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GENDER INEQUALITY PATRIARCHAL SO

Department of Sociology

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the issue in a patriarchal society with aspects of gender inequality; concerned groups and organs suggests that one sure way of efforts at raising their consciousness against them a

Keywords: Patriarchy; Ge

INTRODUCTION

Promoting gender equality for reducing poverty levels seen as an end in itself, but lasting development. It is women's empowerment through workshops, seminars and building blocks to people reducing poverty and improving

Matters of gender become issues of concern that have demonstrated firm Human and People's Rights women's Rights Protocol Development (NEPAD) at the millennium development

With the introduction national attentions are now Gender equality and women's objective and philosophy intrinsic value. Thus to

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THE BABANGIDA MILITARY REGIME AND NIGERIA'S THIRD REPUBLIC IN RETROSPECT

By

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria's political history since independence has been characterised mostly by military incursion into politics. In virtually all cases, the military have tried to enunciate a programme of transition to civil rule but with varying degrees of commitment to such programmes. A case in point is the General Babangida military regime which was to midwife the birth of a Nigerian Third Republic. In retrospect, this paper analyses the transition programme of the Third Republic which took place within the context of a renewed attempt to revamp the country's ailing economy. It is observed that while the period remains one of great political conflagrations for the country, the accompanying chains of reactions did produce some positive impacts on the country's political terrain which have continued till date.

Keywords: Democratisation, Transition, military rule, Political awakening

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria's march towards constitutional democracy has been a chequered one marked, initially, by anti colonial struggles, and later by political conflicts, instability and threat to national cohesion. The struggle against colonial domination came to an end with the attainment of independence in 1960 under a Westminster parliamentary democracy. This, however, lasted for barely six years before the country relapsed into another era of authoritarianism with the overthrow of the civilian government led by Alhaji Tafawa Balewa. The reason for this was hinged on the need to put a stop to excesses of the political class which closely brought the country on the verge of disintegration (see, Akinwunmi, 2004; Ujam, 1995; Ojako, 1981; Oyediran, 1981). The military intervention of January 1966, therefore, brought to an end the First Republic and the beginning of long years of military rule which eventually terminated on October 1, 1979. It needs to be stated that during the long period of military rule in Nigeria, successive military governments did embark on transition to civilian

rule programmes and policies which tended to portray their pattern of intervention as arbitrator type than ruler type (Anifowoshe, 2007:81; Yaqub, 2004). However, unfolding realities usually reveal a contrasting situation as most of the tendencies which informed their intervention in politics (corruption, misrule, abuse of office, etc) usually continued with greater intensity. While this situation often manifests in coups and counter coups against incumbent military rulers, it nonetheless reflects the contradictions inherent in the nature and character of the Nigerian state. Thus, during the first phase of military rule in Nigeria (1966 - 1979), the country experienced no less than four successful and unsuccessful military coups.

Nigeria's return to democracy was in 1979 - 1983 following a hand over of power by the military to elected civilian government but this time, under a Presidential system, adopted as a means of avoiding the kind of stalemate that attended the dual executive model of the First Republic. However, the Republic was soon to be truncated by another military coup which ousted President Shehu Shagari on December 31st 1983. The reason for this according to the prime movers of the coup included the need to rescue Nigeria's 'hopelessly mismanaged economy' which had rendered all infrastructures and facilities useless while the leaders continue to 'revel in squandermania, corruption and indiscipline'. Although the new military regime introduced a number of measures to correct existing anomalies in the polity, its failure to enunciate any programme of political transition to democratic rule coupled with perceived highhandedness of the regime led to its overthrow by General Babangida in August 1985. General Babangida was to become the architect of Nigeria's Third Republic, though, it later became truncated. This paper x-rays the democratic experiment of the Third Republic which took place within the context of renewed attempts at revamping the country's already depressed economy. The essence is to highlight, on the one hand, the socio economic impact of the transition both on the state as well as on the citizens at large and on the other hand, attempt to explain how the chains of reactions thereafter have impacted on current situations.

BABANGIDA'S REGIME AND NIGERIA'S THIRD REPUBLIC: THE CONTEXT AND CONTENT

The Babangida military regime (1985 - 1993) emerged against the background of growing public disenchantment with the Buhari/Idagbon regime. This was because the latter regime was already suffering from legitimacy crises contrary to the enthusiasm that greeted its emergence in 1983. Indeed, there were growing local

and international criticisms against some of its policies and programmes (e.g Decree no. 4 of 1984 - protection against false accusations decree which essentially curtails press freedom and the state security - detention of persons - decree of 1984 among others). It is only natural, therefore, that the citizens would be more interested in a new political order that would guarantee freedom, equity and social justice for all. This was the context in which the Babangida administration emerged and which informed the initial enthusiasm of the citizens towards the administration. In line with this mood, General Babangida, in his Independence Day celebration broadcast of 1985 announced the policy priority of his administration to 'begin a vigorous search for a new political order capable of ensuring sustained economic growth and social development'. He noted further that 'with this in mind', the administration 'shall in the course of 1986, announce a political transition programme for the country' (quoted in Eleazu, 1988: xv). In order to show commitment to his words, General Babangida in January 1986 inaugurated a seventeen member political bureau headed by Dr. Samuel Cooley, with the responsibility of developing a programme for the transition to civil rule. Its terms of reference include:

- Review Nigeria's political history and identify the basic problems which have led to our failure in the past and suggest ways of resolving and coping with these problems.
- Identify a basic philosophy of government which will determine goals and serve as a guide to the activities of government.
- Collect relevant information and data for the government as well as identify other political problems that may arise from the debate.
- Gather, collate and evaluate the contributions of Nigerians to the search for a viable political future and provide guidelines for the attainment of the consensus objective.
- Deliberate on other political problems as may be referred to it from time to time (quoted from Jega, 2007).

The report of the Bureau later formed the basis for the regimes transition to civil rule programme.

In addition, the Babangida regime also established other institutional structures and agencies which would facilitate effective transition exercise. These included a Constitution Review Committee to review the 1979 constitution and come out with a new draft, the Constituent Assembly that was to debate the new draft constitution, a

became moribund in 1993, the government had committed a whopping 400 Million Naira on the programme (Babawale, 2007: 85). Yet, the intended outcome of these expenses (eventual government transfer of political power to an elected civilian government) was never realised. The monetary loss was in addition to the countless loss of productive lives and properties emanating from the imbroglio that trailed annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election. On the surface, it could be assumed that the huge resources committed to the transition programme came against the background of a rich and abundant economic wealth. But this assumption may not be plausible considering the socio economic milieu in which the transition was prosecuted. The point is that, before the military took over, the economy had been facing steady decline in several of its economic indicators. This situation, however, worsened between 1985 and 1993 (see table 1) despite the oil boom and the gulf oil windfall. Indeed, it was estimated that Nigeria made over 12 billion Naira from the windfall which was never accounted for.

Table 1: Economic Indicators

Item	Dec. 1985	Dec. 1992	Dec. 1993
Banks annual interest rates			
minimum	8%	25%	31%
maximum	13%	31%	58%
Naira exchange rate to the US dollar	\$1=	15=	\$1=
	0.9996	19.7597	20.9996
Total value of imports for the year (billions)	13.00	124.613	105.50
Federal Government annual revenue (billions)	10.4	63.6	110.60
Federal Government Annual budget deficit (billion)	1.7	44.2	94.00
Public debt of Nigeria			
Domestic (Billion naira)	27.952	107.93	178.24
External (Billion dollars)	\$17.5	\$27.6	\$28.84

Source: Momoh and Adejumo, 2002

It needs, also, to be stated that, the adoption of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) as an economic revitalisation strategy further compounded the country's economic tragedy. SAP was introduced in June 1986 but by the time the regime was leaving office

in 1993 after the Third Republic became moribund, the socio economic consequences of SAP had taken root, manifesting in the collapse of social facilities and infrastructures, bringing inequality in income, acute poverty and declining standard of living. The yawning gap in socio economic condition before and after the introduction of SAP is graphically presented in table 2 below.

Table 2: Socio - Economic condition in Nigeria, 1986 and 1993

Indicators	1986	1993
GNP per capita	US\$ 770	US\$ 300
Value of Naira to US \$1 dollar	2.0	22.0
Capacity Utilisation	40%	37%
Incidence of Poverty	47%	65%

Source: Jegu, 2007:174

Consequently, the SAP failed to address the economic crises as it was intended. On the contrary, the country experienced a number of crises and protests emanating from the excruciating circumstances to which the citizens were subjected under SAP.

The socio economic cost of the moribund Third Republic will not be complete without mentioning the profligate spending which the government embarked upon as a form of support buying strategy. Such donations include, 10 million naira to the performing musician, Abiodun (see, Osaghae, 1998: 200). Of equal importance is the tendency to use state resources to what seem to be personal programmes. A case in point was the Better Life Programme (BLP) of Mrs Mariam Babangida. As Jibnn (2003: 32) had noted, 'considerable state resources were channelled either officially or unofficially allocated to the BLP in its first five years'. Although the BLP often showed figures of a catalogue of achievements, observers have commented that it has nothing of achievement except as 'a forum for the display of power, influence and prestige by privileged women, leaving behind the disadvantaged rural women (Okeke, 1998, cited in, Jibnn, 2003: 32). Indeed, there is no justification for such commitment of state resources to non state programmes.

Against the background of the foregoing, one thing is clear, it is the most expensive and indeed, most traumatic political engineering experiment in the annals of Nigerian history. This stems from the huge human and material resources which the government committed to the

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Table 2: Socio - Economic condition in Nigeria, 1986 and 1993

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Table 1: Economic Indicators

Item	Dec. 1993	Dec. 1992	Dec. 1985
Banks annual interest rates	31%	25%	8%
minimum	58%	31%	13%
maximum	\$1=	\$1=	\$1=
Naira exchange rate to the US dollar	20.9996	19.7597	13.00
Total value of imports for the year	105.50	124.613	13.00
(billions)	110.60	63.6	10.4
Federal Government annual revenue	94.00	44.2	1.7
Federal Government Annual budget	178.24	107.93	27.952
Public debt of Nigeria	\$29.81	\$27.6	\$17.5
Domestic (Billion naira)			
External (Billion dollars)			

Source: Alomoh and Adejumo, 2002

project and the unending nature of the transition programme launched by the annulment of the June 12, 1993 Presidential elections. We may be tempted to say that the astronomical increase in government revenue during the period was a major incentive for the establishment of such enormous amount to an exercise which from all intent and purpose represents diversionary tactics of the military government to perpetuate in office while at the same time sustaining the accountability tendencies of the military government and their civilian collaborators. In other words, expenditure on the transition programme was as Anifowoshe (2007: 88) notes 'incurred with scant regard for accountability'. Little surprise, therefore, that even the civilian governors who took over in the states were more like military administrators in terms of accountability and observance of the rule of law. The consequences were obvious: persistence of corrupt tendencies in governance and flagrant disregard for due process, continued impoverishment of the masses and their continued alienation from government and protraction of political conflicts instigated by citizens' frustration with the system among others. Thus, in spite of the expensive political engineering embarked upon by the Babangida administration and the adoption of SAP as framework for economic recovery, little or nothing changed for the better in Nigeria both at the level of politics and economy. But this is not to suggest a completely negative situation in terms of impulses produced by the political imbroglio. If anything, developments arising from the chain of events thereafter have continued to exert creative pressures on contemporary Nigerian government and politics.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CONTEMPORARY SITUATION

There is no denying the fact that political events of the Third Republic, especially the annulment of the June 12, 1993 election raised the political consciousness of most Nigerians. Indeed, many Nigerians became more politically conscious and active during this period, a situation which continued to grow in leaps thereafter. This situation was equally reinforced by Babangida's emphasis on a generation-power shift – an idea that greatly favoured the involvement of a new generation of Nigerians in the political process. The increased political consciousness of Nigerians was further manifested in the proliferation of civil society groups, especially human rights and pro-democracy groups who adopted various strategies to ensure the entrenchment of democratic ethos in the political process. Indeed, the proliferation of civil societies in Nigeria after the annulment of the June 12 election remained unprecedented in the history of the country. For instance, in

survey of Civil Society Groups conducted by IDASA, pertinent to Nigeria's 2007 elections, it was observed that out of the about 34,000 of Civil Society Organizations identified to be working on the democracy and governance thematic areas, only 127 had their existence predating ten years. This suggests 267 remaining organisations began to emerge from about the mid 1990s. Interestingly, this proliferation has been accompanied by vibrant inputs into the policy process including the task of election monitoring.

The political imbroglio of the Third Republic equally reinforced the new political awakening that was crystallising in the country beginning from the early 1990s. This relates to the issue of geographical power shift from the North to the southern part of the country. Indeed, the history of Nigeria is one that has seen political power tilting more towards the north since independence. This on the one hand can be attributed to the relative population imbalance between the North and southern parts coupled with the prevalence of ethno-religious dimension of politics which normally gives the North an edge over others on issues to be decided based on numbers. Little surprise, therefore, that the North usually has a lead at moments of national elections. On the other hand, there is profound dominance of officers of the northern extraction in the Nigerian military. Because of this, there is always the tendency for any emerging military government to be dominated by the northern elements among the officers. Beginning from the 1990s therefore, there was a new political awakening from the southern part of the country for a power shift to the region. This awakening was reinforced by the annulment of the June 12, 1993 election believed to be won by a southerner, MKO Abiola. Indeed, while ethno-religious undercurrents were greatly downplayed in the processes leading to the election, the annulment of the election rekindled ethno-religious sentiments in a manner that is unprecedented in the country. The popular thought then was that the annulment was a deliberate attempt to forestall the emergence of a President from the southern region. It could be asserted that underlying flames from the political impasse forced the political class to the informal consociational arrangement of 1993, in which it was tacitly agreed that the Presidency of the country be given to the southern region. Moreover, it was believed that this would help assuage the aggrieved southerners and diffuse the already charged political situation. This arrangement culminated in the major political parties – Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), All Peoples Party (APP) and Alliance for Democracy (AD) – adopting a southerner as their presidential flag-bearers.

CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to x-ray the Babangida military regime and politics of the Third Republic. The regime which came to power in August, 1985 was one of the series of successive military governments in the country. Like its predecessors, it enunciated an elaborate programme of transition to a civilian government. Among other things, it established structures and agencies meant to facilitate the transition process as well as revamp the country's ailing economy. Given the socio-economic and political background against which the Babangida military regime emerged, most Nigerians not only had a sigh of relief but also embraced the Babangida initiatives with all enthusiasm. The enthusiasm however, later became the case of high expectations, dashed hopes. Findings in this work has, however, revealed that while politics at this point had been traumatic for most Nigerians, the period equally remains a major turning point in the political history of Nigerians. Indeed, the various occurrences during the period not only exposed the military as incapable of been corrective regimes which they often claim to be but also, pointed to the fact that the institution is not in anyway immune from the socio-political ills that characterised the larger Nigerian society. But in spite of the loathsome experiences and its accompanying negative socio-economic impacts on the country, events of the period helped to stimulate citizens' consciousness and awareness thereby catalysing the need for negotiation and compromise among competing political elites. This, no doubt, constitutes positive impacts on contemporary Nigerian government and politics.

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