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**QUESTION; CONSTITUTION IS IMPORTANT FOR THE CONSOLIDATION OF DEMOCRACY. HOWEVER, THE MAKING OF THE NIGERIA’S CONSTITUTION HAVE BEEN UNDER TWO POLITICAL DISPENSATIONS THAT HAVE ANTI-DEMOCRACY TENDENCIES, AND THIS HAS BEEN A GREAT IMPEDIMENT TO DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA. EXAMINE SOME OF THE LOOPHOLES IN NIGERIA’S CONSTITUTION OVER THE YEARS THAT HAS AFFECTED DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA.**

**Over years, Nigeria has been wallowing in the coffin of poverty, underdevelopment, power instability, security menace and political hullabaloos, all these has been a problem combating a nation that was once giant of Africa.**

**Nigeria as a country which gained its independence in the year 1960 started out with the parliamentary system of government. The parliamentary system of government under the 1960 and 1963 co nstitutions was characterized by four main features: (1). The separation of the head of state and head of government. At the time, the head of state was Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe whike the head of government was Tafawa Balewa.**

**(2). The plurality of the executive, (3). Parliamentary character of the executive, (4). The responsibility of the ministers to the legislature. The executive is plural in the sense that the prime minister is the head of the council of ministers. It is plural in the sense that the prime minister has more than one vote in council meetings deliberations. The council of ministers derives its authority from the prime minister because they leave office when his tenure ceases. The head of state was the governor general which later turned to the president (under the 1963 constitution) while the head of government was the prime minister.**

**The beginning of democracy can be traced to the early years of independent Nigeria particularly the first republic. Even though Nigeria acquired republican status in 1963, the first republic of Nigeria began on the 1st of October 1960 and came to an end on the 15th of January 1966. The first republic was the republican government of Nigeria between 1963 and 1966 governed by the republican constitution with the president as Nnamdi Azikiwe(1st October 1963-16th January 1966). He resigned from NCNC to become the first governor-general of Nigeria from 16th November 1960-30th September 1963. The prime minister during the first republic was Alh. Abubakar Tafawa Balewa.**

**Before the commencement of the first republic, structures had been put in place in the course of the late 1950s which ensured that Nigeria adopted the “Westminster” model of parliamentary democracy. Elections were held in December 1959 which ushered in the first republic in which the NPC and NCNC formed a coalition which led to the emergence of Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa as prime minister and DR Nnamdi Azikiwe as governor general and later on president.**

**The political unrest during the mid1960s culminated into Nigeria’s first coup d’etat. On 15th January 1966, Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu and his fellow rebel soldiers (most were of southern extraction) and were led by Major Emmanuel Ifeajuna of the Nigerian Army, executed a bloody takeover of all institutions of government. Prime minister Tafawa Balewa, was assassinated along with the premier of northern Nigeria, strong man Ahmadu Bello the Sardauna of Sokoto, Samuel Akintola, the premier of the west and Festus Okotie-Eboh, the finance minister. Major-General Johnson Aguiyi Ironsi took control as the first head of the federal military government of Nigeria on January 16, 1966.**

**Following the assassination of Nigerian military head of state, General Murtala Mohammed in 1976, his successor General Olusegun Obasanjo initiated the transition process to terminate military rule in 1979. A new constitution was drafted, which saw the Westminster system of government jettisoned for an American-style presidential system. The 1979 constitution mandated that political parties and cabinet positions reflect the “federal character” of the nation. Political parties were required to be registered in at least two-thirds of the states and each state was required to produce at least one cabinet member. A constituent assembly was elected to draft a new constitution, which was published on September 21, 1978.**

**The republic would be torn by the secession of Biafra and the ensuing civil war form 1966-70. After the end of the war, the nation re-unified and military rule continued for another 9 years, implementing nationalization of foreign businesses. Eventually, elections were held in August 1979 leading the way to the Nigerian Second Republic and were won by the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) consequent upon which Alhaji Shehu Shagari became the president. Obasanjo peacefully transferred power to Shagari, becoming the first head of state to willingly step down. Soon enough, corruption allegations were in constant increase against the government and thus producing tension and unrest in the country until finally the democratically elected government was again overthrown by a military coup which ensured that Major General Muhammadu Buhari became the military leader on the 31st of December, 1983 by citing charges of corruption and administrative incompetence as reasons for military intervention. President Shehu Shagari was placed under house arrest, and several of his cabinet were either jailed or exiled. The Buhari government was peacefully overthrown by the SMC’s third-ranking member General Ibrahim Babangida in August 1985. Babangida gave misuse of power, violations of human right by key officers of the SMC, and the government’s failure to deal with the country’s deepening economic crisis as justification for the takeover.**

**The third republic was characterized by a little bit of drama and was aborted prematurely. The elections which held on the 12th of June 1993 was won by Moshood Kashimawo Abiola, known as MKO Abiola. However, democracy was not allowed to have its way as Ibrahim Babangida, the then incumbent military leader annulled the elections, hence aborting the third republic.**

**Democracy took a completely different turn in Nigeria from 1999 till date. After the death of the military dictator, General Sani Abacha in 1998, General Abdusalam Abubakar who took over governance from him is known to have worked Nigeria’s return to democracy or democratic rule. The election that was conducted in April 1999 ensured that the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) won as a result of which former military leader, Olusegun Obasanjo was sworn in as the president and commander in chief of the federal republic of Nigeria in May 1999. Obasanjo also won the April 13th, 2003 elections and ruled for another term as provided by the constitution. In the 21st April, 2007 elections, Umaru Musa Yar’Adua of the People’s Democratic Party was elected and sworn in. However, things took a little bit of different turn when Yar’Adua died on the 5th of May 2010 and Goodluck Jonathan was sworn in, in his place. Jonathan completed Yar’Adua term and also won the 16th of April 2011 elections. Powers, however, changed hands in Nigeria’s Democratic rule in the 28, March 2015 elections which when the All Progressive Congress (APC) won the elections and thus, former military leader, Muhammadu Buhari was sworn in.**

**A range of challenges has been identified as the incipient obstacles to the democratic vision of Nigeria. From the ubiquitous phenomenon of corruption to “godfatherism”, poverty to selfish interest of leaders or the inefficiency of leaders etc. Corruption, no doubt, out of all, stands out as a monster amongst the other challenges against democracy in Nigeria. This owes to the fact that corruption has, over the years, been seen to be the bane of the inefficiency of every government in the country. This view on corruption has been quite generally embraced on the basis that if corruption is annihilated in the country, the minor issues such as mismanagement of funds, poverty, election rigging and the likes will be easier to control. However, in a situation where corruption is found to have eaten deep into a Nation’s system such that its leaders are not left out, the possibility of ensuring strict adherence to the rule of law or enforcing the principles of democracy, is not feasible.**

**The problem of corruption in Nigeria is easily spotted when one observes that unlike the general understanding of democracy as government by the people, it appears that the Nigerian model of democracy is ‘government by the few and for the few’. A relevant example is the 2017 budget in which over 2.9 billion naira was voted for honoraria for the president and its agencies. More glaring corrupt practices as found in the corridors of those occupying key positions in the current government and those who served with the previous governments are clear indicators of the corruption malady the Nigerian state is faced with. Except for the problem of corruption in the country is therefore resolved, there seems to be no feasible means of upholding democracy in the state.**

**After a thorough breakdown of history of democracy in Nigeria, how it emancipated, and people who made the country practice what we know as democracy today after following the style of their colonial masters, also problems of democracy which ranges from all spheres of and diaspora to current trend happening in the democratic environments, discussion has also been made on how possibly problems combating democracy can be practically and technically solved.**