What ails Africa? Re-Investigation of Colonial Legacies

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ABSTRACT

The study outlines and contextualizes the theoretical construct of the African state evolution. An attempt is made to unveil the protracted spatial, socio-cultural and economic disparities that still persist across the continent among the various demographic groupings. The central objective is to identify the roadblocks encountered in the building of state in Africa. Moreover, the paper also reflects the colonial rule's trajectory and policy directives as well as the extenuating factors that have stymied the African state system from attaining its developmental goals. However, the findings of the study reveals that, despite a slew of policies, laws and tactics adopted by the African government, policy objectives were not fully realized owing to the myriad of structural and socio-cultural disparities as a result of colonial legacy. The fact is that Africa not only lacks an operational model for governance but also has remained mired in a colonial paradigm that by its paternalistic character undermines its development prospects. So, what the African states required is a strong willed and capable leadership who can set priorities in streamlining the existing states that resonate with the indigenous traditional state and make it compatible with modern nation states.

Keywords: State, Culture, Development, Society, Ethnicity, Kinship.

Introduction

The state is neither an outcome of any single movement nor is it an invention or creation. It does not arise by coincidence or historical accident rather it is the ramification of recurring cultural development. Hassan (2006) articulates that the modern state has emerged out of '*Treaty of Westphalia* (1648). At that time there was no relevance of

state in Africa. The idea of the modern state in Africa occurred when the '*Scramble for Africa*' was initiated by the competing European powers at the Berlin conference of 1884-85. It was the time when administrative boundaries metamorphosed into political periphery. The dominant euro-centric proposition enchained African people into non-viable entities called states, without regard for their cultural ethos and values. In this regard Iheduru (2001) posits that "the African state system reflects the ambition and capabilities of European powers which is stalled by the enforcement of the "*White Man's Burden*" theory".

In the same vein Eargas (1987) argued that in the name of '*civilizing mission*', colonialism sustained in Africa for more than three centuries albeit that, it only inflicted agony and misery to the colonized people. It has been exposed largely as a hoax, a pretext to exploit African resources for the advantage of the metropoles. Moreover, it has rationalized the master-servant relationship which is well elaborated in Frantz Fanon (1961) work "*The Wretched of the Earth*", where he fairly points out that "to illustrate the totalitarian nature of colonial exploitation, the colonist turns the colonized into a kind of quintessence evil. Further, the native is declared impervious to ethics, representing not only the absence of values but also the negation of values". But in reality, it was done to promote colonial's own self-esteemand respectability and this nature of euro-centric power reflects the anarchical order which determines the cumulative process of domination, subjugation and violence in the continent.

Paulson (2020) notes that the idea of mutual existence and collaborative advancement was derived from the humanist principle of Ubuntu (I am because we are), can be seen as the defining characteristic of primordial African societies. They had a mosaic of dynamic political institutions and systems across the continent, which possess a startling level of functioning, including participatory democracy, customary law and accountability. Their administration system was so transparent and advanced that even today's many modern states do not have one. In this regard, Herskovits & Harwitz (1964) considered 19th century Ashanti to be more advanced than the European feudal state. They notice that, the former possess a wider range of land-tenure system, more advanced technique of land use and labour utilization as well as more sophisticated modes of production, than the latter.

Africa's once rich and diverse culture has been abandoned completely over the time because of the exogenous imposition of the western model of state system. Strategic suppression of African voices and marginalization of their interests systemically permeates the ideational framework of the dominant west. Due to this, the channels of African culture merely remained as moribund and decadent. The creative spirit of fine arts, literature, science, philosophy and religion had been replaced by the western model of cultural practices. The African language and literature was at all-time low ebb. Indigenous practices had just become formal, ritualistic and mechanical. The continent had entered into the zone of uncreative habits and decadent traditions. The western tradition had provided a violent shock and a rude challenge to the state of affairs of Africa. The influence of western culture spread far and wide among all classes of people and affected all scenarios of life whether political, economic, cultural and social.

A diagnosis of Africa's woes usually sparks plenty of heated debates. The colonial barbarian rule has brought irreversible changes and left Africa with indelible marks. During this phase, a profound upheaval of African people took place. It was a painful tragedy from which African people have not been liberated yet. Violence and moral decay has become daily routine. Slavery and colonialism has altered the fabrics of African societies and has set a stage for economic backwardness and stagnation. Centuries of oppression has resulted in poverty, chaos, and barbarism. Sharpening social division, growing distributional disparities, ethno-religious primacy and cultural degradation are manifestations of social pain.

Research Question

The objective of the present paper is to examine the influence of European imperialism on the African state system. The research paper will also analyze to what extent the artificial borders have affected the overall development of the African state system.

Theoretical Perspective

Numerous definitions have been offered by the scholars of various sub-fields to the question 'What is state'? Ante (2014) in the words of

Weber finds state to be "the locus of physical force which exercises monopoly of legitimate force over a fixed territory" whereas Oppenheimer (1914) viewsstate as a form of political cohesion. In such an entity human beings engage with one another in order to fulfill their needs (Ookeshott, 1975). Moreover, Runciman (2005) finds state to be an identifiable & distinct, systemizing concept rather than a timeless idea which is different from all the possible schemes through which people united with each other. He refers to it as "the idea par excellence" which is constitutive of political activity and derives its power from law and order.

Scholars like Evans-Pritchard and Fortes (1940) while describing the primitive African societies categorized them into two groups. One comprises those which have centralized authority as well as administrative and judicial institutions. In this system cleavages of wealth, privilege and status correspond to the distribution of power and authority. The Zulu, Ngwato, Bemba, Banyankole and Kede lie in this group. On the other hand the other group consists of those which lack the centralized form of government and their division is not based upon rank, status and wealth. The Logoli, Tallensi and Nuerare the examples of such groups. However, Ayittey (2006) also categorized the traditional African political organizations into two types. He points out that different tribal culture had their own peculiarities, but the architecture and foundations were fundamentally the same. According to him, first group existed as autonomous political unit and follows self-governing mechanisms whereas in the second group people were subjected to others' hegemony, either via conquest or by willingness.

It was found that distinct regions of Africa have different names for their political organizations. They were regarded as the city-states, kingdoms, chiefdoms, dynasties, pastoral societies, confederations, autocracies, war-lords, sub-kingdoms, tributary states, semi-autonomous vassal states and stateless societies (Davidson, 1966; Fortes & Evans-Pritchard, 1940; Ayittey, 2006; Boahen, 1990).In this regard Warner (2001) argues that although Africa had a varied organizational structure and operational principles in the pre-colonial period it doesn't follow the westphalian model. Hence, the usage of the term state in African setting seems to be inappropriate and problematic.In contrast to this,

Potholm's (1979) says that enormous structural variety and continent wide diversity shows its pluralistic nature of statesystem.These narratives clearly indicate that the state system is not a new endeavour in Africa, and that what is new is the imposition of the Westphalian model of state system under the colonial project. The alien nature of the state system imposed by the colonial powers had a disastrous effect and wreaked havoc on Africa's state building efforts.

While Tilly (1985) claims that 'war makes states'but in the case of Africa, wars, particular intra-state, have resulted to state collapse, implosion and dissolution. Contradicting Tilly, Sorensen (2001) believes that war in the third world usually led to breakdown of state, which can be clearly witnessed in the case of Africa. The only successful secessionist war which led tothe formation of state is that between Ethiopia & Eritrea and Sudan & South Sudan.

Anter (2014) identified African states to be *Patrimonial.* These states are autocratic and often oligarchic in nature. Rothchild called it the '*Networks of reciprocities*' whereas Marenin has defined it as '*webs of interaction*'. Such states are characterized by ethnicity, clan and extended family types of loyalties hence there is lack of autonomy which leads to formation of weak states. However, Ergas (1987) depicted African states as repressive, fragile, feeble, collapsing, kleptocratic and predatory whereas, Hyden (1983) described African state as "a foreign structure which is imported from the outside and placed over an alien society like a balloon suspended in mid-air". Contrast to this, Boahen (2000) believes that "one of the positive aspects of European rule was the creation of new states without clearly defined boundaries in place of the existing innumerable lineage and clan groups, city-states, kingdoms and empires without any fixed boundaries". It is noticed that the states of Africa were carved without regard for their local culture and tradition which causes a serious error; as the government cannot impose unity among the people. The loyalty of people towards the state in Africa is weak. They value more the socio-cultural ideologies which consist of ethnicity, religion, race consciousness, tribes and their particular clans and this gap epitomizes the process of political decay.

Political Structure of Indigenous African State

The early history of mankind indicates that kinship was the articulating principles of social organization and the basis of social integration in Africa. It can be well explained as a feeling of '*consciousness of kind*'. Morag (1987) notes that kinship posse'sjuro-political and ritual connection whereas Murdock (1949) in his work "*Social Structure*'' explains kinship as "a structured system of relationships in which individuals are bound one to another by complex interlocking and ramifying ties". He further argues that it is culturally constructed and based on consanguine relation (blood relation), affinal relation (through marriage) and fictive relation (adoption). These relations can be extended either vertically and horizontally. In the vertical case successive generations are bonded together whereas in the horizontal case people are tied together through marriage across a single generation. Moreover, political structure in most of the indigenous societies began at the lineage whose further diversification leads to kinship or the extended family. Williams (1987) illustrates that lineage was the most effective tool for bringing stability and unity in the society. The head of the lineage is chosen on the basis of age, maturity and relation to ancestors whereas in some communities wealth is also regarded as a criterion for their selection.

Vaughan(1986) explains that African kinship observes two types of descent systems i.e. Patrilineal and matrilineal descent. The patrilineal descent relation is reckoned through males and matrilineal through females. 88 percent of African societies reckon its descent unilineally, among them 74 percent marked a preference for patrilineal descent, for example Nuer & Baganda people. Matrilineal descent occurs in only 14 percent of African families. For example – the Suku, the Tonga and the Bemba group, who are found along a belt running across South Central Africa. Of the remaining societies of Africa around 7 percent reckon their descent bilaterally (equally through males and females) and 5 percent combine both forms of unilineal descent into a form called double unilineal descent. Most of the hunting societies such as the San and the Pygmies tend to have bilateral descent.

Africa developed its own kind of civilization, society, science, arts, trade system and states long before the intrusion of the colonizers and

they did not fall into the stereotypical understanding of Europe. There are various debates regarding the development of the pre-colonial African state system. In general, Ayittey (2006) has identified two types of political organizations in Africa. The Mossi of Burkina Faso, the Fanti of Ghana, the Yoruba of Nigeria, the Zulu in South Africa, Oyo & Ashanti in West, Buganda in East and the Swazi had centralized form of ruling. They have well developed judicial institutions as well as administrative machinery. In such a type of organization, political rights and duties are territorially defined. Chief is said to be the judicial and administrative head vested with the power of economic authority over the territory under his jurisdiction. On the other hand, some tribal groups that had no chiefs or rulers are said to be stateless or acephalous societies. For instance - the Mbeere of Kenya, Igbo, Tiv& Fulani of Nigeria, the Konkomba of Togoland, the Jie of Uganda, the Kru of Liberia, the Somali, the Dagaaba of Ghana & Burkina Faso and Tallensi of Ghana are among them.

Ayittey (2006)says that, in terms of structure, the African chiefdom consisted of four fundamental government units i.e. the chief, council of ministers, council of elders and the village assembly.However, for some tribal groups like Bemba and Igbo, the village societies are said to be the largest political units. It is a group of several contiguous villages which are linked through common custom, ancestry and shrine. Further, these village societies are also divided into several units. For instance, Igbo village societies are classified into five social unit's i.e. Village group (Mba), Village (Mbam), Lineage (onumara), Family group (Umunna) and nuclear family (Umunne) (Ayittey). On the other hand, Bemba group village has average 30-50 huts and its leadership consists of territorial rulers, administrative officers and counselors, priests and army leaders.

Ayittey (2006) further mentions that several levels of stratification on the basis of age and gender are also found in the African indigenous state system. For example, Annang tribes are classified into children, youth, middle-aged and elders whereas Afikpo Igbo are categorized into young men, junior, middle and senior. Melbaa (1988) identified that these classifications are separated by age-regiments. For instance Oromo society is structured into 11 sets of age-grade at the interval of

8 years whereas Nuer society is organized into six sets. Specific duties are assigned to each age grade person. For example, in Oromo society 16 years old are required to perform heavy works and travel long distances in order to hunt whereas rulers are drawn from the age group of 40-48 years.

Talking about the system of governance, Ayittey (2006) notes that different tribal groups have different forms of ruling. For example, the governing body of Oromo comprises nine members and each member is specified with certain roles and functions. They have one president and two vice-presidents (Abbaa Bokku), Chairman of assembly (Abbaa Chaffe), Speaker who presents the decision of the presidium of the assembly (Abbaa Dubbi), Memorizer of law (Abbaa Seera), Judge who executes the decision (Abbaa Alanga), Army commandant (Abbaa Duula) and Economy supervisor (Abbaasaa) whereas Ergas (1987) asserts that in Oyo tribe "power was shared among the king (Alafin) and his court, the senate (Oyo Messi) led by its president (the Boshorun) and the assembly of local chiefs (the Ogboni)". Such a well-off system of governance prevents the rulers from abusive use of power and at the same time it also helps in counter balancing the institution. Moreover, in Oromo according to Ayittey (2006) a rotational system of succession was practiced. A few other tribal groups which have such a type of rotated kinship practice were Gikuyu of Kenya, Yoruba of Nigeria and Lunda. This process could also be seen as the one of most effective ways of coping with destructive rivalry for the throne. However, According to Fortes & Evans-Pritchard (1940), the structure of indigenous African state implies that kings and chiefs govern by consensus and there power was counterbalanced by institutions like king's council, selected Officials who have a decisive voice in king's investiture, queen mother's court and so forth.

Ayittey (2006) finds that Indigenous African state system had a hierarchy of courts to deal with disputes or offenses. Based upon the nature of the offenses it comprises of five types of legal system i.e. the moot, the family, the ward, the chief's and the king's court. For instance, the issue of disagreements between siblings may be addressed in the family court whereas clan related disputes are settled in the chief's court. Moreover, the preservation of peace follows mainly four principles in Africa. These are settlement by deliberation and discussion, compensation,

adjudication and assessment by elders and fairness. Different tribal units have their own peculiar types of dispute resolution system chaired by chiefs or clan heads. For example, Igbo have five types of dispute solving mechanisms i.e. through family head, Umuada, village tribunal, age grade and Vodou priest whereas Liberia's Kpelle tribe follows the informal dispute-resolving tactics called 'house of palaveri' or moot. This similar system is also followed by the San of the Kalahari, the Somali and the Bukusu of Kenya.

While it is true that Africans are imbued with a greater sense of community and its ruling process was fundamentally based upon gerontocracies. Respect for elders was not a kind of servility. Young populations were free to express their ideas and participate in the decision making process by attending village assemblies or the council sessions. The idea of democracy was not alien to Africa; it could be observed in city-states, chiefdoms and village groups. People gather at the market-place or under some tree to express their opinions by raising their hands or doing something similar to reach a consensus. Though there were no administrative persons to scrupulously record the proceedings, the institution existed long before the colonists arrived. These democratic essences of Africa's indigenous institutions have been undermined by repressive colonial rules and regulations that disturbed the organic development of African society.

The destruction of Africa's Heritage

The goal of colonial rulers was not to uplift African nation-states; rather they had more modest objectives, to foster in Africans obedience and loyalty to the colonial authorities and develop in a way that would be compatible with the interests of the European metropolitan powers.

Olson's (1993) compare the colonial powers to bandits. His idea of "roving bandits" and "stationary bandits" conjures up the picture of a colonial state. He argued that like colonial conquests "roving bandits" roam the countryside and lootandsteal the resources. Then, they realize that they can do better by setting themselves as ruler and protecting the interests of the tribal, farmers and villagers and then taxing their production and in that manner they can enjoy the benefits for generations instead of roving and stealing for a single time. This is the case of

"stationary bandits" and referred to the colonial state when European forces legalized and rationalized the process of theft while monopolizing the African subjects. On the other hand, Mudimbe (1988) points out that the process of colonization in Africa can be understood through "three complementary hypotheses and actions i.e., the domination of physical space, the reformulation of native's minds and the integration of local economic histories into the western perspective".

The Plight of African Chief

Ayittey (2005), notes that the imposition of White rule has severely limited and abridged the chief's authority in the continent. They were barred from utilizing the organized force at their command at their own free will and were forced to submit to the colonial authority. As a result, the chief authorityhas been weakened, while his subordinates' influence and independence grow. The customary law lost its legitimacy and all unoccupied land was captured by the colonial powers.Chiefs no longer reigned as a sovereign, rather were acting as a representative of the colonial authority. The pattern of rights and obligations that binds him to his subjects was completely shattered and was merely acting as a stooge of the colonial administration. The defenders and custodians of African culture, customs and institutions were seen to be the most persecuted.The pyramidal form of state machinery was maintained which makes the colonial powers paramount. The only way left for the chief to survive was the collaboration with the colonists.

British doctrine of "indirect Rule" enabled the chiefs to have a substantial role in government but was subject to government control.They were expected to take care of unpopular tasks like collection of taxes, recruitment of labourers and construction work. They were not given full authority to make policies or represent African people's interests' rather were tasked to only execute the will of the colony's rulers.

Besides this chief's judicial authority was further curtailed.Fortes & Evans-Pritchard (1940) finds that from 1919, the court was held jointly by the chief and European local district commissioner for hearing any type of civil or criminal case. Further, district commissioner courts were also given the jurisdiction of divorce proceedings between native married couples according to European civil law in 1926. In 1927

after the practice of witchcraft was deemed a criminal offence, the trial of suspected sorcerers was also removed from the tribal courts. Thus, it can be stated that the Europeans altered the structure of Africans courts and established their own governmental structure.

The Indigenous Culture and Systems

The colonial powers did not bring any new institutions to Africa. They just imposed an alien system on the already existing institutions, largely to the detriment of Africans and to their own good. The introduction of various forms of the similar institutions does not imply that the colonists created them. Ayittey (2005) finds that indigenous Africans use spears, bows and arrows as weapons. Europeans were the first to pioneer firearms, which were more effective in killing and hunting. However, it is erroneous to claim that colonists introduced the institutions of war and weaponry in Africa. Further, Ayittey (2005) argued that in pre-colonial Africa, locals congregated under a tree or in the village market square to discuss an issue to reach a consensus. Colonialists built a structure and named it parliament (a place for discussion), did not imply that the African institution of public discussion and free speech were a colonial prelude.

Ayltey (2005) also mentions the monetary institution. Money, in general, is a medium of exchange that facilitates production and commerce. An economy will move in a snail's pace in the absence of it. A variety of commodity currencies such as cowrie shells, iron bars, salt and gold dust were used by the Africans. Later, the coin and paper monies were mooted by the Europeans, not mean they have invented the institution of money in Africa. Moreover, Africa had a regular rural village market prior to the introduction of the urban mega market by the Europeans. Goods and people were transported throughout Africa by foot, horses, canoes and caravans. Europeans brought more efficient forms of transportation: steamers, roads, automobiles and railways. Thus, it could be argued that the colonialists did not invent these institutions; they only introduced different forms of these institutions.

Europeans have destroyed the African self-sufficiency production system and consumer market. More efforts were put into cash-crops production which was the demand of the European market. Cultivation of basic

food for African livelihood was completely neglected as that would have defeated the purpose of European colonies. The transport systems in Africa were also built only with the view to ease the export of the continent's wealth to Europe. It stands totally inadequate for the continent's internal development of trade and commerce. Tele-communications networks too were the same.

European colonial rule was a curse from which the continent found difficult to exonerate itself. The aim of the European powers' was not only to dominate and exploit the material and social space but to colonize the minds of Africans and then rule over them. In the words of Mazrui (2001), colonial authority left a void between the state and the society which further resulted in the weakening of Africans traditional cultural values. However, it clearly indicated that the seeds of Africa's recurring issues were weaved during colonial rule itself.

African States: A Colonial Imposition

Different European powers have colonized African territory with varying degrees of colonial penetration and influence. Ayoob (1995) points out that "the colonial masters have created administrative units in the continent without regard for their pre-colonial affinities and loyalties. Artificial and arbitrary division of colonial borders cut apart tribal, linguistic, religious and ethnic ties, fragmented the existing political system; and lumped varied tribal and political entities into an unstable unit". The impact of such a type of border divide can be seen in frequent wars and conflicts across the continent.

Alesina (2006) points out that "Eighty percent of African borders follow latitudinal and longitudinal lines and scholars believe that such unnatural division of borders will create ethnically fragmented countries or conversely, separate into bordering countries the same people, are the roots of Africa's economic tragedy, violence and conflicts". Anebo (2006) found that the artificial border has divided around 177 ethnic groups from their kith and kin in Africa. In the words of Chazan (1999) the border line drawn by the colonial power has triggered the local identities and underlined the differences between major groups i.e. Hutu in Rwanda and Burundi; the Sara and the Toubou in Chad, the Yoruba, the Igbo and the Hausa Fulani in Nigeria, Shona and

Ndebele in Zimbabwe, as well as Zulu & Xhosa in South Africa. This has resulted in intra- and inter-state conflict.

Since their independence, several African countries had been engulfed in violent civil wars which claimed the lives of millions. Moreover, the imposition of such arbitrary boundaries havesplitted the African communities, tribes, ethnic groups and families and divided them into at least 4 to 6 countries. For instance, Afar group is divided among three countries i.e. Eritrea, Ethiopia and Djibouti whereas Nuer were distributed between Ethiopia and South Sudan. Another ethnic group named Luo is residing in Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania, South-Africa and Uganda. Similarly, Maasai group was divided into Kenya and Tanzania. In a homogeneous society like Europe, division of territory could be done on the geographical basis whereas in a heterogeneous and diverse society like Africa if borders are divided geographically then separation of members of same group and similar culture is obvious.

Ali Mazuri (1986) is of the view that "the colonial political authority exacerbated the difficulties of creating a modern nation-state following independence. Different sections of the population perceived each other as strangers and aliens, increasingly as rivals and ominously as potential enemies". However, Herbst (1966) calls that the idea of sovereignty which tended to be shared in pre-colonial states was also changed during the colonial era. Europeans allegedly exercised power over people rather than land or territory which is clearly different from that of the Westphalian notion of sovereignty. Herbst (1966) goes on to say that "the imposition of territorial states by colonial authorities was a severe disruption of African political practices". Similarly Clapham (1966)notes that the faulty state system placed on Africa is to some extent can be blamed for its underdevelopment. In addition, colonialism also parted Africa into Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone countries. The enormous disparities in their administration have further hampered the idea of African unification, as the majority of its citizens and rulers were inspired by the principles of their former colonial rulers.

Continental Crisis of Institutions

The political instability and cultural degradation may appear to be a discrete phenomenon. This is frequently the by-product of lingering

effects of slave trade, dependence, imperialist infiltration, western neo-colonialism, naked exploitation and brutal repression. In addition to this Zahar (1974) calls primordiality a trauma which manifests in the colonial survival of semi-feudal, ethnic and religious relationships. Moreover, the arbitrariness with which colonial boundaries grouped different nationalities within and across national borders, divide and rule strategy of encouraging rural reactions in the form of traditional oligarchies as local support for imperial power and regionalism based on ethno-religious divisions which has sown the seeds of parochialism in Africa.

Onimode (1988) argued that these primordialities further during the post-colonial era were compounded by the governing groups in a bid to retain power. As a result, there have been ethno-religious animosities, cultural irredentism and even civil wars. The deadliest manifestation of this societal trauma was apartheid in Southern Africa. Gutheridge (1976) points out that Africa's economic challenges and deepening social divides have led to widespread political instability and persecution. More often the frequent waves of military coups and counter-coups across the continent are arguably the most egregious illustration of this. However, more than half of the African states are affected from the menace of civil war. It has resulted in considerable harm to the people and development of the state. The worst's civil wars have occurred in Nigeria – the Biafra war (1967-70), Somali (1991), Sudan (1955, 1962-72, 1983-2011) and Rwanda (1990-1994).

Most of the African countries had achieved their independence by the 1960s. All possessed great hope for rapid growth and aimed to find out the solution to economic and social degradation of the colonial times as well as mitigate the effects of inequality and exploitations. But the development target was not achieved because the successor government had virtually replicated the tenets of colonial rule which lapsed and legalized the process of exploitation, domination and subjugation once again but this time by their own rulers. However, the practice of establishing democracy from a top-down coercive model while ignoring the indigenous institutions had further deprived people of their full rights.

Chazan (1999) mentions that during the initial year of independence in 1960s, most African countries have mainly witnessed the single party dominant government with authoritarian and populist patterns of rule.By the late 1960s it saw the inception of military rule in many countries of the continent which is no more different from the colonial rule. The development of authoritarian rule with primordial types of governance marked the beginning of the 1970s. Ethnic and religious based political parties were formed. Later, this phase also saw the revival of the pluralist initiatives. Moreover, the growth rate of African countries began to fall and by the end of 1970s, it lagged behind many third-world countries. The shift from the 1970s to the 1980s was undeniably the most tumultuous. Many states have witnessed a series of serious conflicts and civil wars. This phase faced the problem of high population growth, low levels of investment, misuse of natural resources, weak political landscape and low standard of living.

In the 1990s, post-Cold War era, many authoritarian regimes came to an end and several countries of Africa took a democratic turn. It saw the emergence of multi-party governance in Africa and regarded it as the second wave of liberalization. The Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) which was introduced during the 1980s remained operational till the end of the 1990s. It had negligible effect in the whole of Africa except Ghana. The experiment of multi-party politics also took a disastrous turn and many states came on the verge of collapse and break down before the genesis of the 21st century. This happened because the state as an entity failed to encapsulate the coherent and incoherent forces in the absence of binding catalyst which probably resulted in the formation of weak and fragile states in the continent.

Further, Chazan (1999) argued that the African states since its independence have undergone a number of political landscapes. These are Administrative-hegemonic (Kenya, Zaire, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Zambia, and Malawi), Pluralist (Botswana, Mauritius, Senegal, Namibia, Ghana, and South Africa), Party-mobilizing (Mali, Algeria, Tanzania and Zimbabwe), Party-centralist (Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau and Benin), Personal-coercive (Uganda, Central African Republic and Equatorial Guinea), Populist (Libya, Burkina Faso, Uganda, DRC and Zambia), Regime breakdown (Congo, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Chad and Uganda) and Dictatorship (Cameroon, Uganda,

Eritrea and Republic of Congo). None of these regimes were able to provide stability to the African states. All the regimes of Africa whether rightist, leftist, socialist or populist are in a state of deep crisis. Thus, the question is how they all can suffer from the same type of crisis? Why are the African states experiencing persistent instability, insecurity as well as political and economic turmoil even after the sixty years of its independence? Whether it is Somalia or Sudan in the East, Algeria in North, Nigeria in the West, South Africa in the South or Rwanda in the Central, the circumstances are almost similar. As a consequence of this, the continent is falling behind in today's age of globalization. This worrying situation clearly illustrates that there is something profoundly wrong and the answer maylies in the authoritarian colonial rule, forced alien state and artificial border. The ideological dependence and under-development of political culture along with the imposition of the western models while ignoring the African indigenous culture and traditional values further resulted in the frequent breakdown of regimes and formation of precarious and collapsed states in Africa.

Major Findings

The organizational structure and operating principles found in indigenous Africa was diverse. To avoid the abuses of power, the rulers were surrounded by a variety of council bodies and institutions. They were also held liable for their conduct. There was also the clause for them to be removed at any time if they failed to govern as per the will of their subjects. Moreover, consensus on crucial subjects was made only after the discussions and consultations.

The artificial border division created at the whim of European powers with no regard for the people, who are living there, forced people of distinct ethnic groups to cobble together. This has triggered unrest in the continent after independence. People from various ethnic groups, who got separated from their kith and kin, waged war against the government and demanded for their reunion which caused serious threat to the national unity of many states in the continent. However, African people are united in their anti-colonial sentiments but they were yet to think of themselves as part of a created nation. Even today African people are more loyal to their ethnic and tribal loyalties. For instance, Nigerian people are divided among the Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa loyalties

whereas Kenya among Kikuyu, Luo, Kamba & Maasai. Rwanda is divided among Hutu and Tutsi, Ethiopia among Amhara and Oromo and South Africans among Khoisan and Zulu and so on.

Most of the newly independent states of Africa were plagued to a greater extent by ethnicity and regionalism, which posed a challenge to the political stability of the state. Political instability occurs when there is no legitimate and orderly transfer of power from one regime to the next or from one leader to the other. It is very similar to the colonial rulers transferring power to new African rulers. This type of transfer of power led to a wave of cynicism and pessimism among the citizens which further caused societal disintegration, civic unrests, intergroup conflicts, economic regression.

In the post-independence era nepotism, ethnic intolerance and corruption have posed a grave impediment to good governance in Africa. African people tend to choose or vote their political representatives on the basis of their ethnic belongings rather than on their merit. Winners reward their ethnic community via giving jobs and building infrastructure. This has resulted in issues such as job ineptitude, leadership incompetence, development concentrated in a particular area as well as single group's dominance over state power. Those ethnic groups who were not favoured waged war against the government which resulted in political conflict within the governing echelon and ultimately added to a nation's political instability.

Tendency to form one-party dominant government brings another challenge to the states of Africa. It has been observed that until the 1980s, with an exception of Botswana, rest of the countries had shifted towards the single-party dominant administration. This type of system eventually led to abuse of power and gave the ruling party dictatorial powers that suppressed any opposition or worthy criticism of the government, which is necessary to maintain the healthy and decent governance. The African state system has neither been completely transformed to the European model of state nor can it return back to the African model of state system. African states have never been sufficiently emancipated from the intensity of community and ethnic bonds.

Way Forward

The continent's predicament is exacerbated due to the deterioration of its cultural aspects. The cultural penetration or cultural imperialism connected with the post-colonial survival of 'colonial mentality' has led to persistent problems in the continent. Ideas and theories can be regarded as the foundation for any sustained social action including policies and programs to address any problems, the rising cultural infiltration seems to be the most severe threat in this regard. What it requires is a radical overhaul of inherited colonial structures and imported models which create and sustain the obstacles to change.

The enterprising reform for transformation to which African nations have pledged under Agenda 2063 is a statement of political goodwill. This should be assured through the right to development paradigm, which entails the restructuring of political structures as well as socio-economic and cultural scenarios, which in effect can only be accomplished through the liberation and empowerment of people. As Africa has abundant untapped natural resources and the highest number of human resources, what it requires is a politically strong willed leader who can reinvent and reengineer good governance and bring sustainable change. Besides this, all African countries and its regional organization need to unite and move ahead as one Africa i.e. as the United States of Africa, with one army, one central bank, one market, one currency and one nation then and then only, it will be able to achieve its ambition of 2063 i.e. "An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens" (AU, 2063).

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