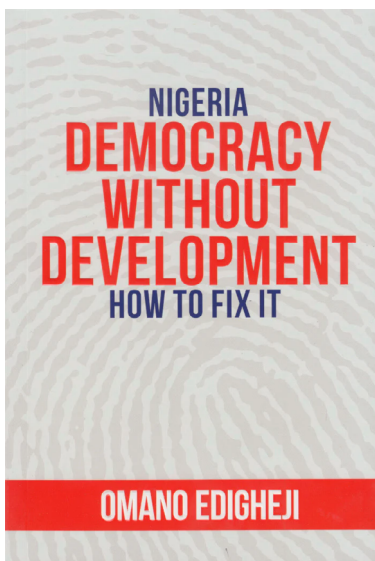


BOOK REVIEW

Nigeria Democracy without development: How to fix it

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Nigeria Democracy without development: How to fix it. By Edigheji, O. 2020. Alime Media Limited

Nigeria is a democratic state as well as the wealthiest country in Africa. However, Nigeria is not where the people of the African continent expected it to be twenty years after democracy was instated. The author states, “There is a general assumption that democracy leads to inclusive and sustainable social and economic development” (pg. xxiii). The assumption here is that Nigeria should have witnessed the progressive development characterised by increased infrastructure, employment, equal opportunities for all and high patriotism amongst its citizens rather than the retarded development currently. However, this is not the case for Nigeria; democracy in Nigeria is characterised by corruption, low development, and mismanagement of natural resources. The characteristics mentioned above are why Mr Omano Edigheji saw a need to

write this book: he wanted to bring to light the discrepancies within Nigeria’s leadership and why Nigeria has not seen any development in the last two decades lastly, to provide solutions to Nigeria’s problems.

Omano Edigheji claims that the political elite in Nigeria has excluded the rest of Nigerians from the benefits of democracy. “The economy benefits the wealthy, especially politicians who have used the state as a means of private accumulation rather than the provision of basic services to the people of Nigeria” (pg. xxv). The people who are supposed to propel the country and its citizens forward are the reason for its low development. This leads to ordinary civilians having less faith in the concept of democracy. Omano Edigheji believes that democracy is the best form of rule in Nigeria; however, it needs to be developmental. “I call for Nigeria to build a Democratic Developmental State (DDS), a state that is developmental and democratic” (pg.xxv). He worries that Nigeria has had two democratic regimes that resulted in the military taking over and did not work well for Nigeria, so he does not want history to repeat itself. He fears that Nigerian civilians negatively perceive the concept of democracy. However, he highlights in the book that reason for the discrepancies happening in Nigeria is not because of the concept of democracy but rather the people who are supposed to implement democratic practices in Nigeria.

According to Omano Edigheji, “political elites are embezzling state funds for their enrichment and are doing nothing to help emancipate everyone who lives in Nigeria” (pg49). The book is centred around two key arguments: the democratic Nigerian government is characterised by

the poor political leadership and weak institutions. In simple terms, Nigeria is a democratic country on paper, and the only apparent practice of democracy in Nigeria is that free and fair elections are held every four years. Furthermore, the book highlights corruption as a norm in Nigeria, and opportunities are distributed based on nepotism and cronyism.

The author uses statistics and graphs throughout the book to emphasise his claims; the book takes a scientific approach and is well-written and well-researched. The author should be commended for writing this book, and he does not restrict or censor his opinions; he lays it all out in the open, the good, the bad and the ugly. He leaves no stone unturned. It takes courage to be able to write and publish what everyone is thinking in their heads but is too scared to say out loud. The author does not use complex or bombastic words so that the ordinary Nigerian can skim this book. It is impressive that the author needs to criticise and speak about all that is wrong with the current leadership of Nigeria. However, he provides feasible solutions to fix the problems and calls on all Nigerians to participate in the revamping of making Nigeria great.

What is impressive about the book is that the author provides solutions to the issues faced in Nigeria; one can feel the author's patronage and love for his birth country Nigeria. Just like Martin Luther King, Omano Edigheji has a dream. In the final chapter titled "The Nigeria of my Dreams", He shares his dream of a Nigeria without Poverty, unemployment and inequality, "I dream of a Nigeria where the rule of law will prevail, and human rights will be respected" (pg. 143). He leaves no one behind in his dream of a better Nigeria and asks all Nigerians to work together to make his dreams a reality.

A critic of the book is that the author paints Developmental Democracy as the only answer to Nigeria's shortfalls; however, he does not adequately highlight the disadvantages and challenges of implementing development democracy. According to him, "there is no other future for Nigeria unless it implements a Developmental democracy" (pg.19), assuming the approach is the only flawless concept for Nigeria's future solution. The book would have been more impactful if it had explored other theories and democratic concepts and practices that would benefit Nigeria. The book is well structured but repetitious, and the author keeps reinforcing the same arguments throughout the book using different words.

In Conclusion, the book is very informative and inspiring as it sheds light on many unjust practices happening in Nigeria and shares guidelines on how to fix the issues. It comes at a very appropriate time when the African youth are invested in Politics and how their countries are run. The book calls for action to the Political elite to do things better and encourages Nigerian youth to actively participate in the country's affairs and assist in eradicating injustices present. Anyone can read this book and feel inspired; the book is worth a read.