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RESEARCH ARTICLE

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE IN NIGERIA`S DEMOCRACY (1999-2019)

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Abstract

The emergence of social movement can be traced early nineteenth century. Besides, the twentieth century also mark a watershed in the development of social movement at the global scale was the fascist and right-wings groups which were regarded as social movements rather than political parties because of their approach and strategies. This study seeks to examine the challenges of social movement in Nigeria's democracy and to examine the implications of civil disobedience on Nigeria's democracy. Moreover, this study is situated within the new social movement theory. Besides, data for this study were collected from various secondary sources such as textbooks, journals and internet sources and content analysis was used to analysed the data collected. The challenges of social movements revealed in this study include stiffer regulations guiding social mobilization; inability to develop a unifying vision, building trust among various communities, prompting extensive involvement, managing comprehensible home-grown and countrywide strategies, training participants dedicated to peaceful action, and resisting suppression. However, the implications of civil disobedience on Nigeria's democracy under present democratic dispensation have been treated with mixed-feeling, as it has resulted in the loss of lives and property. Lastly, this study suggested among other things that good and inclusive governance remain key in achieving sustainable peace and political stability in Nigeria.

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Introduction:-

The emergence of social movement can be traced early nineteenth century. The prominent social movement then was the labour movement that was advocating for improved working condition for the working class and other social movement that emerged during the same period was nationalistic in nature whose goal was to advance for independence various empires across Europe. Moreover, one of the notable social movements that fought remarkably for the legal and political rights of the catholic church was the movement (Heywood 2007:307).

Besides, the twentieth century also mark a watershed in the development of social movement at the global scale was the fascist and right-wings groups which were regarded as social movements rather than political parties because of their approach and strategies. Towards the end of the twentieth century , the new social movement emerged whose ideological dis position was geared towards improving the quality of human lives when compared old what can be

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considered as the traditional social movements whose goal was to enhance social advancement or movements for advancing the plight of the oppressed or disadvantaged in the society.

Today, the new social movement has attracted younger generations from all works of life. However, very few social movements especially women movement like the National Organization for Women (NOW) established in 1966, the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC) and Women Liberation Movement (WLM) which pursue issues relating to equal pay and opportunities. The 1960's and early 1970's social movements have sought to criticize the prevailing capitalist order by promoting libertarian quest for personal fulfilment and self-expression. In addition, in recent decades there has been proliferation of social movements across the world with its membership overlapping and organizational structures that emphasizes decentralization and participation in decision making. More so social movements have been pursuing common goal towards improving human lives. For instance, there was massive protest against the WTO in which there was a violent clash between the police and anti-capitalist anti-globalization protests in what is called the "Battle of Seattle" in 1999. Again, there was social movement mass demonstration in Prague in 2000 and Genoa in 2001 which centred on developmental issues (Heywood 2007:309).

Nevertheless, in Nigeria there has been growing numbers of social movement in various countries in life such as in Nigeria, there are growing number of social movements such as Association for Better Nigeria (ABN), Safe Nigeria Movement (SNM), Coalition for Militant Action (COMA), the Niger Delta Liberation Army (NDLA), Niger Delta People Volunteer Force (NDPVF) led by Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo- Asari, Joint Revolution Council (JRC) which is a coalition of three militant groups namely; the Martyrs Brigade, MEND and NDPVF. Others are the Niger Delta Vigilante Force (NDVF) led by Ateke Tom. Similarly, the Movement for the Survival of the Ijaw Ethnic Nationality in the Niger Delta (MOSIEND), Chikoko Movement and the popular Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), the Ijaw based Federated Niger Delta Ijaw Communities (FNDIC), the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), the Urhobo Union, the Itsekiri General Assembly, Egbesu Boys of Africa (EBA), O'odua Peoples' Congress (OPC) the Movement for Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB)(Oludele2020) and the Islamic Movement of Nigeria under the leadership of Nigeria's Shiites Sheikh Ibraheem Zakzaky. While some of these social movements have served as pressure groups, others have taken the position of hard-line militant activities. However, the repressive nature of the Nigerian Government to opposing views has to a large extent limited the formation of social movements in recent years.

Lastly, since the return of Nigeria to democratic rule in 1999, there has been increasing numbers of social movements in the country with corresponding increase in civil disobedience by Nigerians against the Government. It is against this background, this study seeks to examine the challenges of social movement in Nigeria's Fourth Republic and also examine the impact of social movement and civil disobedience on Nigeria's democracy.

Conceptual Review: Social Movement and Civil Disobedience

There is no down-to-earth definition of social movement in academic literature. According to Heywood (2007:308) "a social movement is particular form of collective behaviour in which the motive to act springs largely from the attitude and aspirations of members typically acting within a loose organizational framework. Tarrow (1982:2) defines movements as collective challenges by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities. Heywood (2007) argued that being a member of any social movements demands that the person shows some level of commitment and political activism than official or card-carrying membership.

Agarwal (2018:414) identified the following basic characteristics of a social movement include: collective challenge, common purpose, solidarity among actors and sustained collective actors similarly, Wilkinson (1972:2) asserts that the major feature of a social movement is the commitment of such movement to a radical change in the society. Thus, Wilkinson (1972) further added that social movements are expected to be "Progressive, democratic forces, describing them as creative and constructive element" in the state (Agarwal, 2008:414 - 415). Some characteristics of social movements "involved in conflictual relations with clearly identified opponents; are linked by dense informal networks; and they share a distinct collective identity" (De la Porta & Diani, 2006: 20).

Leading mass society theorists such as Erich Fromm (1900 – 1980) and Hannah Arendt (1906 – 1975) sees social movements within the context of negative connotation. Fromm (1941) conceive social movement as a "flight from freedom". Erich Fromm and Hannah Arendt sees social movements as an attempt by alienated individual to achieve security and identity through fanatical commitment to a cause and obedience to a (usually fascist) leader. McCarthy

and Zald (1973) conceive social movements as rational and instrumental actors, whose use of informal and unconventional means merely reflects the resources available to them.

Diani (1992:1) defines social movement as a network of informal interactions between a plurality of individual, groups, or organizations engaged in a political or cultural conflict. In terms of the characteristics of social movement Diani (1992) asserts that social movement does not have to use strategies contrary to the political system rather they may use traditional radical unconventional ways of demonstration.

However, Agarwal (2018) argued that Diani (1992) does not agree in same case social movement may be hierarchal in nature like the Green peace movement. By and large, social movement are mobile or are always in active or in action. It is pertinent to note that social movement differs remarkable from mass action such as uprising and rebellion in that social movements requires significant levels of conscious and strategic action in achieving its goal. Besides, social movements are seen include interest groups that spawn political parties trade union and socialist parties which can be regarded within the larger context of labour movement.

However, the term of civil disobedience was first brought to prominent by David Henry Thoreau in 1849. Henry David Thoreau demonstrates individual civil disobedience, by bluntly refusing to pay tax which he considered as unjust laws or policies. He adopted the nonviolent approach based on his conscience. Henry David Thoreau refused was based on the fact that taxes collected by the United States government were used support slavery and to fiancé the US war against Mexico, which Thoreau regarded as unjust. Thoreau (1996, 1849) in his work "Resistance to civil government" on the citizens response to injustice or unfair treatment from the state asserts that when the government requires its citizens to partake in injustice, it is the responsibility of conscientious citizens to disregard it through civil disobedience (Schock, 2013).

In India, the concept of civil disobedience is also known as Satyagraha but was propagated by Gandhi in 1966 (Zain and Yusoff, 2017:129). Zain and Yusoff (2017:129) define civil disobedience as "a form of people dissents against the government or its officers, as there are certain things that they are not satisfied with". However, Schock (2013:277) defines Civil resistance as "the sustained use of methods of nonviolent actionl by civilians engaged in asymmetric conflicts with opponents not averse to using violence to defend their interests". Similarly, he conceives "Nonviolent action refers to non-routine political acts that do not involve violence or the threat of violence" (Schock 2013:277).

Civil disobedience according to Heywood (2007:307) implies law breaking that is justified by reference to "higher" religious, moral or political principles. Again, Heywood (2007) asserts that civil disobedience is an overt and public act; it aims to break a law in order to "make a point", not to get away with it. Fiedler (2009:44) defined civil disobedience "as means of both exerting mass pressure on the political system and as a process through which the participants of a movement perceive and construct an alternative and autonomous democratic power". Besides, Smith (2004) in his submission considered civil disobedience as a public, illegal and political dissent carried out against state or government policies. Also, Sheldon (2005:60) defines civil disobedience as "disobeying or breaking of law for moral, religious, or other reasons, either by an individual or an organized group".

Rawls (1978:405) defines civil disobedience "as non-violent public act that is against the law but is carried out with the goal of changing laws or the government program". Rawls made three submissions under which civil disobedience can be termed as a lawful public act in a liberal-democratic political system. The First condition is that all legal and institutional avenue should have been exhausted. The second condition is that civil disobedience should be only used in overt and tangible cases of injustice especially when every liberal principles of the state, such as equality before the law, are threatened and not just as a reaction to any kind of unjust law or government policy. The third condition is that civil disobedience should always be proportionate to the wrongdoing, and should not be allowed to get a point where it poses danger to the existing legal framework within the liberal political system (Rawls 1978: 405; Fiedler 2009:44).

Habermas (1985: 95-116) in his submission that inclines Rawls position on the condition upon which civil disobedience can be considered as been legitimate. Habermas assigned a more essential role for the condition upon which civil disobedience can be considered as been legitimate under a liberal democratic political system in encouraging public participation within the framework of intrinsic imperfections. Again, Habermas (1985: 95-116) argued that civil disobedience is that aspect and process of coherent negotiation and communiqué by which dispute

or declaration is put forward in the public domain with the purpose of pleasing members of a society's intellect of justice, in a bid of making legitimate legislation and means of rational governance.

Bedau (1991:51) defines civil disobedience as "an act which is illegal, committed openly, non-violently, and conscientiously, within the framework of the rule of law and with the intention of frustrating or protesting against some laws, policies, or decisions of the government (or some of its officers)". While, Quigley and Bahmueller (1991:629) defines civil disobedience as "a deliberate, public, conscientious, and nonviolent act that breaks a law in which the person accepts responsibility and punishment. It is an act of nonviolent protest undertaken to alleviate some injustice, usually with an appeal to some higher principle or law". However, some act of civil disobedience may turn violent if not properly managed.

Therefore, it is pertinent to know that acts of civil disobedience are often justified by those who engaged in it as they often justify their actions by pointing to the fact that they are fighting for injustice meted on them and they have the right to break the law in a bid to express their grievances especially when they considered that they have exhausted every peaceful avenue. Therefore, disobedient citizens tend to act based on what they perceived to be morally right despite their actions in most cases come into conflict with the existing laws of the state.

Literature reviews: Social Movements and Civil Disobedience

There have been numerous social movements that have existed and are existing all over the world that have historically transformed the societies in which they existed. There have been quite a number of some that have failed to perform to expectations. Notwithstanding, considering the significant transformation that social movements have brought on human societies all over the world, scholars and researchers have attempted to understand the origin of social movements, who are the organizers, what are their modus operandi and how they fail.

Besides, studies have shown that social movements do not just occur by chance because, much resource is needed to organize social movements and social movements evolved through various stages before it grows in full blown social movements. In the same vein, citizens of a particular country do not overnight become dissatisfied with government policies or course of action and form social movement with comprehensive ideology that is capable of organizing large-scale protests or toppling prevailing political power in a state (Jonathan Christiansen, 2009).

In recent years, there is a growing academic research on the formation, structure/composition and impact of social movements across the world. According to Agarwal (2018:420-431) social movements are formed when informal and formal network of citizens come together in order to achieve a common goal. He identified reasons while people joined social movements such as personal advantage, group solidarity, and principled commitment to a cause, desire to be part of a group". Today, new social movements have changed its focus from "why" of social movements to "how" of social movements (Tarrow, 1994).

Prominent scholars on social movement studies such as Herbert Blumer, have acknowledged four stages of social movements' lifecycles. The four stages include: "social ferment," "popular excitement," "formalization," and "institutionalization" (De la Porta & Diani 2006:150). Similarly, Jonathan Christiansen (2009) identified four stages of emergence of social movements to include the emergence stage.

Coalescence stage, Bureaucratization stage and Decline stage. The emergence stage is often referred to as the "social ferment" stage. It is the elementary stage of social movements with absence of formal organization. It is also a stage where is widespread discontent among the organizers. The Coalescence stage is the point in evolution of social movements in which they have been able to overcome major hinderances which often difficult for other similar movements this is because social discontent without any proper organization or widespread mobilization of members is just an effort in futility. The Bureaucratization stage is often associated with the "formalization," (De la Porta & Diani, 2006) of every strategy put in place because it requires sophisticated plan of organization and coalition-based strategies. The fourth stage is the Decline stage in which also refer to as the "institutionalization." This does not connote the failure of social movements. Jonathan Christiansen (2009) equally argues that Scholars have rightly observed that social movements may decline for numerous reasons such as Success, Organizational failure, Co-optation, Repression, or Establishment within conventional social order.

Fiedler (2009) in his study of the right to rebel examined the dimensions of civil disobedience with emphasis on the right to rebel in Malaysia. This work is relevant to the body of literature on social movements and civil disobedience

as it expands the scope of recent studies on the reasons for civil disobedience. Schock (2013) in his study of the practice and study of civil resistance traced the origin of contemporary civil resistance to the 19th century of large-scale disobedience organized by nationalists and labour union leaders. The 20th Century civil resistance was remarkable influence of Mohandas Gandhi especially by his nonviolent posture. He argued that the views of some scholars on social movements focus more on nonviolent resistance. Furthermore, he argued that some scholars have made a case for cross-fertilization and synthesis on social movements. In addition, he examined the consequences of nonviolent resistance relative to violent resistance.

However, Chan (2014) in his study on the rise of civil disobedience movements in Hong Kong. He argued that civil disobedience that has manifested in the form of protest have attracted attention of scholars globally but few intellectuals have undertaken some studies on Hong Kong. Chan identified the sociopolitical conditions reasons for civil disobedience in Hong Kong drawing inferences from past protest in Hong Kong from the 1970's to early 2000s. However, Igwe (2012) investigated the theoretical perspective of ethnicity, the nature and significance of social movements in Nigeria's democratization process. He argued that building institutional capacity and deemphasizing ethnic cleavages to ensure social justice is key to achieving sustainable development. On the whole, there is a gap in the literature which has to do in identifying the challenges of social movements in Nigeria especially under democratic dispensation and the impact assessment of social movements in Nigeria. It is against this background this study seeks to make contributions in this research endeavor.

Theoretical Framework

In the literature on social movement and civil disobedience scholars have developed theories for studying social movements and civil disobedience such as collective movement theory; new social movement theory resources, mobilization theory and political opportunity structures Agarwal (2018; Tilly, 1978, McCarthy and Zald 1977). According to the collective movement theory whose proponents includes Karl Max, V.I, Lenin, and Antonio Gramsci argued that citizens joined social movement in a bid to secure (public) collective good. The resource mobilization theory on the other hand argued that social movement actors are deprived, were aggrieved and discontented as such come together to express their discontent. While political opportunity structure theory is argued on the assertion that when citizens encouraged their political leaders to respond and see opportunities that "lowers the cost of collective action revealing potential allies and showing where elites and authorities are vulnerable (Agarwal 2018; Della Porta and Diani 1989).

However, these theories lack the predictive capacity to explain the likes factors that triggered social movements in contemporary Nigeria democratic setting and equally lack the descriptive capacity to explain the implications of civil disobedience on Nigeria's quest for political stability. Therefore, this study adopts the "New Social movement theory that is anchored on the European social theory and political philosophy. The new social movement theory is anchored on six fundamental principles; first, is on symbolic action in civil society. Second, process building of a movement, thirdly post on materialist values. Fourthly, problematization of the process of collective identity. Fifth, socially constructed nature of ideology. Sixth, emphasizes various submerged latent network (Agarwal 2018:419). On the whole, the new social movement theory describes the nature of present socio-political activism especially on symbolic action, self-determination, post materialist values, collective identity, grievance articulation, and the structures they challenge (Agarwal 2018:420).

Challenges of Social Movement in Nigeria's Democracy (1999-2019)

There have been numerous social movements that have existed and are existing all over the world that have histrionically transformed the societies in which they existed. We admit that quite a number of social movements have performed below expectations. Notwithstanding, considering the significant transformation that social movements have brought on societies all over the world, scholars and researchers have attempted to understand the origin of social movements, who are the organizers, what are their modus operandi and how they fail.

Besides, studies have shown that social movements do not just occur by chance because, much resource is needed to organize social movements and social movements evolved through various stages before it grows in full blown social movements. In the same vein, citizens of a particular country do not overnight become dissatisfied with government policies or course of action and form social movement with comprehensive ideology that is capable of organizing large-scale protests or toppling prevailing political power in a state (Jonathan Christiansen, 2009).

The emergence of social movements in recent years in Nigeria has further demonstrated the fragmentation of the nature of power distribution, values and collective identity in Nigeria. But in the developed societies, old order is characterized by class-based politics that has been transformed into political arrangement in which there is the decentralization of power among the various competing groups in the society (Heywood 2007:309). In the words of Laclau and Mouffe (1985) the emergence of social movement in recent time further promote "democratic pluralism" in which bureaucratization that characterized the old political order is been questioned by the activities of social movements by promoting the decentralization of political powers among various groups in the society.

Today, many Nigerians across the six geo-political zones have been oppressed thus making them to organized themselves into social groups in a bid demand for what is rightfully theirs, by agitating using various nonviolent means. This fight for justice and freedom have manifested in the form of civil disobedience/civil resistance especially since the return of Nigeria to democratic rule on May 29, 1999 in the form of mass demonstrations, protests, strikes and boycotts and various nonviolent means. Moreover, today social movements in Nigeria are faced with some challenges especially from democratic regimes that are resistance to oppositions and criticisms. For instance, the President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration (1999-2007) persecuted social movements and their leaders in a bid to frustrate them from criticizing government policies and programmes or exert pressure on the government on certain policies made or policies to be made.

One of the major challenges hindering the effective of social movements under contemporary democratic dispensation is the stiffer regulations guiding social mobilization. This is because action or inaction waged by social movements is treated with suspicions especially when affects the interest of the government in power are usually termed as civil disobedience. The President Muhammadu Buhari administration on July 31, 2020 directed the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) to deregistered the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF), Ohaneze Ndi Igbo and Afenifere and other socio-cultural groups in Nigeria as a measure to ensure peaceful coexistence in Nigeria. This arguably was to discourage any form of ethnic incitement that will affect the political stability of the country (www.infoengineblog.com/2020/07/breaking-president-buhari-deregisters.html?m=1).

Today, the fear of been arrested and jailed by the President Muhammadu Buhari led government who often deploy the Department of State Security Service (DSSS) to arrest and detained as well as possible charged to court any Nigerian culpable of inciting other Nigerians in a bid to obstruct the peace and stability of the country has further discouraged massive demonstrations and protests across the country despite evidence of the rising state of insecurity and poverty in the country like in the North East that have been ravaged by the Boko Haram insurgency; the North West has its own challenge of banditry and cattle rustling as well as the North Central geo-political zone that has been ravaged by ethno-religious and politically motivated violence.

Hardy (2016) in his submission identified some challenges facing social movements to include the inability to develop unifying vision, building trust among various communities, prompting extensive involvement, managing comprehensible home-grown and countrywide strategies, training participants dedicated to peaceful action, and resisting suppression. These challenges are not different from what is obtainable in Nigeria as social movement are faced with similar challenges that has made them incapacitated or ineffective to be able to function as a viable social force to recon with determining the power distribution in the country.

Impact assessment of social movements on Nigeria's Democracy(1999-2019)

Since the return of Nigeria to democratic rule on May 29, 1999, Nigeria has witnessed the upsurge of various social movements that have resulted in civil disobedience due to increasing failure in governance that has triggered mass dissatisfaction from various parts of the country. It is pertinent to note however that assessing the impact of social movements in any society is difficult when compare to other informal political organizations like political parties and interest groups due to the wider nature of their goals and the influence they exert on the society through various physical cultural strategies.

However, women movement and environmental movements have been able to make remarkably political changes through the employment of cultural values and oral attitudes (Heywood, 2007). Besides, the failure of democracy to deliver its dividends triggers the emergence of social movement in Nigeria's Fourth Republic today. This is also attributed to globalization that is now considered as new factor that trigger the emergence of new social movement which has come to stay, as citizens will continue to make a demand on the political system due to increasing level of political consciousness leading to a quest for social justice.

Civil disobedience has manifested in the form of individual or moral disobedience and organized or social civil disobedience (Quigley & Bahmueller (1991). But the organized or social civil disobedience is relevant to this study, because our assessment of social movements in Nigeria is within the context of mass protest and demonstration to show the discontents of Nigerians against the government policies or pressuring the government to change their proposed policies or existing policies perceived to be injurious to the citizens and the society at large. Fiedler (2009) have argued that social movements in recent years have employed a number of strategies to achieve their goal. These strategies involve the use of civil disobedience to exert pressure on policy makers and forming an alternative means to acquire democratic power.

In recent years, considering the improvement in Information Communication Technology (ICT) civil disobedience have been taking place in the social media against government policies in Nigeria such as the Federal Government directives to lockdown interstate movement in a bid to curtail the spread of the Corona Virus. Besides, the social media especially Facebook and Twitter have been used in recent years to mobilize Nigerians with common interest across the country to criticize government policies, or express discontents to the government or its officers with a view to pressurize the government to change perceived unjust or unfair laws or policies that have negative impact on the citizens.

On the 1st of January, 2012 there was a massive protest across major cities like Lagos, Abuja, and Kano by Nigerians with the name OccupyNigeria following the removal of fuel subsidy by President, Dr Goodluck Ebele Jonathan led administration which increased fuel pump price from ₦65 to ₦141 per litre and from ₦100 to ₦200 on the black market. The outcome of this protest resulted in a 30% reduction in petrol pump price to ₦97. This shows that the protest influenced the President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan's administration decision to remove the subsidy on petrol (<https://techpoint.africa/2019/11/08/social-movements-twitter-nigeria/>).

Similarly, on the 14th April, 2014, about 276 female students were vehemently abducted from the Government Girls Secondary School, Chibok, Borno State by the Boko Haram terrorist group. Later about 57 of female students escaped from the trucks while the Boko Haram terrorists made away with 219 students. Moreover, with the effort of social movements in Nigeria with the Hash Tag #BringBackOurGirls and international pressure so far 107 girls have been found while 112 are still in the custody of the Boko Haram terrorists.

There was a civil disobedience against the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) was created in 1992 as a crime-fighting unit of the Nigeria Police Force in 2017 over their incessant cases of brutality, extortion, high-handedness, and unlawful arrests. There were appreciable impacts as the government signed a number of bills into law to help curb the menace. On October 7, 2019, BBC's investigative arm in Africa, BBC Africa Eye, released an hour-long documentary highlighting cases of sexual harassment by lecturers of two West African universities — University of Lagos and University of Ghana. The impact of the documentary, which implicated four lecturers in these universities, was felt immediately (<https://techpoint.africa/2019/11/08/social-movements-twitter-nigeria/>).

The Federal Government of Nigeria in 2019 under the President Muhammadu Buhari led administration proposed the Rural Grazing Area (RUGA) pilot project across the federation but it was vehemently rejected by Nigerians and it was suspended. On the 3rd of August, 2019 Omoyele Sowore was arrested by the Department of State Security for his proposed mobilization of Nigerians for a revolution against the President Muhammadu Buhari led administration due to failure of his government (<https://techpoint.africa/2019/11/08/social-movements-twitter-nigeria/>).

On the whole, the impact of social movements on Nigeria's democracy have been treated with mix-feelings. While in some cases, social movements have made significant impact on Nigerian democracy by galvanizing supports against government policies perceived to be detrimental on the living conditions of Nigerians. In other areas, social movements have not achieved the desired impact as their activities are often categorized as Civil disobedience and are often suppressed by the government of the day who uses state apparatus like the police, DSS and the military to arrest protesters and charged them to court for various offenses ranging from mutiny and treason.

Conclusion:-

The emergence of new social movements across the world has helped in checkmating the activities of the government. Some social movements have achieved their goals while others have not achieved their goals due to multiplicity of factors. Therefore, seeks to examine the challenges of social movement in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

and also examine the impact of social movements and civil disobedience on Nigeria's democracy. This study revealed that social movements are faced with several challenges such as stiffer regulations guiding social mobilization; inability to develop a unifying vision, building trust among various communities, prompting extensive involvement, managing comprehensible home-grown and countrywide strategies, training participants dedicated to peaceful action, and resisting suppression. However, the impact of social movements under present democratic dispensation have been treated with mixed-feeling, while some social movements are making remarkable progress towards achieving their goals, quite several other social movements are suppressed by the government. This has led to the death of many social movements in Nigeria in recent years. Therefore, this study makes some recommendations that will help strengthen the formation of social movements in Nigeria in achieving their goals.

Recommendations:-

Firstly, the government at levels of governance should tolerate opposing view in governance. This is because, democracy allows for the aggregation and articulation of divergent views within the state.

Secondly, good and inclusive governance remain key in achieving sustainable peace and political stability in Nigeria.

Thirdly, social movements leaders and the Federal Government of Nigeria should be allowed to operate within the ambit of laid down democratic rules and regulations in Nigeria.

Finally, the Federal Government of Nigeria and the state governments in Nigeria should be able to differentiate between the militant social movements and those that are demanding for good governance in Nigeria to be able to know ways of dealing with them.

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