

# The Role Of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) In Democratic Consolidation In Nigeria

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*Abstract: This paper examines the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings on democracy, civil societies and democratic consolidation, discuss the retrospective genesis of civil society groups towards democratic struggle in Nigeria since colonial and post colonial era. In similar vein, it also takes a look at the roles civil societies play in consolidating nascent democracies and assesses the factors militating and/or strengthening civil societies towards consolidating democratic processes. Related literatures described civil societies as institutions that form the basis of a functioning society composed of the voluntary social relationships, civic and social organizations that is not part of and distinct from the structures of a state. Irrespective of a state's political system the relations between state, the market and civil society determine the character of a society and its structure. Thus, constitute the entirety of a society. In other words, modern democracies and civil societies are not only interconnected but inseparable. The reason for this cannot be far-fetched from the fact that the smooth functioning of every democratic system depends to a large extent on the nature, character, composition, organisation, ideals and institutionalization of civil society group. Therefore, institutionalization of strong civil society organisation begets a formidable democratic consolidation.*

**Keywords: Democracy, Civil Society and consolidation**

## I. INTRODUCTION

Democracy has been described as a political system in which the people of a country rule through any form of government they choose to establish. In modern democracies, supreme authority is exercised for the most part by representatives elected by popular suffrage. The representatives may be supplanted by the electorate according to the legal procedures of recall and referendum, and they are, at least in principle, responsible to the electorate. In many democracies, such as the United States, both the executive head of government and the legislature are elected. In typical constitutional monarchies such as the United Kingdom and Norway, only the legislators are elected, and from their ranks a cabinet and a prime minister are chosen (Pious, 2008).

Civil society organisation, on the other hand, is composed of the totality of voluntary social relationships, civic and social organizations, and institutions that form the basis of a functioning society, as distinct from the force-backed

structures of a state (regardless of that state's political system) and the commercial institutions of the market. Together, state, market and civil society constitute the entirety of a society, and the relations between these three components determine the character of a society and its structure (Centre for Civil Society, (2006). This suggest that, civil society organisations exist in virtually all societies as they are part of the general populace composing of clubs, associations, unions and the likes.

As Lester, et al (1999) argued, that these organizations have attracted so much attention in recent years due, in large part, to the widespread crisis of the state that has been underway for two decades or more in virtually every part of the world, a crisis that has manifested itself in a serious questioning of traditional social welfare policies in both the developed and developing world. Owing to the disappointments over the progress of state-led development in significant parts of the developing world, to the collapse of the experiment in state socialism in the developed world, and to

the concerns about the environmental degradation that continues to threaten human health and safety everywhere. This led to an increase in questioning the state which has focused new attention, and new expectations, on the civil society organizations that operate in societies throughout the world.

Also contributing to this development is the sheer growth in the number and scale of these organisations. Indeed, a veritable “global associational revolution” appears to be underway, a massive upsurge of organized private, voluntary activity in literally every corner of the world.

Prompted in part by growing doubts about the capability of the state to cope on its own with the social welfare, developmental, and environmental problems that face nations today, this growth of civil society organizations has been stimulated as well by the communications revolution of the past two decades and by the striking expansion of educated middle class elements who are frustrated by the lack of economic and political expression that has confronted them in many places (Lester, et al 1999).

It is with this in mind that, this paper aimed at discussing the theoretical and conceptual explanations surrounding the concepts of democracy and civil society organisations, assesses their relationships and in essence, examines some of the ways through which civil society organisations help in consolidating democracies, with particular reference to Nigeria’s democratizing process.

## II. DEMOCRACY: CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL EXPLORATIONS

Democracy is the most familiar concept in many political discourses which has not only attracted more attention and fascinated considerable academic and intellectual dialogue than any other social and political concept in the past two centuries, in fact all other politically and socially significant issues like social justice, human rights, rule of law, good governance, poverty and development are discussed under the purview of democracy. Paradoxically democracy has generated more academic and intellectual polemics than any other social and political concepts in recent time. This is because the concept is grossly ideologically loaded and assumed an honorific title (Owolabi, 1993).

Today, there is hardly any country making a public statement that is not government by the people (Kaur, 2007). It is uncommon to see regimes with authoritarian character and fascist traits laying claim to democracy. According to a report from the Economist Intelligent Unit (2010) 55 countries constituting about 36% of the world population purported to be democratic are classified as authoritarian regimes. But despite the vagueness in its meaning and ambiguities in its practice attempt have been made by scholars to define the concept.

Joseph Schumpeter defined democracy as a system for arriving at political decision in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote (Diamond 1999). In a similar vein, Robert Bobbie sees democracy as a cluster of rules permitting the broadest surest, direct and indirect participation of the

majority of the citizens in political decisions. For example, in a decisions affecting the whole community. In this context, democracy is governance that involves the widest participation either through election or through the administration of the accepted or adopted policies (Kaur, 2007). At a minimum democracy according to Bratton and Vande Walle (1997) can be defined as a form of political regime in which citizens choose, in competitive elections, the occupant of the top political office of the state.

Conservatively democracy is a combination of two Greek words; *demos* and *kratein*, which means “people rule or rule by the people”. Democracy in this since is primarily concern with who should rule and who decide who rules. By implication democracy means the acceptance of the basic equality of men as humans and the basic responsibility of all adult men and woman for their own destiny. For Karl Popper democracy means, the ability of the people to send parking an unwanted government through majority vote. This is because in a democracy the will of the people is the basis and legitimacy of power and authority which is to advance their interest (Agyeman, 2003). In this regards, popular sovereignty is the hall mark of democracy. It is the extension of the sovereign wills of the people to every facet and socio-political importance or the general politics. Agyeman (2003) refers to it as “true or moral democracy”. However acceptability and participatory government through the majority principle is limited in the practices since not every citizen can actively participate in the decision making and running of the government.

On account of this, the principle of representation is very critical for modern democracy. This is because, contemporary states involve large demographic and population sizes, multiculturalism, multiplicity and complexity of interests, maturity and age related conditions for active participation (Chidam, 2003). Hence, democracy in its classical sense is the principle of popular participation which in the maximum sense has become practically impossible today because of the size of contemporary polity.

In order to overcome the challenges posed by the size, complexity and multicultural nature of modern states, political theorists have come out with different philosophic models and variant of democracy all of which could not be discussed here. According to David (2006) democracy theory is in a state of flux as there are almost as many differences among thinkers within each of the major stands of political analysis, as there are traditions themselves. Broadly however, democracy can be seen within the prism of participatory liberal or representatives and social democracy. Participatory democracy tend to create opportunities for the participation of citizens which is at the very heart of democracy especially citizens committed to democratic value mindful of their civil duties. Unknowingly, that those who become involved in political activities are the life blood of any modern democratic system.

Democracy experienced great transformation by the beginning of the nineteenth century when it was beginning to be thought of as the right of citizens to participate in the determination of the collective will of the people through the medium of elected representatives. Participatory democracy complements and strengthens representative democracy where decision making remains first and foremost legitimized by the

legislator. Participation is an indispensable complement of representative democracy.

The theory of representative democracy fundamentally shifted the term of reference to democracy through the practical limit that a sizeable citizenry imposes on democracy, which had been the focus of so much critical attention, were practically eliminated (Held 2003). To Held representative democracy could now be celebrated as both accountable and feasible government, potentially stable over great territories and time spans.

Modern liberal and liberal democratic theories have constantly sought to justify sovereign power of the state, while at the same time justifying limit on that power. Liberal or representative democracy is a system of rule embracing elected officials who undertake the oath to represent the interest or views of citizens within the framework of the rule of law. To be term as liberal democratic, regimes must meet a certain standard of electoral accountability and provided some level of constitutionally protected liberty to their citizens (Vernon, 2001). This is the limited sense in which many people have conceived democracy today and one which has gained wider acceptance among the countries of the world (Ogundiya, 2008). Liberal democracy therefore is a constitutional political theory which serves to justify a political system that rest on a combination of certain practices namely: the accountability and restraint of government.

Since the advent of the irresistible third wave in the early seventies in transitional democracies, scholars have paid considerable attention to three general goals. Fostering free and fair competitive elections, held among multiple parties and candidates building civil society, with programme designed to assist grassroots organizations, citizen advocacy groups and independent media and strengthening the core institution of the state by encouraging independent judiciaries as well as effective legislatures and efficient bureaucracy (Norris, 2005).

Despite the concerted efforts to ensure the sustenance of democracy in the developing countries and other new democracies, the wind of reversal has considerably eroded the gains of third wave. Much of these winds reversal are a function of underdeveloped democratic structures and institutions within which civil society appear very critical. Before we authenticate the validity or otherwise of this argument, let us examine the conceptual explanation beneath civil societies and basic pre requisites of democratic consolidation.

### III. CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

The attempts to theorize or define civil society are replete with and even marred by difficulties and disagreements. Over time and sequel to the above, numerous and varying perspectives over its usage have developed and competed for attention (Guyer, 1994). As Brattan (1994) observed in reference to the definitional and theoretical disarray of civil society, few social and political concepts have traveled so far in their life and changed their meaning so much, such is the state of its variability. That while some conceive the civil society in terms that depicts it as being engaged in

antagonistic relationships with the state, others perceive it as having mutually beneficial and cooperative engagement with the state. Thus while some scholars refer to it in oppositional terms as either the private sphere of the material, cultural and political activities resisting the incursion of the state.

Stephen (1984) perhaps has propounded what is obviously a neutral definition of civil society. He sees civil society as an area where manifold social movements and civic associations from all classes attempt to constitute themselves and advance their interest. Otite and Kawonise (1997) on their part hold that, civil society is not merely a system of social relationships but also a social space in which different associations, unions, clubs and other groups mediate between the state and the families and individuals. As Kawonise (1997) put it else where, it is those "intermediary and autonomous organization which function and sometimes flourish in the space that exist between the state and the household. Furthermore Schmitter (1999:18) similarly states that;

*By civil societies, I mean the presence of intermediary organization and arrangements that lie between the primary units of society – individuals, families - extended families, clans, ethnic group of various kind, villages units and the ruling collective institutions and agencies of the society. All the key properties of civil society hinge on the presence of these intermediaries between the primary units of the system, that is the governing institutions, the all embracing and institutions as a whole.*

Civil society organizations, according to the London Schools of Economics Centre for Civil Society (2004) refers to the arena of uncoerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. In theory its institutional form are distinct from those of the state, family and market. Though in practices, the boundaries between state, civil society and market are often complex blurred and negotiated. Civil society embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. Scheduler et al (1999) defines civil society as a broad ensemble of non state actors which include citizens, social movements, voluntary associations and independent media.

Civil society generally consists of trade or industrial unions, professional associations and Human rights associations. For example, Nigerian Bar Associations (NBA) Nigerian Medical Association (NMA), Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC). Human Rights Associations, such as the Committee for the Defence Human Rights (CDHR) as well as pro-democracy groups such as, Campaign for Democracy (CD), Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) and the press. These groups have made themselves relevant in consolidating Nigeria's democracy, not only in terms of what they have been able to achieve for members but for the larger society.

The NLC for instance successfully negotiated a new premium wage with Shagari administration in 1981 after an effective general strike (Ademiga, 2006). It is also note worthy that due to the activities of NMA and NANS, workers enjoyed improved salary package as well as Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) relief packages in 1989 (Abimbola 2002, and Adenugba, 2006). However, political developments in the country of 80<sup>s</sup> and early 90<sup>s</sup> had toughened some pressure

groups in order to sustain and attain a stable democratic order in the country. The explosion on the growth in the structure and operation of civil society organisations have been influenced by cruel tyranny and debilitating economic crises from the 1980s in Nigeria.

#### IV. PREREQUISITES OF DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION

The concept of democratic consolidation has become a pivotal concept in comparative politics (Schedler, 2001 and Olaleye, 2004). Originally, the idea of democratic consolidation was first introduced as a concept for addressing the challenges of regime stabilization and provides an answer to the vital question; when are democracies secure from breakdown? (Olaleye, 2004). There seem to be a serious confusion about the precise meaning of democratic consolidation. But for clarity and in order to avoid analytical confusion, this paper will adopt the classical and most widespread definition that considers a democratic regime to be consolidated when it is likely to endure (O. Donnell, et al, 1996).

Collier suggested that, approaches to defining consolidation fall into three categories; actor centered, event centered and institutional (internal and external). The actor centered approach focuses on the willingness of the significant actors to work within democratic rules. The event approach looks at elections or constitutional ratifications as marker. An internal institutional approach focuses on the degree of institutionalization while an external approach concentrates on the duration of new political institutions and the extent of meaningful changes there in. In a more stable and established way, democracy could be understood as establishing permanent institutions and arrangements for the functioning of democracy or alternatively as eliminating undemocratic features of a post authoritarian system (Power and Powers 1988).

The basic ingredient for democratic sustenance is the legitimacy which democracy enjoys as a system of governance. For democracy to be legitimized it must make sense to the people. The process of legitimizing democracy is often times refer to as consolidation which is determined by a number of factors. Scholars have argued that movement towards democracy depends on the existence, within the society, of certain pre conditions that may be economic, social or political in nature. The development paradigm for instance is associated with democratic stability or instability towards economic growth and modernization (Lipset, 1963 and Vanhanem, 1997). These scholars hypothesized that, the level of a country's economic development independently affects the orientations of the citizens and fundamentally their psycho-political perceptions of the system. These orientations have direct linkage to whether the citizen will support or withdraw their allegiance to the system. In essence, though this approach emphasized the role of the economy, it does not fail to appreciate the impact of its cultural legitimacy and suitable institutions (Kaur, 2007).

Other theorist eulogize the social factors in terms of societal cohesion, homogeneity, integrations and religious

harmony prevailing in society as essential for maintaining stable and enduring democracy. For Jean Stuart Mill, for a democracy to endure there must be shared values, the heterogeneity prevailing in terms of religion or ethnicity was regarded by him as factor that make regime less stable (Prezworski et al, 2000). Within the context of Nigerian experience, this argument could be adjudged to be valid. Since 1999 when the country returned to democracy, particularly the electoral type, ethnic chauvinism and intermittent religious crises have posed serious challenges to the nations' flexible democracy. Politically, irresolute issues like militancy in the Niger Delta area, the *Boko Haram* (Western education is a sin) in the North East and some part of North Central political regions, the ethno religious crises in Jos the capital of Plateau state among others, have hampered democratic stability.

#### V. CIVIL SOCIETY IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

##### COLONIAL ERA

Civil society organisations as an indispensable mechanism for re-structuring governmental policy toward the yearning and aspiration of the masses is as old as a state itself, but the concept begets waves with the emergence of democratic movement. Ify-Amadiume (1995) and Stamp (1986) identify civil societies that existed during colonial era to include, women's organisations such as market women organisation, farmers group and hawker's organisations which were primarily established for economic objectives, but consequently, they played political, social and developmental roles. During the anti-colonial struggle for instance, they were not only embarked on radical protest but also contributed materially to the formation of nationalist parties (Awe, 1992).

Organized labour also had cause to participate in partisan politics, particularly with its affiliation to the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroun (NCNC) in 1944. The outcome of this affiliation was the success of the general strike of 1945. A similar situation came about in 1964 when workers not only demanded improved wages but also made a number of political demands. The climax of this development was the formation of the Nigerian Labour Party (NLP) by Michael Imoudu and Eskor Toyo in 1964 (Abimbola, 2002).

##### POST COLONIAL ERA

In the post colonial era, civil society groups through individual and collective actions were able to influence policies and effect economic changes favorable to member. The NLC, for instance, successfully negotiated a new minimum wage with Shagari administration in 1981 after an effective strike. As regards political issues and democratization, it was in the 90s, the Babangida era, that civil society became very vibrant and dynamic. In the wake of flagrant abuse of fundamental human rights, several Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) emerged, for example, Constitutional Rights Project (CRP), Civil Liberty Organisation (CLO), National Association of Democracy (NDL) lawyers, Universal Defenders of Democracy (UDD) e. t. c.

Campaign for democracy was an umbrella organization for all Human Rights Organisations and pro-democracy groups, because, it spearheaded the protest against the annulment of the June 12 election results. These groups waged legal and political battles against obnoxious decrees, criticized military rule and on several occasions the Babangida led junta coup was challenged in the court of law for its obvious plot to scuttle its own transition to civil rule. These groups were so intent in eradicating military rule in Nigeria that they fought for it, despite incessant harassment, intimidation, arrest and detentions of members. Activist like Gani Fawehimi, Dr Beeko Ransome Kuti, and Femi Falana were hunted, harassed and incarcerated by the junta. Yet despite the pain inflicted on them, they refused to be cowed and their personal sacrifices and selflessness marked them out and endeared them to the public.

It was the selflessness of these activists that earned them not only public admiration but precipitated mass revolt against the military regime, a revolt never seen in the country before. Another group within the civil society to reckon with is the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). Initially, ASUU primarily focused on pressurizing the government into ensuring the adequate funding of research and accommodations for students, the maintenance and safeguarding of university autonomy and improvement in working conditions. However, it became involved in political activities and democratic struggle, an instance was when ASUU embarked on a strike action between May and November 1993 claiming that the reason for the strike was government refusal to honor its 1992 agreement with the union, however amongst its demands was for the annulled elections of June 12, 1993 to be revalidated. (Abimbola, 2002).

With Babangida's departure and the installment of the Interim National Government (ING), another protest was embarked upon, and this time, stay at home tactics were used. Nigerians responded to the call to stay at home, and offices, markets, institutions of learning were closed. Legal luminaries like Gani Fawehimi denounced the ING and made predictions about the premature death of the succeeding interim government.

*Whether Shonekan likes it or not, God has condemned his region as the shortest in history of Nigeria, and it will suddenly be terminated by God, because June 12 has a connotation and denotation that Nigeria has not understood* (Adenugba, 2006:122).

It is pertinent to note that, the civil societies' activities in Nigeria contributed massively to the departure of Babangida regime and the collapsed of ING. During the Abacha government, the struggle went to the extent of attracting the attention of the international community which slammed sanctions on the then military government. Nigeria was also suspended from the Common Wealth and threatened with expulsion if she did not put in place a democratically elected civilian government within two years of her suspension.

#### CIVIL SOCIETY AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION

As previously stated, civil society comprises private businesses; media organisations; political parties; non-

governmental organisations (NGOs) or voluntary associations, or more generally civil society organisations (CSOs); interest organisations, such as trade unions, confederations of employers and businesses, farmers' associations, etc. Special attention is drawn to the question whether the concept of civil society and its diverse operationalisations emanating from European and North American contexts travel well to empirical realities elsewhere (Lars, and Arne, 2009).

Suchit (Undated) argued that, the possibility of consolidating democracy is one the challenges facing young democracies, e.g. in developing countries like Nigeria, which are weak, vulnerable and inefficient and as such need to be strengthened and consolidated. But, the question is: how can civil society contribute to the democratic consolidation in those nascent democracies?. For him, democracy is consolidated when a reversal to authoritarianism is impossible. For some, democracy is consolidated when it is made stable, vibrant, efficient and accountable. At any rate, it is a complex process and the factors contributing to democratic consolidation include structural and cultural dimensions. Commitment to democracy by organizations and groups is also essential for consolidating democracy. Political parties, social movements, civil society organizations, interest groups, and other social organizations can play an important role in strengthening and deepening democracy. They can serve as a mechanism for political participation and mobilization, disseminating democratic principles and norms. Civil society organizations can help consolidate democracy in a number of ways.

As Diamond (Cited in Suchit, Undated) points out, civil society can play a role in checking, monitoring and restraining the exercise of power by the state and holding it accountable. This function can reduce political corruption, which is pervasive in emerging democracies. It can force the government to be more accountable, transparent, and responsive to the public, which strengthens its legitimacy. Civil-society organizations can play a vital role in making the elites and the mass public more committed to democracy by disseminating democratic principles and ideas. Organizations that are involved specifically in the protection of civil rights and freedoms, as well as political reform, can be particularly important in this regard. Another role civil-society organizations play in consolidating democracy is by stimulating political participation. In several emerging democracies, voluntary political participation is not always high. Political indifference and apathy may slow down the consolidation process. Civil-society organizations can supplement the role of political parties in encouraging people to get involved in politics, especially as voters in elections. Political participation strengthens the legitimacy and the institutionalization of democratic government, which are essential for consolidation.

Civil society's role in empowering the people is well recognized. Civil-society organizations in many democracies perform the function of representing the interests and asserting the rights and power of the people. In several new democracies such as Indonesia and Thailand, many interest groups are loosely organized and unable to articulate their interests. Civil-society organizations can come in and help interest groups and people to fight more effectively for their

interests, thereby empowering them. Civil-society organizations also can train future political leaders. Those who are involved in the activities of such groups learn how to organize and motivate people, publicize programs, reconcile conflicts and build alliances. This teaches people to deal efficiently with political challenges and can mold competent political leaders.

Nie, Powell and Prewitt also investigate the democratic functions of civil society in terms of its effects on political participation and portrayed that, as the density and complexity of economic and secondary organizations increases, greater proportions of the population find themselves in life situations that lead to increased political information, political awareness, sense of personal political efficacy, and other relevant attitudes. These attitude changes, in turn, lead to increases in political participation (Nie, Powell, and Prewitt, 1969 cited in Gang, 1998). Civil society has yet another democratic function, that of facilitating democratic transitions.

However, Lars and Arne (2009) argued that, the significance of civil society in terms of democratic consolidation is somewhat more disputed. That what does appear does not exist, it is more often said than done. Thus different approach is needed the study. Although many CSOs no doubt play a constructive consolidating role while the activities of others make no difference one way or the other, while others may have a profoundly anti-democratic function. Suffice it to say that some CSOs play an ambiguous role in the democratic consolidation process. Therefore, there is a need for empirical investigation in order to ascertain whether or not civil society makes a significant contribution toward democratic consolidation. For instance, the right to associate and to form organisations is one of the fundamental rights in a democracy. The problem is to establish and document the mechanism whereby civil society contributes to democratic governance or to its opposite, and, in the context of newly democratized African states, to ascertain how easily the concept travels to that geographical area.

Meanwhile, the relationship between civil society and democracy is often expressed in citizen participation through electoral institutions and processes. Civil society organisations mobilize support for issues and channel the concerns into the political system via elected representatives and links with political parties or in the shape of varieties of social corporatism. Recent strands of democratic theory broadens this perspective and may be seen as a response to a perceived democratic malaise scenario emanating from studies of declining electoral turnout, the exodus of members from political parties, and the increasing distrust of political institutions and political elite (Lars and Arne, 2009).

## VI. CHALLENGES FACING CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

One of the pressing strategic challenge facing CSO networks today is leadership. This is because in early years of life of any small organisation, it is difficult to disassociate organisational performance from the performance of the leader and as such, the performance of the coordinator will be reflected in the performance of the network. More often, too

many demands are placed on one person's shoulders, and he is expected to excel at everything, while only few of the CSO coordinators are strong on planning and administration as they tend to react to events, rather than operate proactively as leaders. Once an organisation is established, its performance will depend strongly on its leadership, more than the members. Hence, the leadership in these CSO is still highly dependent on a small number of key individuals, which makes them more vulnerable. Other networks have clearly shown that when a network has a poorly performing coordinator, the performance of the whole network is compromised. Another challenge is funding sources and sizes which evidently influence how CSO networks behave. They look almost exclusively to governments either at local/national or international level for funding sources for their support, rather than from members, and only few of them claims to charge fees such as membership fees and etc from their members. Consequently, this undermines most CSO networks' sense of accountability to their members (James and Malunga, 2006).

Similarly, Makumbe (1998) laments that, there certainly exists an African civil society which is actively seeking to raise the living standards of citizens as well as to promote and protect their rights and interests. The lack of such crucial resources as finance and an environment conducive to civic activity are major inhibitions to the development of Africa's civil society. In combating these problems, Africa will need external donor support in various forms for quite some time to come.

The challenges posed to civil societies are both internal and external challenges as they become more active players in the processes of social, political and economic development. These challenges vary across countries, because of the variety of external contexts in which they are played out and the variety of civil society organizations and actors that are involved. For instance, the nature of civil society and its relations to the other sectors can also generate problems and dilemmas that undermine the ability of civil society organizations to carry out their social missions. It is worth noting that many of these challenges are exacerbated as civil society organizations become more important actors; and as long as they are acting on the margins of social development, they remain relatively affected by such pressures. Moreover, when they become central players in social, political and economic transformations—as in the last decade for many countries—the problems posed by many of these issues become more salient (David, and Archana, 1999).

Other normative challenges facing civil society organisation include among others, the inability to influence the attitudes and values of people in their host societies there by making the populace appreciate and value their activities, intense effects of corruption, political inclination, accountability, dealing with human resource and what have you.

## VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We have disused the inextricable connections and theoretical expositions underpinning democracy, civil society and democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Generally the paper

concluded that, the role of civil society organizations remain utmost imperative not only in checkmating and re-structuring government policies towards the yearnings and aspirations of the people, but also as an indisputable tool towards democratic consolidation. For instance, Edwards (2009) lamented that, there is no doubt that civil society plays a significant role in Africa's democratization process and development initiatives. It is therefore the role of large organisations such as TrustAfrica to safeguard the space for African civil society by finding ways in which civil society organizations can be protected, strengthened and made more effective in their endeavors. However, in spite of the above functions, the identified certain factors militating against the success of civil society organization which among others include, the disguised nature of most of the existing civil society organization, where some pretend to be humanitarian in nature but only exist for financial and selfish purposes. Some are post government why some exist in seeking for political folders e.t.c.

Nevertheless, for a strong and independent CSO, for the organisations to functions effectively and be capable of strengthening our democracies there by bringing a desired change in our societies toady, the CSO should be composed of individuals of good and exemplary character who are ready to serve beyond their personal aggrandizement there by impacting positively on the lives of the populace. Their source of finances should also come, if possible, from the members of the organisations through levies and contributions in order to make them as independent as possible.

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