

Democracy and development in uganda history essay



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The topic of Presentation, is solicited and linked by the presenter, to a variety of suggested development topics, which bear profound concern and relevance to the concept of holistic human development, based on un diluted Democratic Governance.

Holistic Development in general, as duly embracing the social and economic growth, in relation to developing countries, such as Uganda, bears a significant brotherhood, as well impacting relationship to undiluted democracy, where it is taken and emphasized as an inevitable basis and root of holistic human development.

The selected topic of Democracy and Development significantly connote as well implies that democracy, in an un diluted form, is an inevitable basis of holistic human corporate development and that such development, should be rooted in the attributes of good, accountable, transparent, as well selfless positive democratic governance of a people.

It is, therefore, to be noted that the functional practice and presence of democracy, or the profound lack of it, or presence of the same, in diluted unconventional forms and content, in a developing country, such as Uganda, in the defined aspects of human corporate, political, social and even cultural endeavors, does also add up to, as well imply a negative reversal of that development, whatever it may be.

It is to be noted further, that holistic development denotes as well as implies the physical and spiritual growth of holistic human endeavors and efforts, in the inevitable context of morally good democratic corporate governance of a people. This means that human beings, duly struggle and work for holistic

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development, as well as ensuing growth, in both the physical and spiritual worlds, as the governance and leadership structures, the implementation of such structures, their functional lay outs, practices and operations, as well as leadership styles, are democratic and morally rooted in undiluted democracy, for democratic institutions, of moral democratic orientation and setting.

Note the rationalization, as duly enunciated and amplified above, is quite perceivable in Uganda, as an African country, within the prescribed scenario of a developing world, (call it underdeveloped for some relative emphasis). The researcher and writer of the concept paper, is a Ugandan, working and coming from Uganda, for which this paper of presentation, demonstrates and amplifies, for international consumption, understanding, analysis, appraisal, evaluation, in addition to taking cognizance of the inherent concepts of diluted democracy, as impacting human holistic development, in a particular emphasis to Uganda, as an independent country of Africa.

2. 0 THE BACKGROUND

2. 1 The Recent Historical Perspective:

Since 1986, Uganda (located in the East African interland), has made acclaimed substantial progress, in promoting good governance, at the political, economic, social and even cultural fronts of Uganda and elsewhere in the world.

The country, has been officially and widely acknowledged, as sustaining a positive economic development and growth, which, in the statistical opinion and assessment of the view technical perpetuators, averages 6%, over the

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recent one and half decades, the country having progressively, moved from mere economic recovery stage and reconstruction status, towards a substantial sustainable economic development and progressive growth, targeting a massive poverty reduction from among the grassroots population. It is being further stated that Uganda's Macro economic stability, much as it is progressively and positively improving, remains a major area of the country's grassroot focused reforms and development efforts, for the express purposes of wider resource allocation.

Indeed, Uganda's fiscal and monetary restraints, as coupled with the attributes of prudent and fugal monetary management and administration, has appropriately and inevitably, supported the country's robust economic development and systematic growth, and has, consequently, forestalled, and contained the hyper inflation, to a single digit level, over most of the one and half decades of the prospective periodic review.

Nevertheless, according to the official statistics, the proportion of Ugandans, as defined and prescribed, as living in absolute poverty, did over the period of economic review, accordingly decline from 56% to 35%. It has been officially further highlighted that, the per capita income gains, between the years 1992 – 2005/6 were quite modest, allegedly because of the country's high population growth rate at 3. 4 per 1000 people. The same is feared to further increase, in the prospective future.

It has been further stated, that significant challenges are poised, for the economic attainments, as stated and highlighted, in the acknowledgement

reports of international nature for Uganda's economic and even political appraisal. These, among others, include:

The setting up of a sustainable fight and impactful mitigations of abject poverty, at grassroots levels.

Putting up impacting measures of mitigating high level economically retrogressive corruption, which is endemic in the country's top and middle level leaders.

Resolving the political and military conflict in the Northern Region of the country, this has persisted, for over two (2) decades.

Addressing others, but not duly specified subterranean forces which hamper, as well as derail the country's democratization process and positive economic development of sustainable growth, as already highlighted.

All in all, Uganda's political, social and economic development, is duly linked up with improvement in democracy and democratic governance, of the country, if all things, and the political will associated thereto, and the systems and practices established for the due installation of an undiluted democratic dispensation, were not merely cosmetic and inherently, distracted by the country's successive political leadership.

2. 2 The Instruments and Measures to Address the Development Dimension, but Rife with Diluted Democracy.

This is properly demonstrated and amplified in the paper as follows:

2. 2 (1) Diluted Democracy and Misguided Political Governance

One has to note inter alia that Uganda, as an independent country and nation of colonial creation became of diluted democracy and misguided political governance; went through a tumultuous checkered political history, since the attainment of independence and standing, as a new country in the year 1962. The country has gone full circle from assumed parliamentary form of diluted democracy, to the years of full vetted and sporadic concealed military benevolent dictatorship of quasi civilian rule, of tactic political cajoling, to the present day.

The short lived burst of apparent prospective political enthusiasm; to independence, and soon after it, was soon replaced by a long, almost unremitting period of near despair and disappointment, up to 1986, when Yoweri K. Museveni, an accomplished disciple of diluted democracy syndicate took over state power by force of arms. In the minds of many democratic foresighted Ugandans, this was in essence, not different from the 1966 Crisis, where the consensus ridden, and generally accepted independence constitution of the country, was violently overthrown and abrogated by similar force of arms by benevolent dictatorship of the Late Milton Obote. He did this, in his capacity as second Executive Prime Minister of the Country, after Uganda had become internally self governing in March 1961 under the first Political Leadership of the country of the Late Ben Kiwanuka who was manipulated out of power with British connivance.

However, the distinguishing political feature between the Museveni and National Resistance Movement - NRM Military take over, in 1986, and the Obote's Uganda People's Congress - UPC take over, after abrogating the 1962 Constitution, was that in 1980 a Uganda grassroot people's mandate, <https://assignbuster.com/democracy-and-development-in-uganda-history-essay/>

to govern the country, had been violently infringed and violated by a massively rigged general elections, which brought back Obote, to power, for yet another time, after his first violent overthrow from power by General Idd Amin in 1971.

The inherent advocacy and justification of the Museveni's NRM's take over of Government by force of arms, was, therefore, made on the commensurate pretext, that there had been massive rigging of national elections by Obote, and his UPC party, in December, 1980, and that there had been fragrant dictatorial misrule of the country, by Obote and his party, which provided Museveni, with a blank Cheque of governance, in Uganda, after the military take over of power, in January, 1986..

It is, therefore, to be noted here, that since the year 1966, to the present day, despite the positive and inherently appreciable Museveni and NRM cosmetic democratic innovations, as well as plausible features, of due reliance to the military, rather than the established democratic institutions, to govern, has over the time, persisted in Uganda. Hence the assertion that the army, has to be represented, as an organ of state, in the Parliament of Uganda, a prerogative of civilian rule and governance, in well oriented democratic states of the world.

Therefore, with diluted democracy in Uganda, at the centre stage, the country, has been characterized by civil wars; repressive governance policies, as well as statute laws of mere political expedience; a war monger governance style; a persistent refugee influx; and to big extent, a reversal and retrogression of would be attained social and economic gains, as

presumably having been acquired, in the positive wake of the rather cosmetic democratic systems; which unfortunately have duly and inadvertently, persuaded committed and uncommitted political observers both locally and internationally.

The negative impact of the political, social, economic and even cultural instability and overlapping political confusion, brought about as a result, is destined to leave a lot of deep scars in the general fabric of the country, for many years to come, across the country's political and social spectrum.

Nevertheless, there are, as it were, undeniable overt developments, since Museveni and NRM captured state power in Uganda in year 1986. It is also to be noted that the progressively concealed military regime change in 1986 was incidentally hailed locally, most especially in the country's central region of Buganda and even across the globe. The regime brought relative peace and security in those areas, of the country, where it was not resisted, for obvious reasons. While one part of the country, was at war with the regime, for now over 20 years, the part not at war, got the economy of Uganda, partially and somewhat rejuvenated as well as resuscitated, under the mistaken guise that the whole country was not at war.

The regime, has to some debatable extent, safeguarded the conventionally accepted principles of human liberties, through selected and guided promotions of relative press freedom, allowing some form of multiparty political dispensation, while limiting the fundamental freedoms of assembly and also did selectively, put an end to the fragrant open human rights' abuses, as exercising appreciable controls over the army, from being an arm

of repressive tacit political abuses, and to progressively make the same an apparently friendly organ of the civilian population, which was not the case before, for any of the past Government regimes of post independent Uganda.

However, amidst these fairly positive attributes and apparent overt achievements, Uganda faces a momental task, as well a challenge for establishing and nursing, as well as fostering visible and feasible functioning democratic institutions, which shall be beyond the whims and outright undemocratic dictates of incumbent Executive Presidents of the country.

3. 0 WHAT HAS DODGED THE CURRENT UGANDAN GOVERNMENT IN INSTITUTING DURABLE DEMOCRACY FOR DEVELOPMENT IN UGANDA

This is to be the major subject of address and presentation of this paper, on Democracy and Development in Uganda.

The Paper Objectives

The Key Objectives for this paper therefore, are:

3. 1. 1 Objective One:

To outline the brief events of thwarted democracy in Uganda, which have resulted in the checkered post independence history of the country, which has bred overt and covert military dictatorships.

3. 1. 2 Objective Two

To state and demonstrate the profound failings, as well as shortcomings of Uganda's post independence dictatorial Government regimes including the

NRM, in entrenching undiluted democracy which is the root and sound sanctuary of holistic genuine corporate development of the country.

Objective Three

To show why despite the apparently commendable progress in putting in place a plethora of regulatory institutions, policies, a constitution and statutory laws for building and establishing a democratic state of Uganda, there is unfortunately a looming and impending political catastrophe which might reverse and retrogress all apparent economic, political and even social gains, if nothing is done to forestall the same genuinely.

3. 1. 4 Objective Four

To illustrate a lack of genuine commitment and political patriotic will to mitigate and fight the rate of high level corruption, which duly impacts democracy and holistic development, in Uganda.

3. 1. 5 Objective Five

To demonstrate, as well as show that Museveni and the NRM duly displayed undiluted democratic tendencies and practices from the beginning, up to the 12th year of his rule in Uganda. It is in these years, that the country did genuinely develop and built the impetus that has pushed the NRM regime, to live up to the present day, albeit the diminishing fortunes, arising out of the incessant repressiveness overtime.

4. 0 CONCLUSION

By the end of the paper presentation, it is hereby envisaged and anticipated that the presentation, as envisioned, by this paper, shall lead to an international understanding, appraisal and evaluation of the democratic and developmental overtures, in Uganda, to lead to an appreciation of functions, innovations of fitting approaches and their due rationalization, in a Ugandan African context of congenial democratic development.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF UGANDA AFTER INDEPENDENCE

5. 1 Introduction

Please, note the paper objectives, as pin pointed above. This section of the presentation is now, to focus on the stated objectives, as laid down in Nos. (3. 1. 1. - 3. 1. 5)

The British ruled Uganda, not as a colony, which they overrun, but as a Protectorate, to which they were mutually invited by the late Kabaka (king) of Buganda, Muteesa I. Before that, Arab traders had had their contact with Buganda as foreigners in the 15th Century, in 1745.

Other foreign contacts were of John Speke, in 1862, from Britain and HMS Stanley in 1875, again from the same country, which resulted in the invitation of Christian Missionaries, as the kind of functional people, wanted by Kabaka Muteesa I, as a sign of mutual corroboration and cooperation between Buganda, and people of foreign lands. When the missionaries came to Uganda, as responding to Muteesa's call, the final result was, so to speak,

colonization of Uganda, where the British ruled Uganda, for over 60 years, until independence was granted in 1962.

When the country became independent, the future looked quite good and prospective, compared to its neighbors, Uganda is small and compact, compared in size, to Britain. It was endowed with substantial resources and favorable tropical climate.

When Uganda became independent in 1962, the future looked quite promising. The country which was small and compact (and still is), was endowed with substantial resources and favorable climate. It had a relatively developed social and physical infrastructure. Roads, schools, hospitals and the public service were amongst the best in black Africa.

Besides, at independence, the country enjoyed relatively prosperous agricultural economy based on cotton, coffee, tobacco, tea, sugar and variety of food crops, as well as livestock. It was self sufficient in food production. Due to its abundant wild life and natural beauty, the country had untapped tourist potential. Though the manufacturing sector of the economy was small, it was rapidly growing, thanks to the policy of import substitution and economic diversification. Indeed, in terms of overall economic progress, Uganda was comparable to Ghana, South Korea and Malaysia, and was indeed ahead of India and Indonesia.

Uganda's great expectations, however, did not materialize. Shortly after independence, the country degenerated into tyranny, chaos, violence, war, economic collapse and moral degeneration. Constitutionalism and the rule of law ceased to exist. Extra judicial killings were elevated to the level of public

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policy. By 1986, Uganda had become the land of untold human misery and an object of pity in the world. Its human rights record was appalling. An estimated over one million people, had lost their lives between 1966 and 1986. Thousands more, fled into exile and were scattered all over the world. The economy was in shambles. Indeed, when the NRM came to power, the country looked somehow ungovernable and was on the verge of Somalia-like war-lord-ism.

What went wrong? Why did Uganda make such a false start? How can the decomposition of post independence Uganda between 1966 and 1986 be explained? Why did Uganda become so unhinged or dislocated? There are no definitive answers to the questions. Nevertheless, historians have explained the country's post-colonial turbulence, in terms of colonial distortions, neocolonialism, under development, incompetent post independence leadership, ethnicity, militarism and religious bigotry. This brief historical survey from 1895 to 1986 attempts to explain why and how Uganda became “ the sick man” of Africa before the NRM captured state power, in the hope of putting the country on the road to un diluted democracy.

5. 2 The Legacies of British Colonialism:

The modern state of Uganda, which assumed its geopolitical identity between 1890 and 1926, was a product of European colonialism. In drawing up the boundaries of Uganda, the British colonial authorities brought together fifty six (56) distinct communities, with diverse languages, cultures and historical traditions. At the same time, the colonial boundaries partitioned various African peoples, who had lived together for centuries in two or more colonial states.

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In Uganda the ethnic incompatibility was basically a product of British Administration and may have been a colonial strategy. Before colonialism, the various peoples of Uganda had co-existed in relative peace and equality, and in cases, such relative peace and equality, and in cases, such Buganda, the people had even mutually integrated through marriages and mutually beneficial cooperation activities of life sustenance and survival. People did not believe that they were more developed or cultured than their neighbors, except under threat and resistance of the new comers. Various Ugandan communities knew that they were different but equal, as human beings, for any material benefits as well as according one another the requisite human rights. Even civil wars and conflicts took place among 'would be' equals of divergent interests. But the British progressive conquerors or in the case of Uganda, protectors, changed all this. They halted and froze the natural process of people's integration and evolution for the better, or worse.

The natural process of cultural diffusion and mutual dissemination into one another for, mutually identified social goals and benefits through trade, intermarriages and migration, as well as movement, was duly disrupted. For their colonial and administrative strategy, the British duly emphasized mutually disruptive differences, as well as adverse prejudices, which put otherwise co-operative and corroborative people further apart. People's mutual similarities were never identified and emphasized to ensure harmony and mutual solidarity among people of different cultural identity. The British policy of "divide and rule" not only enhanced the negative spirit and attributes of ethnic consciousness and social chauvinism, among ethnic peers, but exploited and made it become a source of tension and disastrous

conflict, for post independence Uganda, when selfish ill fated politicians inherited the mantle of political power. It is said that once the British established the multi-ethnic-state of Uganda, through the quash constitutional agreements made with the different tribal chiefs or kings of more established nationalities of Uganda, they made no deliberate, well conceived efforts to forge Uganda's inhabitants and their possible leaders, into a unifying force of cadres, for possible and viable integrated Uganda.

Some ardent scholars have pointed out that unity in diversity was not one of the British cardinal colonial intentions, for a people as diversified as Uganda's. Rather the British colonial and administrative mission was to exploit it with the four (4) coded intents of colonialism, at the broader level, namely;

Procurement of industrial raw materials.

Acquisition of prospective market for finished products.

Employment of excessive qualified manpower.

Attaining a sure sphere of political cultural influences, for the prospects ahead.

It is said that what the British set out to do, bearing in mind their cardinal intentions, was to establish an efficient, but cost effective colonial administration, but not a Nation State, of a prospective viable future.

Nevertheless, this does not represent the whole truth about British colonialism, compared to their counterparts, the French in their Colonial

Policy of " Assimilation".

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The thrust of British Policy before, 1945 was therefore, to keep Africans, as apart as practically possible, and to more or less promote disunity, ethnicity and parochialism among them, so that the future prospects of unity among them, would inevitably be kept at bay. This ethnic focused policy was duly implemented, through the system of “ Indirect Rule”, more especially in Buganda (Uganda’s central region, which became the focus of development). This is where the British were quite intent of entrenching their Anglicanism and all that it entails, and to use it as a springboard, to other areas of Uganda. In effect, the Baganda were profoundly divided on the basis of religious bigotry, which was later, to affect political developments in the country, not mentioning other dimensions of British colonial set ups.

It is said, therefore, that the British knew, well before, that as long as they designed and constructed a Uganda that would remain a house divided, the future of British influence in Uganda, would be guaranteed by use of mere ethnic and nationality manipulation. Accordingly, the subsequent development of Uganda, became an artificial, disintegrated entity of British colonialism, with antagonistic nationalities of British cultural influence, but which are not prone to see themselves, as a united viable nation, springing from their well nurtured coherent cultural identities, across the board, without much mutual suspicions, as was fanned by post independence local politicians to ensure certainty of political office and longevity therein.

In concerted conformity to the politics of “ divide & rule”, the British Protectorate administrators and policy authorities treated various Ugandan cultural entities differently. It is alleged that Buganda was singled out for unfairly allotted favors, if not profound envy, on the part of the British to <https://assignbuster.com/democracy-and-development-in-uganda-history-essay/>

employ Baganda, to conquer the rest of Uganda and to establish, with them, an effective Protectorate administration, which lasted over sixty (60) years.

In some specific instances, Buganda was overtly and somewhat rewarded, and in other instances the British only gave tacit approval and appreciation, for the alleged Buganda's corroboration and cooperation with the British, in their endeavors to rule Uganda for their own acknowledged permanent and lasting intents. It is further emphatically pointed out by some unorthodox history authorities, that Buganda gained extended territory at the expense of the hostile Bunyoro and non belligerent Nkole Kingdom. It is not however, thoroughly discussed, how in the vagaries of people's open movement from territory to territory, and acknowledged mutual equality, respect and solidarity for mutually acknowledged common benefits, how Buganda managed to do this, unless there are other unaccounted for, factors, in the Geopolitical re-alignment of Uganda's ethnic entities.

This in the view of such historical authorities gave rise to the contentious issue of the so called "lost counties" of Buyaga and Bugangaizi, presently known as Kibaale District of Uganda. The Baganda chiefs who corroborated with the British were allocated the duty and functions of administering the said territories, it is duly highlighted.

In the year 1900, the British and Buganda signed the well known Buganda Agreement, which defined the mutual relationship, between Buganda and British Protectorate Administration. In this agreement Buganda retained its own Government and local administration, as it were, for a system not merely overran by the British, in their bid to colonize. By this agreement,

Buganda was divided into crown and privately owned land tenure, known as Mailo and Crown Land systems. The Kabaka, his chiefs and other Baganda notables, were by the agreement granted Mailo land. It is said that in this, the British sought to create a landed aristocracy which was to be one of the pillars of British policy protectorate administration, in Buganda.

For the British, it has been said and acknowledged, that the Baganda were the Japanese of Africa, to which Professor Ali Mazrui, has also alluded. It has also been stated that by the British treating Buganda, as state within the state of Uganda, which is their own colonial creation, but which Buganda was, even before their coming, the British, created a recipe, as well sowed seeds of ethnic tension and conflict in Uganda. This is a contentious subject, whose settlement can only be addressed by the restoration of Uganda's independence constitution, which unfortunately, was abrogated and violently overthrown by Apollo Milton Obote by force of arms, in 1966. In so doing Milton Obote committed a treasonable act, for violating a people's will, which had been enshrined in that Constitution at independence as the British left Uganda, and constituted nation of their creation. It could only be changed, through democratic constitutional genuine and legal means and not violently, as it was by Milton Obote.

It has been categorically stated that the Baganda developed a high sense of ethnic nationalism, which also was reinforced by Buganda's economic, political and social centrality in the state of Uganda. For the perpetrators of these views, the British are accused of seeing the rest of Uganda, as merely a satellite of Buganda. Thus, the British are assumed by this school of

thought, to have created Buganda, as a thorny problem, for independent
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Uganda, and for them, before independence. But one wonders what the British could conveniently do, to Buganda, which they found as a nation, already with management and administrative structures in place with a relatively sophisticated culture of its own.

It has profoundly been highlighted that, during the 1950s and 1960s, the ambitions of Buganda's unwanted nationalism clashed with integrative policies and processes of the central government. Buganda is said to have sought to maintain their deserved identity, but through narrow minded and aggressive neo-traditional separatism.

On the part of those in central government of Uganda, the government is said to have been determined to keep Buganda at any cost, as an integral part of Uganda, but without any hearing, nor providing any redress to Buganda's major concerns, and sense of cultural pride.

In the view of Uganda Nationalist advocates, Buganda's concerns and identity pride, which in their understanding and estimate, are untenable, led to a clash of interests which exploded into the crises of first, 1953, when the Late Kabaka of Buganda, Sir Edward Muteesa II, was exiled to Britain by the former Protectorate Governor, Sir Andrew Cohen, and second to the 1966 in which the Late Milton Obote, overthrew the Independence Constitution, which he had been sworn to uphold, as well as, protect, as executive Prime Minister, at independence.

The privileged status of Buganda, it is said, that sooner or later, generated the profound anti Buganda sentiments in the rest of Uganda. Non Baganda, are said to have resented the wholesale imposition of the Kiganda
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Administrative system, manned by Baganda chiefs, with the tacit consent of the British.

Buganda's question in Uganda therefore has remained a thorny issue for the democratic governance of the country, created by the British as a super imposition over existing viable nationalities, which were nation states, in their own right. But all said and evaluated, Buganda's right to exist, within the independent state of Uganda, needs to be respected and rationalized within the national constitution framework of Uganda, taking account of its role and function to Uganda as a nation without any tresses of apparent subjugation.

The Buganda question and the equitable status of the same, in the independent state of Uganda, as created by the British, has defied the self seeking, biased unpatriotic post independence political leaders who not only play the fiddle of diluted cosmetic democracy, but impact holistic development by their direct or indirect political overtures. The stagnated rate of development in Buganda, since independence, is therefore attributed to this. Buganda and other parts of Uganda, excluding the North, is claimed to be developing, since 1986, because Museveni and the NRM tended to demonstrate indicative attributes of democracy, in setting Uganda's outstanding problems such as the Buganda question. He received a lot of support in the so called war of liberation, before and after the bush struggle, which gave him propelling political impetus that gave rise to his longevity, in power.

See figures below, as demonstrating economic development and growth in first ten (10) years of Museveni's rule in Uganda, but which are going down progressively, as direct result of diluted democracy, playing the rounds in Uganda.

Year

Tax Revenue collected in U. Shs in billions

Tax Revenue as % of GDP

1988/91

44. 6

5. 16

1989/90

89. 6

6. 81

1990/91

135. 9

7. 84

1991/92

179. 7

7. 00

1992/93

286. 6

7. 85

1993/94

374. 0

9. 56

1994/95

522. 5

10. 76

1994/96

625. 5

11. 60

Table 1: Indicating the progressive rise in statistical economic development and growth in Uganda, as President Museveni and NRM, tended, in some measures, to walk the emphatic talk of undiluted democracy in Uganda, in the 1st ten (10) years of NRM with Buganda's support as well as patronage.

5. 3 The Demonstrative Aspects:

Looking at the dramatic political events, which have shaken Uganda overtime, behind them, the profound causes have been a lack of Democracy,

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or democratic governance systems. In the end such events have not only affected national development, but have shaken the country's foundation to the core, and