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Abstract

The apparent and alarming state of socio-economic and political decadence in most African countries including Nigeria presupposes the collapse of democratic ideals or values such as equality, freedom, fairness and social justice. This is attributed to the prevalence of a monstrous anti-democratic vice such as corruption. Rocked by a decline in morality and national consciousness in both public and private life, the practice of democracy in Africa and Nigeria in particular since independence, has been a staggering or transfixed one. In this paper, it has been argued that the perceived collapse of democratic ideals in Africa is fundamentally caused by moral decadence thus, introducing false ethical values which have helped in destroying democracy in Africa. Proffering solution to this, a conscious moral will or law with emphasis on the „ought. as against the „is. in both public and private life is examined. This moral law is located in the „Categorical Imperative. a cardinal moral theory in Immanuel Kant's ethical philosophy presented in his work *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785). Understood as an ideal moral principle rooted in selflessness, the categorical imperative is therefore recommended as a foundation upon which the democratic structures in Africa could be constructed. Significantly, it is not the form democratic governance takes that sustains it but the foundation upon which the form is constructed. Thus, democratic stability in Africa is here understood as a major index for democratic success. This no doubt requires the formal institutionalization of the „categorical imperative. in all facets of our lives including educational, religious, social, economic, cultural, military and political structures. This paper is of the view that with a pedagogical approach and the practical adoption of the theory of complementarity as that which contradicts self-interest and aim at a higher sense of integration thereby, resulting in the common good and a just society, the moral tenets of Kant's categorical imperative can consciously be inculcated in the Nigerian citizenry and Africa as a whole. This will further result in a collective moral will and a reformation of the mind-set of both policy makers and the citizenry with a view to tackling the vexed issues of democracy in Africa.