

FOSTERING UNITY
IN DIVERSITY AND
YOUTH ROLE IN
NATION BUILDING

BEAUTY ODIAKA CLETUS

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FOSTERING UNITY IN DIVERSITY AND YOUTH ROLE IN NATION
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DEDICATION

*This book dedication is to all patriotic Nigerians, who believe on
the future of this great country and place the unity and interest
of Nigeria above parochial leanings and sectarian affiliations.*

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This book without assistant and inputs of a number of cerebral minds and reputable organizations would not have come to fruition and it is vital to appreciate these commendable gestures of various individuals and groups that have in one way or the other facilitated the writing and publishing of the book.

Foremost, with excitement and delight, I extend my profound gratitude to my inestimable gem and affectionate husband Cletus Ebhodaghe for giving me an uncommon shoulder to lean on garnished with love that springs in torrent; his unwavering support not only mitigated the challenge of this work, but also culminated in its materialization.

Sincerely, I appreciate and thank the Rev fathers, Christians Association of Nigeria, Muslims Association of Nigeria and other groups that spatial limitation has compelled their exclusion in this litany of credits.

I thank my beloved parents Mr. and Mrs. Obiajulu Odiaka for their sacrifices and investment to make me who I am today. I appreciate all my siblings for the bond we share. My lovely kids Brianna Oseremen, Gianna Osedabamen, Ivanna Irenosen, Giovanna Aiminde, and Giovanni Ehiremen are my life treasures; the radiant energy of their presence kept me busy and spurred me to go extra miles to blend domestic duty and the demand of this cerebral work to achieve amazing result.

I will not fail to give credits and acknowledgement of the immense contributions of the following persons who unfortunately are not with us any more, my late brother Alexender Odili Sunday Odiaka, an icon and a former military officer. He had supported me before his demise on 18th, December 2011.

Late Comrade Olaitan Oyerinde, an exemplar, a father highly gifted and a man with profound Knowledge of the demands

and processes of evolution of organized society who passed on May 5, 2012 and Barr Greg Aruna who died on December 2008 were parts of the success of this book. May their gentle souls find rest in the bosom of the Lord.

Finally, my profound appreciation goes to God Almighty who has kept me alive together with my family, in addition gave me a new possibility to accomplish this work upgrading it from the previous edition.

FOREWORD

Initially this book was two distinct books under the titles: Youth and Nation Building and Fostering Unity in Diversity.

While the author was an undergraduate Law student at University of Benin, she wrote the first book, Youth and Nation Building in 2009. Shortly after graduation, before her enrolment to the Law School, she wrote the book with the second theme, Fostering Unity in Diversity.

It is obvious the young author discovered her cerebral gift and resource early enough and has leveraged on them to enrich and influence her generation and contribute to nation building and youth empowerment through her books.

These her books with two separate thematic substance were approved by the Edo State Ministry of Education as Text for Civic Education in the Junior Secondary Schools in the state.

I am particularly fascinated with her choice of title and presentation of the books. The issues covered are self-selling.

At a time when the Nigerian youths seem to lose focus as the future leaders of the nation but easily fall prey to political and economic exploiters, the title, Youth and Nation Building is an apt reading.

In addition, the title- Fostering Unity in Diversity has been a hot topic that continues to shape the nature of relationship of Nigerians in a plural society.

Many analysis and commentators on national issues have described Nigeria in various adjectival expressions given the prevailing multiple diversity in culture, language, religion and even mannerism.

It is good to see the idea expressed by the budding author of this

book. The author has rightly posited that what divides us could be the source of our unity.

She identifies key instruments of unification, such as the National Youths Service Corps NYSC, Unity Schools and the constitutional provisions for Federal Character considerations in federal appointments.

Furthermore, she captures the current challenges of the youth and imperative to change the narrative against the backdrop of their roles in nation building.

I have no doubt therefore, that the readers would not be disappointed with the views and historical analysis of events expressed in these two books, now merged under the title.

Barr Nelson Ogbuanya, LL.M, MCIArb, (Lond) BL Lecturer, Nigeria Law School, Lagos Campus, September 2011.

FIRST EDITION BY BARR, TORITSEJU OKITIKPI.

Second Edition By Edmund Nwabueze.

PREFACE

Nation building is not exclusive preserve of any group or segment; the vital processes demand collective efforts by every member of the society.

It is imperative to recognize the young people as influential member of the society and leaders of tomorrow and conscript them as integral partners in nation building by creating opportunities for their socio economic emancipation and empowerment, which will rescue them from the lure and tempting influence of crimes and criminality.

The perils and insecurity the society contends with are significantly untoward actions that arouse principally when they have ignored, neglected and exploited.

Today, nothing poses more threat and danger to our national security than incidences of ethnicity and its attendant orchestrated violence.

Ethnicity is a threat to national stability, which arises and sustained by passion for domination of one's ethnic group at the expense of others, national cohesion and unity.

Ethnicity is the bane of Nigeria development. It is prevalent problem, which has existed from inception and it needs urgent surgical operation to arrest the malady that culminated in the 30 months civil war and has continued to fuel further conflagration and crisis in post war Nigeria. Suspicion, distrust and hatred amongst diverse ethnic nationalities with sporadic violence have been the ugly spectacle in Nigeria and the situation has not abated in spite of the efforts by federal government in forging unity by through lofty schemes that bring the convergence of people of various cultures to live together.

More often than not, political leaders and the elites have

manipulated the nation's diversity to further their political and economic interest.

Sadly, the resultant is violent uprising culminating in bloodletting and destructions of people's properties.

Unfortunately, the youth has been cannon fodders and expandable materials at the hands of these elites to articulate their grievances and frustrations by violence, terror and destructions through deepening the faulty ethnic lines.

It becomes extremely imperative to engage this vital segment of the society with a view to redirecting their energy to positive ventures that affect the nation through empowerment and re-orientation.

It is imperative to increase the level of literacy among the nation's youth through expansion of education opportunities. Educated youths will certainly not be vulnerable to pranks and manipulations of few privileged who exploit ethnic diversity for selfish gains.

Most nations have turned their diversity to 'resource' and continued to leverage on the unique gift for national development, Nigeria will not continue to lack behind by failure to translate its diversity to strength and by indifference to the plights of its teeming youths which the most dominant and vital force in nation building.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

THE COUNTRY NIGERIA

Physical feature Sociological
feature Anthropological history

CHAPTER TWO

THE MAKING OF NIGERIA BY THE BRITISH

Struggle for Independent Nigeria

Post independent Nigeria and crisis of nationhood

CHAPTER THREE

EMERGENCE OF THE MILITARY IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

First military coup and termination of first republic Counter coup
and its aftermath

Birth of Biafra Republic and Nigeria declaration of war Military era in
immediate post-civil war Nigeria

The second republic of manifest corruption Second
arrival of the military in governance Annulment of June
12 Presidential Election

CHAPTER FOUR

FOURTH REPUBLIC AND ITS DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENTS

Olusegun Obasanjo Government

Musa Yar' Adua Government

Goodluck Ebele Government

Muhammadu Buhari Government

CHAPTER FIVE

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Structure of the legislative arm of government Political
participation, ethnicity and governance Ethno linguistic
groups found in Nigeria Indigenous languages and lingua
franca Religion and its spread across the nation

Divisions in two major religions, Islam and Christianity

CHAPTER SIX

ETHNIC STRUGGLES AND CONFLICTS IN NIGERIA

Hausa- Fulani and Igbo conflagrations

Orchestrated pogrom against the Igbo by Hausa -Fulani soldiers Hausa-
Fulani and Tiv conflicts

Ethnic conflicts in Warri, Delta State

Upheaval between Nupe and the Yoruba ethnic nationalities Zango-
Kataf imbroglio in Kaduna

Emergences that fuelled ethnic massacres

CHAPTER SEVEN

CAUSES OF ETHNIC STRUGGLES IN NIGERIA

Domination of one ethnic nationality in power Obsessions to
control leadership of market or trade union Elites' conspiracy and
inordinate ambition

Fear of minority ethnic groups against domination

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCEPT OF UNITY IN DIVERSITY

Understanding the concept and its historical origin Ecological
foundation of the concept

Social ecology and eco-feminism foundation of concept Thrive of
unity without uniformity and universal goodwill

CHAPTER NINE

THE CHALLENGES OF UNITY IN DIVERSITY

Sources of cultural diversity

Newfound freedom and liberty for self- expression Influence
of globalization to cultural diversity Effects of multinational
to cultural diversity

Phenomenon of asylum and its influence on cultural diversity Movement
of labour force to developed nation

Diversity an intrinsic character of modern society How
immigrant culture defines modern society

Contemporary multicultural society and pre-modern society Impact of
democracy on contemporary multicultural society Diversity without
fragmentation

Influence of religion on diversity without fragmentation

CHAPTER TEN

FOSTERING UNITY IN DIVERSITY IN NIGERIA

Government efforts to foster unity amidst diversity Concept of federal

character and impacts of its commission Imperative to create a new framework for co-existence

CHAPTER ELEVEN

WHO QUALIFIES AS A YOUTH

Youth as a spark, that needs no ignition

The dynamics that shape and influence the youth

CHAPTER TWELVE

YOUTH AS HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Historical precedent of youth roles in nation building Failures of youths who came to governance as military officers The vital place of ingenuity to young people

The value of skill acquisition to young people Exodus of youths to foreign countries and its perils

The needs for the youths to shun violence and criminalities The dangers of sudden wealth and rewards of hard work Young people and their future leadership roles

Current challenges of the youth demand collective efforts to change Government failures to meet educational needs of the youth Need to re-inform NYSC and disintegrate certain social practices

Involving corporate and religious bodies in youth empowerment

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

CHALLENGES FACING THE NIGERIA YOUTH Limited access to qualitative education Grossly limited access to employment Repugnant cultural practices

Lack of access to business support funds Inadequate skill acquisition centres for employment Migration in search of greener pastures

Lack of access to reliable health support

Poverty and privation worsen by burden of extended family Mono economy and Over dependence on oil

Negative influence Western, culture Distance from cherished cultural values

Over exposure to the culture of greed and corruption Ethnicity and lack of national consciousness

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

NATION BUILDING AND IMPERATIVE OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

THE MOTIVES OF EXCLUSION OF YOUTHS FROM POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Wrong assessments of youth capacity in politics and nation building

Perception of youth incapacity for socio-economic engineering

False view that youth are intemperate and impatience for state duties

Perception that youth lack experience in political matters Portrayal of youth as lacking motivation for sustained political action

False belief of youth inability to meet high demands of political offices

Adults' contempt to share political powers parity with young people

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

YOUNG PEOPLE INTEREST IN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Emerging order that is titling in favour of youth leadership

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

EXPERIENCES OF THE CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA

YOUTH Vulnerability to extra judiciary killings Harassment and assault by security operatives Deployment as political thugs

Employment as agents of election malpractice Use to execute covert dirty jobs

Deployment for political campaigns

Use as tool of entertainments of privilege class Use for ferry illicit goods or smuggling Deployment for drug trafficking

Exposure to privation at the home front

Dearth of youth groups and their communal activities Fractured learning and fragmented education Religion as refuge and succour for the youth Kidnapping, ritual killings and child trafficking Underemployment and contract staff phenomenon The need for credible youth development policy

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

YOUTH AND NIGER DELTA SITUATION

Militancy in Niger Delta and emergence of kidnapping for ransom. Military confrontation with militants and Amnesty Programme.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

YOUTH AND NATION BUILDING

Tackling poverty and hunger

Strategic dealing with illicit use of drugs Making education free and compulsory Capacity building for the youth International business initiative

BEAUTY ODIKA CLETUS

Entrepreneurships and self-reliance

CHAPTER NINETEEN

NIGERIA YOUTH AND MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Nigeria success rate in implementation of Millennium Development Goals
Youth roles in implementation and actualization of MDGs

REFERENCES

CHAPTER ONE

THE COUNTRY NIGERIA

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, the eight most populous countries in the world, and the country with the greatest concentration of the black race. It is a country of enormous human and material potentials, which are indeed a pride to a black man but the challenge is to translate these abundance resources to meet the yearnings and aspirations of not only Nigerians but the rest of Africans.

She is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations, an international organization Britain and her former colonies share membership for advancement of mutual interests.

The country was among the 'Next Eleven' economies at attainment of sovereignty and up to the mid-seventies; it was among the richest nations in the world.

Between 70s and early 80s Nigeria income per capita was \$1160. Nigeria has a mono economy largely dependent on oil. The economy of Nigeria was one of the fastest growing in the world, with the International Monitoring Fund projecting a growth 9% in 2008 and 8.3% in 2009.

In addition, between 2012-, 2015 Nigeria economy was at a growth rate of 7% GDP and was again one of the fastest growing economies. Nigeria economy was the third largest economy behind South Africa and Egypt but after the country reassessed its economy during President Goodluck Jonathan Government, Nigeria became the largest economy in Africa. The economy went into recession in 2016-2018 but it is now picking up at infinitesimal growth rate, but expectation is that the current

government of President Buhari is configuring and structuring all micro and macro elements to return the nation to prosperity.

Physical features of Nigeria

Nigeria is a country comprising thirty-six states and Federal Capital Territory Abuja. The states emerged out of three Regions, Northern, Western and Eastern of the pre-independence era, which later became four regions when Midwestern Region emerged out of the old Western Region in 1963. The country is located in the West Africa and shares land borders with Republic of Benin in the west, Chad and Cameroon in the east, and Niger in the north. Its coast in the south lies on the Gulf of Guinea on the Atlantic Ocean. The seas that wash the coast of Nigeria are Bights of Benin and Bonny. The vegetation of Nigeria broadly categorized into two zones: Forest Zone depicts by tall trees and Savannah Zone exemplifies by wide grasslands dotted with some short trees. Nigeria has wet season, dry season and Harmattan. The wet season comes between April and October cause by the Monsoon or South West winds that blow from Atlantic Ocean to bring down rainfall. The dry season is usually between October and March. The North East Trade winds, which blow from the Sahara Desert between December and January, bring Harmattan characterize with chilly dry air and dusty wind. The two important rivers in Nigeria River Niger and River Benue have their confluence at Lokoja in Kogi State, North Central.

Sociological features of Nigeria

Nigeria has over two hundred and fifty ethnic nationalities; however, the three largest most influential ethnic groups in Nigeria are the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. Nigeria is a secular state but her people are predominately religious. There is major spread of the two dominant religions Christianity and Islam. The northern part of the country has predominately Muslims population while the southern part has predominately-Christian population; however, there is negligible minority

demography of traditional worshippers.

Anthropological history

People of Nigeria have an extensive and fascinating history. Archaeological evidence shows that human habitation of the geographical area of Nigeria dates backs at least to 9000 BC. The area around the Benue and Cross River believed to be the original homeland of the Bantu migrants who spread across most central and southern Africa between the first millennium BC and second millennium. The name Nigeria derived from the Niger River running through the country by Flora Shaw; a journalist who coined it in one of her articles in British tabloid. The name means Niger area. She later married Lord Lugard, a British Colonial Administrator who amalgamated the Northern and Southern Protectorates in 1914 to bring into existence a country with the greatest concentration of black race in the world. The Nok people in central Nigeria produced the earliest terracotta sculptures ever found in the country.

A Nok culture resident in Minneapolis Institute of Arts portrays a sitting dignitary wearing a "Shepherds Crooks on the right arm, and a "hinged flail" on the left. This are symbols of authority associated with ancient Egyptian Pharaohs, and the god Osiris, and suggests that an ancient Egypt style of social structure, and perhaps religion, existed in the area of modern Nigeria during the era of pharaohs.

In the northern part of the country, Kano and Katsina had recorded history dating back to 999. Hausa kingdom prospered as trade posts between North Africa and West Africa. At the beginning of the 19 Century under Usman dan Fodio, the Fulani led Centralized Empire continued until 1903 when there was partition of Fulani population and land into various European Colonies, as major European scramble for footholds and tractions in the continent of Africa. Between 1750 and 1900

one two thirds of the entire population of the Fulani jihad states consisted of slaves.

The Yoruba Kingdoms of Ife and Oyo in the Southwestern Nigeria became prominent around 700-900 and up to 1400. However, Yoruba mythology states that Ile-Ife is the source of human race and that it predates any other civilization. Ife also produced terra cotta and bronze figures and Oyo once extended from Western Nigeria to Togo. The kingdom of Benin was located in the Western Nigeria. Benin's power lasted between the 15th and 19th Century. Its dominance extended as far as the city of Eko -a Bini name later changed to Lagos by the Portuguese.

In Southeastern Nigeria, the kingdom of Nri of the Igbo ethnic nationality flourished from probably from 10th Century until 1911, making it the oldest kingdom in Nigeria. The belief is that Nri is the foundation of Igbo culture.

Nri and Aguleri, where the myth originated are in the territory of the Umeuri clan, which traced their lineage back to the patriarchal king- figure of Eri.

CHAPTER TWO

THE MAKING OF NIGERIA BY THE BRITISH

Portuguese explorers were the first Europeans to begin trade in Nigeria. The Portuguese seafarers were in search for sea route to India when they stumbled on settlement along the lagoon and it is widely held view by historical scholars that Lagos derivation was from the lagoon by these European explorers.

Consequently, trade began to take root between the Portuguese and the natives in ports of Lagos and in Calabar involving various commodities including human cargoes, which became notorious as various European nationals jostled to outdo one another.

The Lagos Port served as pre-shipment convergence of the slaves from the continent of Africa en-route to America in the infamous commerce, Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. European slaves' merchants and their intermediaries negotiated with the rulers in different ethnic groups for the supply of slaves and sustenance of the trade, which profited European countries as, their nationals involved in the reprehensible commerce shipped able-bodied African men and women to America and Europe to work in plantations.

Consequently, many of the citizens today in Europe and America were descended from former slaves with ancestral roots mostly from Nigeria ethnic groups. Britain abolished its slave trade in 1804 and following the Napoleonic Wars, established the West Africa Squadron in an attempt to halt the international traffic in slaves.

To formalize its hold in the Niger area as Europe countries scrambled for the continent the British Government secured treaties with the rulers in different ethnic groups, the British conquered the leaders or kingdoms that proved obdurate to her overtures by force of arm through its army of expedition.

There were many wars to halt British annexation by native empires or tribal communities of what later became Nigeria against the British Empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth Century.

Notably of those wars were the British conquest and annexation of Lagos in 1861, the conquest of Benin Empire in 1897. Also other wars and strong oppositions to the British efforts to establish its political authority over the Niger area were the Anglo - Aro war from 1901- 1902; the conquest of Opobo and banishment of its king Jaja who was uncooperative to the British and host of others.

In 1885, British claim to this area in the Sub-Saharan received international recognition and in the following year the Royal Niger Company received charter under the leadership of Sir George Tubman Goldie. In 1900, the company's territory came under the control of the British Government, which moved to consolidate its footings over the area of modern Nigeria. In 1901, the British government created two Protectorates: the Northern and Southern Protectorates as the area came under British protectorate, part of the much-revered British Empire, the foremost world power at that historic time. In 1906, there was merger of Lagos Colony with the oil River coast and the Southern Protectorate.

In 1914, the Colonial Administrator Frederick Lord Lugard formally united the Niger area as the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria by amalgamating the Southern Protectorate and Northern Protectorate as one entity for administrative convenience of the colonial government than any other reason.

However, administratively, Nigeria remained divided into the Northern and Southern Provinces and Lagos Colony.

Western education and the development of modern economy proceeded more rapidly in the south than in the north, with the consequences made manifest in the nation political life ever since. The feudal system in the northern provided latitude for slavery and servitude of the natives to political authority established by the British Indirect Rule policy.

This probably accounted why there was no outlaw of slavery in northern Nigeria until 1936. In 1939, there was division of Nigeria into three autonomous regions: Northern Region, Western Region and Eastern Region. The creation of the regions brought Nigerians to participate politically alongside the Colonial Administrators in governance.

Struggle for independent Nigeria

Following the Second World War, in response to the growth of Nigeria nationalism and the demands for independence, successive constitutions legislated by the British Government moved Nigeria towards self- government on a representative and increasingly federal basis. By the middle of the 20th Century, the great wave for independence was sweeping across Africa.

It was as, if there was lift of a dark cloud out of eyes of Africans by the pioneering role of Dr. Azikiwe and his group of newspapers through the increasing knowledge and information they disseminated across the continent. The group of newspapers West Africa Pilot, Nigeria Spokesman, Southern Nigeria Defender, Daily Comet and Eastern Nigerian Guardian played remarkable roles in pre- independent and post independent era through their massive and incisive editorials, features, adverts, and cartoons.

Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe popularly known as Zik of Africa had returned from USA, fired with the knowledge of America battle for independence, established media organizations both in Liberia, Gold Coast (Ghana) and Nigeria. His drive was to sensitize and enlighten not only his compatriots on self-governance, but also to the rest of the children of Africa held under the yoke and bondage of colonialism.

His mantra," show the light and the people will find the way encapsulated Azikiwe's philosophy which became fulcrum of his activities to lay the foundation for struggle for independence in most Africa countries.

The nationalists among who were Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Ahmadu Bello, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Dr. K.O Mbadiwe, Chief Anthony Enahoro, Prof Eyo Ita. Others included Aja Nwachukwu, Chief RBK Okafor, TO Benson, Mrs Margret Ekpo, Chief Denis Osadebay, Chief H.O Davies, Chief Mokuwugo Okoye, Mallam Aminu Kano etc. intensified agitation for independence following the independence of Gold Coast (Ghana) in 1957. Chief Anthony Enahoro had moved a motion for independence in the parliament in 1957.

Post-independence Nigeria and crisis of nationhood

On October 1, 1960, Nigeria gained independence from the United Kingdom with lowering of British flag Union Jack and hosting of Nigerian flag; Green White Green.

The struggle for independence was by the nationalists under various political platforms, which offered them ground to contest pre- independence election in 1959 to form a government after the exit of colonial government. There were three dominant parties, the Nigeria People Congress

NPC led by Alhaji Ahmadu Bello the party was dominated by Northerners and those of Islamic faith, National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) led by Dr, Nnamdi Azikiwe and dominated by Igbo and Christians. The last was the Action Group (AG) largely dominated by the Yoruba led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo. None of the three parties could form a government on its own after the rigged pre- independence election conducted by colonial government without coalition because of failure to meet the constitutional votes spread in the three regions.

There was tense political climate fuelled by horse trading, negotiations, intrigues, accusations and threats. Chief Awolowo had offered Dr. Azikiwe a position of Prime Minister for the two parties, AG and NCNC to form a coalition, but Alhaji Ahmadu Bello had threatened to pull the North out of the federation if the coalition becomes feasible.

NPC, which garnered majority votes preferred NCNC coalition to form a government of an Independent Nigeria. Dr. Azikiwe proved himself an exemplary pan Nigeria leader when he accepted NPC offer of the Governor - General even though it was less in power configuration to the Prime Minister position if the negotiation of NCNC with AG had perfected, but it would have put the post Independent Nigeria in precarious situation with the possible exit of the North.

Dr. Azikiwe would not want his dream of his country as the most populous concentration of blacks in the world to collapse because of his personal ambition. His stake was high as the greatest investor in Nigeria project in the pre-independent Nigeria and greatest contributor to the nationalist struggle for independence, the exit of the North would have been anticlimax of independent struggle.

Little wonder, Ahmadu Bello called Dr. Azikiwe the father

of the nation Nigeria. NPC and NCNC formed the first government of a sovereign Nigeria with Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe as the Governor- General and Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Ahmadu Bello's deputy in the leadership of NPC as the Prime Minister. AG led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo became the opposition.

Nevertheless, the rivalries among the dominant ethnic groups, the Hausa (Northerners) Igbo (Easterners) and the Yoruba (Westerners) continued to threaten the post independent Nigeria.

There was an imbalance created in the polity as the result of the 1961 plebiscite. Southern Cameroon opted to join the Republic of Cameroon while the northern Cameroon chose to remain in Nigeria.

The northern part of the country was far larger than the southern. The nation Nigeria parted with the British legacy in 1963 by declaring itself a Republic with Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe as the first President and Commander-in-Chief of Armed Forces.

When the election came in 1965, the Nigerian National Democratic Party NNDP outmaneuvered AG the dominant party in the Western Region for the control of the region, an amalgamation of conservative Yoruba elements under the leadership of Chief Ladoke Akintola backed heavily by the federal government.

In May 1962 crisis erupted in the Western Region House of Assembly with attendant unmitigated violence culminated in the declaration of a State of Emergency. The government arrested, detained and tried Chief Awolowo and some members of his party for treasonable felony with ten years imprisonment slammed on the leader of the opposition.

In August 9, 1963, there was creation of Mid-West Region following the plebiscite of July 13, 1963. Then was the appointment of Chief Dennis Osadebay as the Premier of the new region.

Again, the Western Nigeria engulfed in upheavals following the disputed elections of 1965, rigged in favour of NNDP against AG the dominant party.

CHAPTER THREE

EMERGENCE OF THE MILITARY IN POLITICS

Military in politics is an aberration. By the structure of the institution, it lacks capacity to handle political issues, which are usually complex. The training and orientation of the military makes it inappropriate for political leadership. The coming of the military to take the reins of power, in a country's that was slightly above half a decade of self- government portended danger to the newly independent nation. The entrance of the military in the country's leadership uttered diametrically, Nigeria's destiny. Nigeria has never recovered from the monumental impacts of military incursion in its political affairs.

First military coup and termination of the first republic
The disequilibrium and perceived corruption of the electoral and political processes led several back-to- back military coups from slightly above mid-sixties to the late nineties when the military bowed out of political leadership. The first coup was in January 15 1966 by five young leftists', Majors Emmanuel Ifeajuna, Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu, Major Dan Okafor Major Ademoyega and Major Anuforo. The coup plotters were under the platform, "Supreme Council of the Revolution of the Nigeria Armed Forces" and lucidly stated their mission and motive: "the aim of the Revolution Council is to establish a strong, united and prosperous nation, free from corruption and internal strife". At the time, the majors struck, a huge climate of problems hovered around the newly independent nation, strife riots, federal army occupied Southwest Region and most especially the nation was bedeviled with cankerworm of bribery and corruption. Nzeogwu in his broadcast stated:

"Our enemies are the political profiteers, the swindlers, the men in high and low places that seek bribes and demand ten percent; those that seek to keep the country divided permanently so that they can remain in office as Ministers or VIPs at least, the tribalists, the nepotists, those that make the country look big for nothing before the international circles; those that have corrupted our society and put Nigeria political calendar back by their words and deed".

The coup plotters assassinated some leading political figures in the country including the Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa , Balewa, the Premier of the Northern Region, Ahmadu Bello, the Premier of the Western Region Chief S.L Akintola, Chief Festus Okotie- Eboh Minister of Finance and Chief Denis Osadebay the Premier of the Mid- Western Region. In addition, there was murder of three top ranking military officers by the unfortunate incident that diametrical altered significantly the future of the new independent nation.

Despite the seeming success of military putsch by the exit of political leaders, the coup plotters could not set up a central government because Major General Aguiyi Ironsi mobilized loyal soldiers to undermine the coup in Lagos the seat of power of the federal government. Sir, Nwafor Orizu, the Senate President whom the baton of power fell into as the Acting President in absence of Dr. Azikiwe who was outside the country was compelled by the prevailing circumstance to hand over governance to the Nigeria Army, under the command of General JTG Aguiyi Ironsi. General Ironsi appointed Military Administrators in the four regions, Major Hassan Katsina in the Northern Region, Major Ejoor was handed over the Mid- Western Region, Col Fajuyi was the Administrator of Western Region and Col Emeka Odimegwu Ojukwu became the Administrator of the Eastern Region. General Ironsi in May 1966 abolished the

federal structure by Decree 34 of May 24, 1966. The action was unpopular as it exacerbated the fear of ethnic domination. The suspicion for Igbo hegemony was real in politics, economy and the military

Counter coup and its aftermath

There was a counter coup on 29 July 1966 to January 15 coup, which was bloody and carried primarily by Northern military officers as a reprisal to the murder of Northern political leaders, in which there were killings of a number of Igbo military officers including the Head of State, General Ironsi. The successful coup paved way for Colonel Yakubu Gowon to become Head of State. This sequence of events led to an increased ethnic tension and violence. The retaliation coup christened Northern coup, mostly motivated by ethnic and religious reasons, was a bloodbath against people of Eastern Region both military officers and civilians, especially those of Igbo extractions. The pogrom targeted against the Igbo began early in the year 1966 and remained unabated even after the north successfully captured power by the ascension to power of Col Yakubu Gowon.

Birth of Biafra Republic and Nigeria declaration of war

The continued violence against the people of Igbo extraction and others from the Eastern Region increased their desire for autonomy and protection from military's wrath. Col Emeka Ojukwu the Military Administrator's obduracy to the Head of State Col Yakubu Gowon fuelled the intense political climate.

The intervention of Ghana military leader Gen Ankrah to mediate on the crisis and through Aburi Accord signed by Nigeria Head of State Gen Gowon and Military Administrator of Eastern Region Col Ojukwu collapsed since Nigeria refused to honour the Agreement. As part of the political strategy to undermine, the power of the Military Administrator of the Eastern Region, Gen Yakubu Gowon created 12 states out of the four regions.

By May 30, the Eastern Region had declared itself an independent state called Republic of Biafra in line with the wishes of the political leaders in the region and Emeka Ojukwu became the Head of State.

The Nigeria Federal Military Government responded by declaring military action against the breakaway region to reabsorb it to Nigeria by force of arm. The civil war began as the Nigeria military launched attack on July 6, 1967 at Garkem signaling the beginning of 30-month war that ended on January 1970. The estimation was that more than one million people died in the Nigeria civil war while the economy and social infrastructures of the Eastern Region lay waste and utterly crippled.

The post war policy of Gen Yakubu Gowon premised on three R: Reconciliation, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation was observed more in breach as it ended as mere pronouncement without political will to implement them.

Military era in immediate post- civil war Nigeria Following the war, Nigeria became to an extent even more mired in ethnic strife, as the defeat of the Eastern Region, triggered hegemonic ascendancy of northern soldiers and by omission or commission, the Southern Nigeria was like a conquered territory and various military regimes that came on board headed by soldiers of northern extraction advanced the interests of their people. In 1975, there was a bloodless coup, which ousted Gen Gowon and brought Gen Murtala Mohammed to power.

In February 13, 1976, Gen Mohammed fell on assassin bullet in bloody coup led by Col Burka Saka Dimka, and then General

Olusegun Obasanjo became the Head of State.

During the oil boom of the 1970s, Nigeria joined OPEC and billions of dollars generated by production in the oil-rich Niger-Delta flowed into the coffers of the Nigerian state. However, increasing corruption and graft at all levels of government squandered most of these earnings. The northern military clique benefitted immensely from the oil boom to the detriment of the Nigerians and the economy.

As oil revenue fuelled the rise of subventions to the states with the associated corruption, which brought stupendous wealth to few-privileged individuals at the expense of the nation, the seat of power at the centre became much attractive. The federal government cornered all the resources of the nation with disproportionate portion to the states and local governments; hence, the struggle for political office was intense.

As the oil price in the international market skyrocketed with huge revenue accruing to the federal government there was increased appetite for government and individuals for unbridled consumption, squandermania and grandiose projects which have no impact to the people and little attention was given to savings and investments to critical infrastructure that are springboards for development. Government of Nigeria failed in diversifying the economy by strategic utilizations of the colossal funds at its disposal to open multiple sources of revenues.

The federal government obsessively dependence on oil and its attendant fluctuations and instability in the international market, put Nigeria mono economy characterized with uncertainty at peril.

The second republic of manifest corruption Beginning in 1979, Nigerians were excited and delighted in the return to democracy when Gen Olusegun Obasanjo transferred power to the civilian regime of Alhaji Shehu Shagari.

There was perception that the second republic government under Shagari was corrupt and manifestly incompetent in virtually all sectors of Nigeria society. NPN Government crippled Nigeria and elevated embezzlement and financial impropriety to an art in its four years of Misrule.

When the regime was overthrown by the militarily coup of December 31, 1983 shortly after its fraudulent elections in 1983 depicted with unbridled irregularities, rigging and manipulation to give landslide victory to the party in power NPN, it was welcome development by preponderant percentage of the population.

Second arrival of the military in governance Gen Muhammadu Buhari who emerged as the Head of State following the overthrow of Shagari Government promised reforms to clean the mess of the second republic rule. His regime-injected discipline in the polity and slammed outrageous prison sentences to the politicians who ruined the country. Nevertheless, the regime lacked agenda for return to democracy and its anti-liberal policy were minuses, consequently, it was overthrown by another coup de tat in August 27, 1985 by the Chief of Army Staff Gen Ibrahim Babangida.

The new Head of State promptly declared his preference for the title of President and Commander-in- Chief of the Armed Forces. President Babangida set 1990 as the official deadline for the return to democratic governance and created sundry democratic institutions and agencies to actualize

democratization.

The tenure was marked with flurry of political activities: he initiated transition to civil programme, he instituted the International Monetary Fund's Structural Adjustment Programme SAP to aid in the repayment of the country's crushing international debts, where a large chunk of the revenue that accrued to the federal government was dedicated in debt servicing.

Babangida Government inflamed religious tensions in the nation by his surreptitious enrolment of Nigeria to the Organization of Islamic Conference OIC. After Gen Babangida survived abortive coup in 1990 led by Major Orka, he tempered with the date of his promise to return to democracy to 1992. Annulment of June 12 Presidential election Indeed, Babangida democratization process was with many hiccups.

There were banning and unbanning of politicians; there was liberty for politicians to form political parties and at some point, Gen Babangida proscribed the parties and later he created two political parties the Social Democratic Party SDP and the National Republican Party NRC. When free and fair election finally held on 12 June 1993 under his Transition to Civil Rule Programme the electoral umpire National Electoral Commission NEC Chairman Professor Humphrey Nwosu stopped further announcement of the election results, when he had announced more than 90 % of the results of the election. On June 23, 1993, President Babangida proceeded to annul the election that Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola the SDP Presidential candidate was coasting to victory, sparking off mass protest and violence across the country most especially in the Southwest where Abiola hailed from.

The protests by individuals and groups including human right organizations, professional bodies and students in tertiary institutions, which effectively shut down the country for weeks compelled Gen. Babangida to keep his shaky promise

to relinquish power on August 27, 1993 to a civilian to run government.

Interim National Government and Gen. Abacha regime

Gen Babangida caretaker regime contrived at the wake of his departure, Interim National Government ING headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan who hails from MKO Abiola home town Abeokuta faced legitimacy crisis and barely survived three months when the Secretary of Defence, Gen Sani Abacha ousted the ING in a palace military coup on November 17, 1993.

Gen Abacha proved to be perhaps Nigeria most hardnosed dictator and employed violence on a wide scale to suppress voice of dissents to sustain himself in power. Under Abacha there were sundry assassination attempts and assassinations including the killing of the wife of MKO Abiola Alhaja Kudirat in July 4, 1996. Gen Abacha detained many politicians and human activists who were in the trenches for the restoration of democracy and actualization of Abiola mandate.

Gen Abacha Government arrested and detained MKO when he proclaimed his June 12 electoral mandate and declared himself President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces on June 11, 1994 at the eve of the anniversary of the annulled election of June 12, 1993. MKO was in detention for four years until his eventual death on July 7, 1998 a month after Gen Abacha died on June 8, 1998 under mysterious circumstances. Gen Abdulsalami Abubakar succeeded Gen Abacha as the Head of State and hurriedly returned the country to democracy. There are stolen funds from Nigeria treasury found in various Western countries Banks traced to Gen Abacha. Several hundred millions of dollars in accounts linked to him were unearthed in

1999 which underscored that Gen Abacha was the worst ever in the annals of the political developments in all dimensions.

CHAPTER FOUR

FOURTH REPUBLIC AND ITS DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENTS

The fourth republic came in the heel of the aborted third republic. After the annulment of the June 12, 1993 Election, the nation passed through crises with Gen. Babangida handing power to Interim National Government ING. The ING lasted three months before Gen. Abacha overthrew it and pulled down all the democratic structures put in place by the military government of Gen. Babangida through his transition to civil rule programme that lasted for seven years.

Gen. Abacha brought third republic to abrupt end. His death on June 8, 1998 brought Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar to power. Gen. Abubakar constituted the shortest transition programme and organized elections contested by three political parties, PDP, APP and AD to establish the democratic structure of the fourth republic.

Olusegun Obasanjo Government

Nigeria returned to democracy in 1999, with the election of Olusegun Obasanjo, a former military Head of State as the new democratic President ending almost thirty- three years of military incursion. There were coups and counter coups by military officers who seized power during the interregnums of military adventure from 1966 to 1979 and from 1983 to 1999 excluding the three months of Interim Nation Government under Ernest Shonekan.

There were condemnations of the elections, which brought

Gen Obasanjo, the Presidential candidate of PDP to power in 1999 and again 2003 as not free and fair.

However, there were marked improvements in the nation as attested by the attempts to tackle corruption in government and hasten developments in several sectors especially in telecommunication, works and housing, educations etc.

While Obasanjo showed willingness to fight corruption in the public space by establishing anti- corruption agencies, His government was widely accused of not being free from corruption in its dealings and conducts.

Most of the anti- democratic flaws manifest in the fourth democratic experiment which can be traced to Olusegun

Obasanjo, in the manner he conducted the business of governance. He brought practices alien to democracy into Nigerian democratic culture. In fact, there was the perception that PDP denied Nigeria opportunity of commencing the fourth republic on sound democratic footings when it rejected Dr. Alex Ekwueme, former Vice President in the second republic, a man with huge democratic credentials as its Presidential flag bearer in 1999 Presidential Election but preferred former Head of State schooled in command structure and dictatorship. Nevertheless, Olusegun will go down in history as a pan Nigeria, one of the most detribalized Nigeria leader not swayed by sectarian bigotry.

Umaru Yar' Adua Government

Umaru Yar' Adua of the People Democratic Party PDP came to power in the 2007 General Elections. The international community condemned 2007 elections conducted under President Obasanjo watch as being massively flawed. President Yar A'dua tackled the unrest in the Niger Delta, which drastically affected oil productions and massive revenue drop during Obasanjo Government by initiating Amnesty Programme. President Yar' Adua reduced the fuel price Obasanjo hiked and

was the first head of government in Nigeria to do that. President Yar' Adua was a democrat and his conducts in governance were completely departure from his predecessor. President Yar' Adua tried to entrench democratic culture by given unfettered hand to other Arms of government to operate. Unlike his predecessor, he never meddled with the operations of the National Assembly and submitted to court verdicts and pronouncements. Unfortunately, the good and honest leader died on 5 May 2010 after a protracted illness.

While President Yar' Adua suffered protracted illness, he did not transmit power to his Vice President, as the sick President was held hostage by his kitchen cabinet, some of who acted certain aspects of the President functions keeping the Vice President completely at a distance. The National Executive Council which has the constitutional responsibility to declare the sick President incapacitated to continue in governance could not rise to the occasion even when the Minister of Information Prof Dora Akunyili informed the nation of the President deplorable condition, other members of the Yar A'dua cabinet countered her. However, through the Doctrine of Necessity the Senate empowered the Vice President Dr Goodluck Jonathan to become the Acting President and saved the nation of not having a sitting President for several months with everything that by law required the President endorsement being on hold.

Goodluck Ebele Jonathan Government

The swearing in of President Dr. Goodluck Jonathan as a successor to the demised President Musa Yar' Adua took place on 6 May 2010 and he became the 14 Head of Government. In his inaugural broadcast to the nation, Goodluck Jonathan cited anti-corruption, power and electoral reforms as focus of his administration.

He stated that he came to office under very, "sad and unusual circumstances". On May 18, 2010 the National Assembly approved President Goodluck Jonathan nomination of the Kaduna State Governor Namadi Sambo, an architect for the position of Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Goodluck Jonathan matched for his electoral reform by appointing an activist as INEC Chairman Prof. Attahiru Jega, Vice Chancellor of Bayero University, and former ASUU President who had a running battle with Gen. Babangida's Government on his union agitation for better funding of the university.

There was a declaration of 2011 Elections conducted by Prof Jega as free and fair by the local and international election observers. President Jonathan was able to managed the economy creditably with the former Vice President World Bank Mrs. Ngozi Iweala who also became the Managing Director of World Bank the position she resigned to become the Minister of Finance under Jonathan after serving in that capacity in Obasanjo Administration.

Under her watch Jonathan Government was able to achieved 7% GDP growth to make Nigeria economy one of the fastest growing economy. The insurgency in the North east and inability of the military to contain it, brought increasingly low point to President Jonathans Administration, as there were attacks on several communities by Boko Haram with frightened number of the dead. President Jonathan faced tremendous oppositions from the northern political leaders as 2015 General Elections approached. The leaders insisted that it was the turn of the north to produce the President of Nigeria.

The President had oppositions from members of his party

against his re-contesting in 2015. The anti-Jonathan 2015 Presidential bid later broke away from the party and joined the mega opposition party APC formed by the merger of three parties, ACN, ANPP, CPC and a faction of APGA. The elections of 2015 polarized the polity along ethnicity and religion lines.

The incumbent President is a Christian and an Ijaw from Niger Delta while his major challenger, the APC Presidential candidate, Gen Muhammadu Buhari, former Head of State, a Muslim, hails from Northwest. The General had lost three previous Presidential elections in 2003, 2007 and 2011. Two main contenders in 2015 Presidential Elections, President Jonathan and Gen.

Muhammadu Buhari had the backing and supports of their people with threats of violence and counter threats coming from Niger Delta militants and some political pressure groups in the north if their candidate lost the election. President declared that his "ambition is not worth the blood of any Nigerian" and had reiterated his non-interference on the electoral commission INEC as he was irrevocably committed to bequeath to Nigeria, free and fair elections where votes count.

Prof Jega, the Chairman of INEC and his commission had unfettered freedom to carry out its statutory responsibility without hindrance from government. President Jonathan kept his word and congratulated his opponent, Gen Buhari even before the announcement of the elections result, when it was obvious that the final result of the election would not go his way.

Muhammadu Buhari Government

Gen Muhammed the former Head of State between December 31, 1983 and August 27, 1985 when he was overthrown by

his Chief of Army Staff Gen Ibrahim Babangida, entered the political fray in 2002 of initial overt detest for politics.

He was the Presidential flag bearer of ANPP in 2003 General Election and lost to the incumbent President Gen Obasanjo. He lost again to Musa Yar 'Adua in 2007 Presidential Election under the platform of ANPP. In 2011, Gen Buhari as the Presidential candidate of CPC lost the Presidential Election to the incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan who took over when his boss Yar A'dua died. In 2014, there was merger of three parties, ANPP, CPC, ACN and a faction of APGA to form a mega party APC, which became the greatest threat to the ruling party PDP.

Gen Muhammadu Buhari was the party Presidential candidate in 2015 General Election and made far-reaching promises to Nigerians with his mantra of 'change'. He defeated the incumbent President in a fiercely contested election. President Jonathan accepted the outcome of the election and handed over power peacefully to him against all prediction of violence and bloodbath. Gen Buhari the first opposition leader to defeat an incumbent constituted a cabinet that fell short of popular expectation, as there was absence of technocrats but members of APC. In less than two years, the economy was prostrate and hardship set in as inflation skyrocketed. The exchange rate became frightening as Naira receded against hitting all time low of five hundred per dollar before Central Bank CBN at three-hundred and sixty per dollar stabilized it.

Gen Buhari known for his anti- corruption stand spent four years of his first term fighting the monster of corruption. He had accused PDP of running a highly corrupt government that stole outrageous amount of money from the nation's treasury. Buhari government has been able to recover many stolen funds and many of the corrupt politicians have been facing

prosecutions by the nation anti-corruption agency EFCC. Many governors and politicians who corruptly enriched themselves while in office at the expense of the nation are now serving prison sentences after successful prosecution by EFCC while some of them also return their loots to the nation.

There is significant improvement in infrastructural developments across the nation.

Buhari' s Government has made impact in building massive roads, rail reconstructions and rehabilitations including the Second Nigerian bridge that was proposed more than 30 years ago, which various regimes had paid lip service to. In a bid to stimulate local productions, conserve foreign exchange and boost job opportunities, the administration banned a number of items. His government has invested heavily in agriculture to the end that the country has stopped importation of rice.

The Buhari Administration conceived N-Power Scheme designed to cushion the menace of unemployment that has reached frightening level by empowering youths with 500,000 beneficiaries recorded at the terminal end of President Buhari is first tenure. The government is empowering the rural dwellers and urban poor through trade and millions of petty traders and market women have benefitted from it.

President Buhari faced sundry criticism of running a government with manifest ethnic and religious bigotry by the

manner of his appointments in sensitive positions in total disregard of the principle of federal character and not coming hard on the Fulani herdsmen that murdered many innocent citizens. President Buhari had always defended himself that he prefer to work those he can trust given the level massive corrupt that has permeated all fabrics of the country.

President Buhari contested for another four-year term in 2019 General Election, and against all predictions, although he has a massive support from the north in all the elections since 2003, the support for his second term bid was weak in the South except in the Southwest due to Bola Tinubu and Prof Vice President Osinbanjo factors. However, President Buhari returned elected by the electoral umpire INEC although the opposition candidate Atiku Abubakar, former Vice President and the Presidential candidate of PDP in the election is challenging the victory in the court.

CHAPTER FIVE

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

There are three arms of government: the executive, judiciary and legislature. Each arm is independent with separate functions. The legislature makes laws, the judiciary interprets laws and the executive implement laws. Nigeria is practicing Presidential system government where the President has executive power as the head of government and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

Structures of the legislative arm of government Nigeria is a federal republic modeled after the United State of America with the executive power exercised by the President; it has the Westminster system model in the composition and management of the upper and lower houses of the bicameral legislature.

The President in the democratic model presides as both the Head of State and the head of the national executive, and elected by popular votes to a maximum of two terms of four years.

The Senate and House of Representatives, which combined in a bicameral National Assembly, check the President Exercise power as part of their statutory obligation is not only to make laws but also to have oversight functions to the executive.

The Senate is a 109-seat body with three members for each state and one from the capital territory, Abuja; member's election is by popular votes to four-year terms. The House of Representatives contain 360 seats and population determines the number of seats per state. There is no limit to the number of terms serve in the legislature. The head of the leadership of Senate is the President, while the head of the House of Representative is the Speaker. The two chambers of the National Assembly have the mace as symbol of authority and make laws through passage of bills, which the President assents to become

laws.

Political participation, ethnicity and governance Ethnocentrism, tribalism, religious persecution, have played a visible role in Nigerian politics both prior and subsequent independence in 1960.

Sectionalism has made its way into Nigerian politics as exemplified by various attempts by tribal chauvinists to concentrate federal power to a particular region for selfish interests. Sectarianism has also led to active secessionist movements such as MASSOB, Sectarian movements such as Odua People Congress, Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta and a civil war.

Nigeria's three largest ethnic groups Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba have maintained historical preeminence in Nigerian politics; competition amongst these three groups has fuelled corruption and graft. Because of the above issues, Nigeria's current political parties are pan national and irreligious in character though this does not preclude the continuing preeminence of the dominant ethnicities. There are over 90 registered political parties in the country, but the major political parties at present include APC, PDP, APGA. YPP is still at fringes with Senator under its platform. The ruling party APC maintained fairly greater number both in the upper and lower chambers. In 2019 over seventy parties participated in the elections.

Like in many other African societies' prebendalism and extremely excessive corruption, continue to constitute major challenges to Nigeria, as vote rigging and other means of coercion practiced by all major parties in order to remain competitive. In 1983, the Policy institute at Kuru declared that only the 1959 and 1979 elections witnessed minimal rigging.

Ethno linguistic groups found in Nigeria

Nigeria has more than 250 ethnic groups, with varying

languages and customs, creating a country of rich ethnic diversity. The largest ethnic groups are the Fulani/ Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo accounting for 68% of the population, while the Edo, Ijaw, Kanuri, Ibibio, Epira, Nupe and Tiv comprise 27%, while other minorities make up the remaining 7%. The Middle Belt (North Central) known for its inherent diversities, comprises many ethnic groups including the Pyem, Geomai, and Kofyar etc. The official population count of each of Nigeria's ethnic group has always remain controversial and disputed as members of different ethnic nationalities believe that the census is always doctored to inflate the census figure of a particular group usually believed to be the northern groups to give them numerical superiority. There are small minorities of British, America, East Indian, Chinese (est. 50,000), white Zimbabwean, Japanese, Greek, Syrian and Lebanese immigrants in Nigeria. Immigrants in Nigeria also include from other West African or East African nations. These minorities mostly reside in major cities such as Lagos and Abuja or in the Niger Delta as employees for the major oil companies. A number of Cubans settled in Nigeria as political refugees following the Cuban Revolution.

In the middle of the nineteenth Century, a number of ex-slaves of Afro- Cuban and Afro- Brazilian descent and emigrants from Sierra Leone established communities in Lagos and other areas in Nigeria. Many ex-slaves came to Nigeria following the emancipation of slaves in the Americas. Many of the immigrants, sometimes called Saros (immigrants from Sierra Leone) and Amaro (ex-slaves from Brazil) later became prominent merchants and missionaries in these cities.

Indigenous Languages and lingua franca

The number of languages currently estimated and catalogued in Nigeria is 521. This number includes 510 living languages, 2-second languages without native speakers and 9 extinct languages.

In some areas in Nigeria, ethnic groups speak more than one language. The choice of English as official language of Nigeria was to facilitate the cultural and linguistic unity of the country. English as the official language tangentially related to the fact that a significant part of the Nigeria population spoke English because of British colonization that ended in 1960.

The major languages spoken in Nigeria represent three major families - the majorities are Niger- Congo languages, such as Yoruba, Igbo, the Hausa language is Afro- languages, a member of the Kanuri, spoken in the Northeast, primarily Borno State, and a member of a family Nile- Saharan.

Even though most ethnic groups prefer to communicate in their own languages, English being the official language is widely used for education, business transaction and for official purposes.

English as a first language however remains an exclusive preserve of small minority of the country's urban elites, and not spoken at all in some remote areas. With the majority of the Nigeria's populace in the rural area, the major language of communication in the country remains indigenous languages.

Some largest of these, notably Yoruba and Igbo have derived standardized languages from a number of different dialects and are widely spoken by those ethnic groups. Nigeria Pidgin English, often known simple as " 'Pidgin' or ' Broken' (Broken English), is also a popular lingua franca, though with varied regional influences on dialect and slang. The Pidgin English or Nigeria English is widely spoken within the Niger Delta areas predominately in Warri, Sapele, Port Harcourt, Agenebode, Ewu, and Benin City.

Religion and its spread across the nation

Nigeria is a secular state, without any official religion; however, the country is a home of a variety of religions, which tend to vary regionally. This situation accentuates regional and ethnic distinctions, which often a source of sectarian conflict among the population. Even though, Nigeria is majorly divided equally between Christianity and Islam and between south and north, it is evident that across Nigeria there is wide spread belief, albeit suppressed for political reasons, in traditional religious practices.

Based on 2009 World Religious survey (Mapping out the Global Muslim Population), 50.4% of Nigeria's population were Muslim, 48.2% were Christian (15% Protestant, 13.7% Catholic, and 19.6% other Christian), and followers of other religions were 1.4%. The core north is largely Muslim, there

are large numbers of both Christians and Muslims in the North Central (Middle Belt), including the Federal Capital Territory.

In the Southwest, there is parity in the percentage of both Christians and Muslim domicile in the area. In the other part of Southern Nigeria, Christianity is predominant with limited spread of traditional belief.

In the Southeast, there are preponderant numbers of Catholics, Anglicans Methodists and Pentecostals with few traditional belief faithful, while the Niger Delta is majorly Christians except Edo State, which has fairly population of Muslim, in Auchi, Afuze and their contiguous communities.

Across Yoruba land, many people are adherents to Yoruba/ Irunmole spirituality with its philosophy of divine destiny that all can become Orisha(Ori, spiritual head; Sha is chosen: to be one with Olodumare(Oni Odu, the god source of all energy; ma

re, enlighten /triumphs. Other minority religious and spiritual groups in Nigeria include Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Chrislam(a syncretic faith melding elements of Christianity and Islam). In addition, Grail Movement and Hare Krishna have been on the increase in Nigeria. Due to religion upheavals especially in the north where tens of thousands of innocents' citizens have died and properties worth of hundreds of millions destroyed on religion elicited violence, it is an increasing debate if traditional religion is not preferable to Christianity and Islam- two major religions that have sources of religion unrest in Nigeria for many decades. Divisions in two major religions, Islam and Christianity The majority of Nigeria Muslims are Sunni, but a significant Shia and Sufi minority exists and some northern states incorporated Sharia law into their previously secular legal systems.

This action seemed counterproductive as it broke the fragile religious harmony in the north and fuelled religion tension, which probably accounted for the formation of Boko Haram insurgence that seeks to overthrow the secularity of Nigeria state to establish Islamic Caliphate.

In Christendom, there is a split between Catholicism and Protestantism. There is further fragmentation of Protestantism into Pentecostalism and Orthodox Church.

The leading Protestant Churches that have the toga of orthodoxy are Anglican Communion, Methodist, Baptism, Seven Days Adventists, and Salvation Army etc. The leading Pentecostal Churches are: The Lord Chosen Charismatic Revival Movement aka Chosen, Mountain on Fire and Miracle Ministries MFM, Redeem Christian Church of God, Christ Embassy, Synagogue Church of All Nations, Christian Pentecostal Mission CPM, Deeper Christian life, Living Faith aka Winners Chapel, The Redeemed Evangelical Mission TREM, Four Square Church, Apostolic faith Church, Assembly of God Church etc.

In Southwest (Yoruba land) there is predominant Anglican population, the Southeast (Igbo land) has principally Catholics and Edo area has predominantly Assemblies of God, which was introduced into Nigeria by Gabriel Ojemekere Oyakhilome and his associates at Enugu.

CHAPTER SIX

ETHNIC STRUGGLES AND CONFLICTS IN NIGERIA

The amalgamation of the Southern and Northern Protectorates of Nigeria in 1914 by the British Colonial Administrator, Lord Lugard, unified the belligerent ethnic nationalities into the country Nigeria.

This increased the frequency of interactions of varied ethnic groups and individuals in multiethnic polity, exacerbating the phenomenon of ethnicity and ethnic conflicts within the geopolitical entity called Nigeria.

These ethnic conflicts emanated from conditions of contested claims over access to or control of scarce resources, opposing perceptions by multiple users or potential beneficiaries, of limited resources and politico-economic dividends of government and governance.

Hausa-Fulani and Igbo conflagrations

The earliest near riot situation that brewed between the Hausa settlers and the indigenes of Jos area was in 1932. This smoldering ethnic struggle replicated in the Jos riot of 1945. The riot was an ethnic conflict between the Hausa and the Igbo that last for two days. Two people were killed with many injured and considerable properties were destroyed

or damaged. The Igbo masterminded general strike of 1945 occasioned severe hardship for Hausa people who readily, acted on the British Colonial Administration's insinuation and went on rampage and riot.

There was also the Kano violence of 1953 that erupted between the Hausa- Fulani and the Igbo. The genesis of this violence was the contentious issue of self- governance in 1956, but the Hausa- Fulani led ethnic groups in the north were strongly opposed to that date. At the height of the tension between the northern and southern leaders violence ensued that mainly engulfed the Igbo ethnic group, which incidentally has over the years, become the traditional victims of Northern hostility because they are the major socio- economic competitors of the Hausa. These conflicts lasted for four days leaving thirty-six dead and two hundred and forty-one wounded.

Orchestrated program against the Igbo by Hausa- Fulani soldiers

The military coups of 1966 set in motion a series of ethnic engineered pogroms against the Igbo. In 15 January, 1966, a military coup led by Major Nzeogwu, from Igbo speaking community in Delta State was deliberately misinterpreted and mischievously christened Igbo military coup against the backdrop that the coup plotters who called themselves, " Supreme Council of the Revolution of the Nigeria Armed Forces" lucidly stated their mission and motive.

This for all intent and purposes, were not ethnic, but nationalistic and altruistic although misguided as they proclaimed their intention to build a "prosperous nation, free from corruption and internal strife". At the time, the Majors struck, a huge climate of problems hovered around the newly independent nation, strife riots, federal army occupied Southwest and most especially the nation was bedeviled with

cankermouth of bribery and corruption.

The coup toppled the government of Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. The counter coup of 29 July 1966 brought into power the military officers of northern extraction led by Col Yakubu Gowon.

There were attacks on Igbo both military and civilians over the northern cities through orchestrated violence by soldiers and the youths in orgy of blood. Excerpt from 1978 extensive work of Nnoli on the ethnics in Nigeria, titled, 'Ethnic Politics in Nigeria' Page 243 reads: "Igbo lives and properties were attacked on a massive scale on 29 and 30 May 1966.

It Began with the demonstration in Zaria of the student of the Institute of Administration and the Ahmadu Bello University against the Unification Decree which they feared would adversely affect their competition for jobs by throwing open the relatively closed job market of the North to Southerners.... Following closely in the wake of these May killings came the July massacre of the Igbo within the armed forces... the Northern soldiers were determined to end Igbo supremacy in the military and the federation.

On 29th July 1966, they descended with ethnic vengeance on the Igbo officers and men, eliminating them in large numbers, and forcing the others to go into hiding" This culminated into the thirty months atrocious civil war in which the Igbo ethnic group was the victim. During the civil war, millions of people lost their lives and a record of destructions of property worth millions of naira.

Hausa- Fulani and Tiv conflicts

Another ethnic uprising worthy of note occurred between the Tiv, the Hausa-Fulani settlers, and their supporters in the Middle Belt in 1960. Consequent to the Hausa-Fulani ethnic

majority in northern Nigeria, Mr. J.S Tarka foisted the United Middle Belt Congress as a rival political party to the Northern People Congress, to ensure the liberation of the Tiv from socio-economic domination of Hausa -Fulani.

The United Middle Belt Congress had a landslide victory over its major opponent, the Northern People Congress in Tiv land to the displeasure of the Hausa-Fulani political and traditional elites. The traditional rulers through the Native Authority System unleashed oppressive rule against Tiv supporters of the United Middle Belt Congress. Many suffered dismissal from employment, while many were harassed, arrested and imprisoned. This sparked off the spiral of conflicts that occurred between August and November 1960 characterized by large-scale arson and deliberate murder.

Similar riots occurred in Tiv land in 1964 in which about two thousand people died with much property destroyed.

Ethnic conflicts in Warri, Delta State

Ethnic conflicts in Warri are traceable to three main factors. The first is the change of the title of Olu of Itsekiri to Olu of Warri. This involved the Olu of Itsekiri ruling over all the three ethnic groups in Warri, Ijaw, Itsekiri and Urhobo and other inhabitants. The Urhobo and the Ijaw abhorred this internal colonialism and it led to violent and bloody confrontations particularly in 1952 and 1953. The relocation of the Warri South Local Government Headquarter from Ogbe-Ijaw, an Ijaw town to Ogidigben an Itsekiri settlement is the second factor that caused several inter-ethnic conflicts between the Ijaw and Itsekiri in Warri. There was perception of gains on the creation of the Local Government Councils and the location of their headquarters. This arouse by limited access to development opportunities.

Thirdly, conflicts rose out of claims of royalty and especially the Ijaw and Itsekiri in the riverine areas and the contest for

compensation by different communities and ethnic groups for the use of lands or creeks, which ownership was still subject of dispute especially by the Ijaw and Itsekiri in the riverine areas.

Upheaval between Nupe and Yoruba ethnic nationalities

The Nupe-Yoruba conflict in Kwara State in June-July 2000 was a conflict triggered by the defence of ethnic interest. Nupe and Yoruba farmers had claims over a small piece of fertile land (Fadama). According to July 31, 2000 publication of the Nigerian Tribune, two farmers, one from Share and the other from Isaragi, had interest in the land. There was perception that the two fighters as representatives of the Yoruba and Nupe ethnic groups and this resulted in violent inter-ethnic clashes leading to loss of several lives and property.

Zango-Kataf imbroglio in Kaduna State

The Zango-Kataf conflict in Kaduna State was caused by the decision to relocate the Zango-Kataf district market to a new and more spacious and accessible site with opportunities for expansion. As the new site was located in Kataf area, they welcomed the relocation proposal, while the Hausa Community in Zango vehemently opposed it; some people from Hausa Community in Zango town harassed and assaulted Kataf women, when they went to the site for market

activities on 6 February 1992. Kataf men were provoked and the ensuing conflicts claimed many lives and property.

Emergences that fuelled ethnic massacres

There are events that reinforced ethnic suspicion and mistrust, as did the annulment of the 12 June election of 1993, where MKO Abiola the Presidential candidate of SDP of Yoruba extraction won the election but prevented from assuming power by Northern Political military officers who were in the helms of affairs at that time.

Soldiers under the instructions of Chief of Army Staff Gen Abacha a Fulani mowed down many protesters predominantly Yoruba youths who rose in protest for the injustice in the street of Lagos.

At the wake of the Sharia Judiciary System declarations in some northern states of the country in 2001, unparalleled ethno-religious massacres occurred in Kano, Kaduna and plateau state.

So, severe and devastating were the conflicts particularly in Plateau State, that the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Olusegun Obasanjo declared a state of emergency in Plateau State to stem the ugly to the sustained ethnic unrest.

These pogroms are usually camouflaged ethnic riots for supremacy between the various ethnic groups. Excerpts from Olowolabi Y piece, in TELL Magazine, page 43, August 19, 2002 titled, "Home of Battler and Bloodshed":

"Since the September 7, 2001 bloodbath in the Jos, the city seems to have fallen the respectable Plateau, as home of peace and tourism. From the Jos city tragedy to the recent killings in the adjoining towns and villages, the state has been engulfed

for just one reason: the battle for supremacy between the Hausa and Fulani settlers and the indigenes. And this has been largely exploited by religious bigots and political jobbers."

At the wake of publication of one of the tabloids in Denmark, on a caricature portrayal of Holy Prophet Mohammed, riot broke in Kano; Hausa- Fulani youth has targeted their contemporaries of other ethnic nationalities for massacre and maiming. Similar incident happened when Most Beautiful Pageant scheduled to host in Nigeria at Abuja in 2002, Hausa-Fulani youths rose to abort the event that was on going by unrestrained killings of fellow Nigerians of other ethnic nationalities. Ethnicity has grown, setting ethnic communities against one another in the struggles for ethnic entitlements and hegemony.

The conflicts are far and sporadic. For space, the discussion of sundry ethnic conflicts may not be possible such conflicts as Hausa- Kataf, Jukun -Tiv, Kuteb-Jukun, Hausa- Mambilla and Ogoni- Adoni, Ife- Modakeke, Umumeri- Aguleri etc. Indeed, inter-ethnic conflicts aside from the truncation of sustainable socio-economic development of a nation, the bequeathing of a legacy of enduring bitter memories of inter-ethnic relations; it touches on human life, shelter, and the making of a living.

Therefore, public policies have often been evolved in ethnicity's capacity to catalyze inter- ethnic conflicts.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CAUSES OF ETHNIC STRUGGLES IN NIGERIA

There have been an upsurge of ethnic conflicts and violence in the world over in recent years. Notably, not all conflicts that appear ethnically based is ethnic motivated. All conflicts have several dimensions and it will be wrong to classify many contemporary conflicts as ethnic.

However, there is consideration of a conflict as ethnic when it involves organized political movement, mass unrest, separatists' action, and civil wars with opposing lines drawn along ethnic boundaries.

It is usually a conflict between minorities and dominant majorities, where the majority controls access to the power and resource of the state and the minorities, often without going into open confrontation with the dominant group, question the state structure as a whole and act violently when the society and the state are unable to suggest any mechanisms for regulation.

Domination of one ethnic nationality in power Many scholars have articulated sundry theoretical approaches to the study of ethnic conflicts.

Concurring to the postulations of three scholars: Nnoli, Osaghae and Otite, there is the sociological approach. The proponents of this theoretical approach argue that there is exacerbation of ethnic conflict by the usurpation of members of one ethnic group of certain privileged social niches and the effects of social discrimination based on ethnic characteristics. Quoting from Otite book, 'Ethnic Pluralism, Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflicts in Nigeria', empirical

experience has shown that:

"The control of the state is the greatest prize in ethnically plural societies- it is regarded not only as the source but also the distributor of resources commonly valued in the society. As the chief 'allocator' of services, facilities and factors of development, the state becomes a target over which control, ethnic territorial groups engage in an endless struggle"

This explains why there is intense and ferocious contest of the prime political positions as the President of the federation, President of the Senate, Speakership of lower legislative chamber and that of State Assemblies and governorship of the state; there is a fierce contest of Chairmanship of local councils and Chairmanship of public agencies by the various ethnic groups.

Obsessions to control the leadership of market or trade union. An important economic determinant in the orchestration of ethnic conflict is the tendency to control the trade and market activities by members of a certain group, usually a minority group.

This often causes a negative reaction on the rest of the population. The Igbo ethnic group suffered series of pogrom in different parts of the country because of their dominance in trade and market activities in Nigeria. Otherwise, how could one explain the selective massive destructions unleashed on the Igbo traders and their cooperative kiosks during the April 1991, Bauchi crisis? A crisis erupted between the Sardauna and the Hausa-Fulani ethnic groups in Tafawa- Balewa, which spread to Bauchi city, and the Igbo traders and properties became targets for killing, maiming and destructions by the rioters.

Elites' conspiracy and inordinate ambition

Aside from economic calculation, there could be other powerful dynamics in operation which more or less occasion ethnic conflicts. A powerful dynamics in the explanation of ethnic

conflicts is the elite based theory of conflict. A political science theory reinforces the role of intellectuals and politicians in fanning the embers of ethnic bigotry and ethnic strife. This approach is germane to ethnic conflicts in Nigeria. The issue of power and the hedonistic predisposition to rule on the part of elite elements, the interaction between power and material reward are crucial factors for understanding the causes of ethnic nationalism and conflict in Nigeria. The elites as the holders of pre-eminent positions in society manipulate the non-elites in their attempt to optimize their assets to gain maximum resources. They achieve this through their actions and utterances. Let us consider two important statements credited to two prominent members of the Nigerian elites Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa as was recorded in legislative council debates in March 24, 1947 where he declared, "I make it clear to you that if the British quitted Nigeria now at this stage, the northern people would continue their interrupted conquest to the sea". Two years later, on July 6, 1949, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe in the West African Pilot said that:

"It would appear that the God of Africa has specially created the Ibo nation to lead the children of Africa from the bondage of the ages 'and that' the martial prowess of the Ibo nation at all stages of human history has enabled them not only to conquer others but also to adapt themselves to the role of preserver... The Ibo nation cannot shirk its responsibility".

These statements served as warning as well as incentives to elites from other parts of Nigeria to seek greater ethnic identity, which has led to fierce inter - ethnic struggles and violence in Nigeria. The concept of conquest present in the two statements was very inciting. Read what Nnoli work in 1978 titled, " Ethnic Politics in Nigeria" opined:

"The remarks create possibilities for the emergence of conflict spirals capable of escalating inter- ethnic hostility into violence. By their negative effects on the perceptions of ethnic opponents,

such utterances create the opportunities for the emergence of an increasingly intense spiral of self- reconfirming, self-reinforcing and self- perpetuating hostile suspicious actions, and counteractions which fan the embers of ethnic antagonism and violence."

This is because the rank-and-file participants are often ready to follow their leaders out of a sense of collective solidarity, irrespective of the consequences. Amirahmadi paper titled, "A Theory of Ethnic Collective Movement and Its Application to Iran," was succinct in this issue. He argued in his presentation that this approach could not fully explain the phenomenon of mass mobilization itself, the intensity of emotion among participants in conflicts, nor the strength of group desire for autonomy and the readiness to sacrifice and to the most violent methods to achieve goals formulated by activists.

Fear of minority ethnic groups against domination

Horowitz in his book, 'Ethnic Groups in Conflict' posited that a potent factor in implication of ethnic conflicts is the psychological fear of domination often expressed by discriminated and dominated minority groups. The 'reaction of concern' comes from the exaggerated feeling of danger and leads to 'extreme actions in response to danger'. These are the fear of having one established values changed thus cutting one drift in a wider and more uncharted sea called Nigeria that seems to lack an articulated goal and value system, worsen by the fear of competition for scarce resources, and many other fears that may be explicit or implicit. This irrational fear of losing cultural integrity becomes a powerful political reality in Nigeria that has occasioned internecine inter-ethnic struggles and conflicts.

At the outset of politics in Nigeria, the conduct of political activities was on the three ethno-regional groupings. The Northern People Congress (NPC) was a northern based party for Hausa- Fulani and all minority ethnic groups in the Northern Region, the Action Group (AG), for the Yoruba and all minority

ethnic groups in the West, while the National Council of Nigeria Citizens (NCNC), was for the Igbo and ethnic groups in the East. Fear, suspicion and uncertainty informed the formation of political parties by the minority ethnic nationalities in the various regional groupings. For example, J. S Tarka led the Tiv and other ethnic minority groups in the

Middle Belt to form United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC), while Alhaji Aminu Kano formed the Northern Elements Progress Union (NEPU). These are in response to the domination of the North by Hausa-Fulani ethnic group.

In his article, titled, " Do Ethnic Minorities Still Exist in Nigeria" which appeared in Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics Osaghae E asserted strongly that ethnicity and ethnic based conflicts base on fear can hardly stay in plural societies such as Nigeria for there will always emerge new majorities and minorities with changing structure of the state.

Group legitimacy and sense of collective identity compel the idea of a state as an attribute and guarantee of preserving group entity.

There is endowment of state that connotes territory, institutions of power, and resources, with ethno- national character and an element of a certain cultural system.

According to a paper presented by Tishkov VA to a conference in United Nations University Tokyo, he declared that the state is the apparatus through which the ethnic group establishes territory and language symbols of collective legitimacy and protection.

The Nigeria multi-ethnic society has witnessed secessionist struggles principally characterized by symbolic rather than pragmatic interests.

The declarations of the Delta People Republic in 1966 and the Republic of Biafra in the 1967 and a host of other threats emanate from these symbols of collective legitimacy.

The distribution and acquisition of prestigious symbols is a real and rational subject for ethnic conflicts and these are different from material interest.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE CONCEPT OF UNITY IN DIVERSITY

The political and social climate that prevails in the world today emphasizes differences, disunity and violence rather than the qualities of unity and productive and constructive energy that are required to sustain human societies. These negative processes and forces have perpetuated the alienation from the basic material roots of human existence, the natural world of which we are a part. Excerpt from Mary and Clark book, 'Ariadne's: The Search for New Modes of Thinking':

"...the best hope of humankind is to maintain as rich a diversity of social type as possible, with the expectation that each of these experiments in the human future will cross-fertilize with others, and thus maintain the vital diversity essential for indefinite.... competition for ascendancy in the world trade, power, or military might simply empty, meaningless concepts for the future. By encouraging diversity elsewhere, each society ensures a rich source of ideas and techniques for its own future".

Despite the immense diversity of creation, all accept that there exists in nature a profound underlying unity. The search for this unity provides the motivation for the lives of many different men-some who, like Einstein, search for it in general natural laws and others who, like Teilhard de Chardin, would trace cosmic evolution to a divine origin.

Understanding the concept and its historical origin

The use of the phrase unity in diversity and similar concepts is not a new phenomenon. Its roots date back hundreds of years in non-Western cultures such as North America and Taoist societies in 400-500 B.C. In pre- modern Western culture, it

has been implicit in the organic conceptions of the universe that have been manifest since the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations through medieval Europe and into the Romantic era. The phrase has appeared in contemporary times, in a variety of areas including a bibliography of libertarian publications and an interdisciplinary academic symposium in which the following articulation of the concept posited by Michael Novak appeared:

Unity in diversity is the highest possible attainment of a civilization, a testimony to the most noble possibility through passionate concern for choice, in an atmosphere of social trust.

The most profound use of the concept has developed over the last 150 years as an integral aspect of ecological understanding of the world and, to that end; it appears most frequently now in literature promoting that vision. Outside the natural and social sciences and humanities, literature that draws from ecology, the concept appears in a well-articulated form in the Baha'I writings.

It is interesting to note that the origins of the Baha'I Faith coincided almost to the year with the roots of ecology although none of the original members of either 'movement' had any earthly connection with each other. The parallels in the development of both movements are also interesting to note that they both continue to emerge from obscurity in their respective domains, gaining recognition and respect as they effectively and constructively respond to the challenges that face them.

Ecological foundation of the concept

The ecological context of the concept is on the scientifically derived knowledge that biological diversity is necessary to sustain the healthy existence of ecosystems and that the healthy progress of the planet is dependent on a diversity of such ecosystem.

There are species that would be undiscovered, because of the destruction of the environment in which they live by massive transformations such as deliberate burning of rainforest to release more land that is arable.

Natural scientists and environmentalists lament on the loss of these species. In other cases, the environments are so sensitive that even minor changes result in unforeseen consequences such as extinction of some species.

The long- term consequences of the escalating loss of species diversity is unknown at this time, efforts are underway at all scales of human endeavours to deal with the problem, the most recent global event being the drafting of the Biodiversity Convention at the Earth Summit.

Social ecology and eco-feminism foundation of the concept

This ecological foundation for the concept of unity in diversity has given rise to its use by movements such as social ecology, eco-feminism, and organizations based on native principles. It has been a moral foundation for harmony between some of these movements. In summing up the historical conflict between social and deep ecologist, Bookchin and Foreman book, 'Defending the Earth' quoted Steve Chase statement, 'Unity-in-diversity is a basic attribute of healthy eco- communities. Why should it not be a healthy characteristic for the radical ecology movement? As will become more evident shortly, the concept finds its most profound application in human relationships. An excerpt from the Bookchin and Foreman book reads:

For feminism in general and eco-feminism in particular, the concept represents a means to unite the diversity of women's voices around the world, drawing on their cultural and geographical distinctions, and finding common ground in their experience as women.

The concept could also find expression in the current attempt by Natives in the North America to acquire self- governance, drawing on their common experience since European settlement and diverse expressions of their cultural tradition to provide riches in a new social environment. Murray Bookchin has articulated one of the central aims of radical ecology as a social force in contemporary society: one of the tasks of the radical ecology movement is to articulate a general human interest that transcends the real but particularistic interests of class, nationality, ethnicity, and gender in order to build alliances to reconstruct our communities along more humane and ecological lines.

Yet we need to be wary of talking too glibly about the general human interest. Multiculturalism must mean more than mistaking the currently dominant culture as universal and expecting other people to adopt the perspective of this dominant culture.

Indeed, Bookchin makes a crucial argument in the above statement that is the fear that submerging of many 'minority' groups within a dominant culture characterized by white, male values. It is this fear also within contemporary Western society that has given rise to the notion of 'political correctness' a phenomenon that threatens to increase the fragmentation in society despite its attempts to foster awareness of and sensitivity to differences.

A healthy and constructive articulation of the concept of unity needed to erase those fears and mends the rifts that have developed. The concept must incorporate a set of principles that is universally applicable to all human beings because they are human at the same time that it provides protection for the diversity of characteristics that maintains the vibrancy of the human species. In simple terms 'Unity in diversity' is a slogan celebrating co-operation between different groups of people in a

single society and socio- ecological philosophy that describes a sense of oneness despite physical or psychological barriers.

Thrive of unity without uniformity and universal goodwill

To establish a universally recognized concept of unity, there is need for an acceptance that universal principles exist. These principles reflect the values that apply to every human being. These principles lie at the core of all the major religions and most noble cultural traditions. The values of universal goodwill, love for one neighbor, and the golden rule of treating others, as we ourselves would wish to be treated are just some of the ideals that are common to all cultures.

They have fostered social union and amity between people for countless generations, inspired great works of art, and continue to underscore our highest aspirations. Today's world would indeed benefit from a profound affirmation of these essential spiritual truths as Laszlo Ervin book submitted,"

The Inner Limits of Mankind: Heretical Reflections on Today's Values, culture and politics." To Laszlo, the application of these values requires rising above the religion dogmas, political ideologies and national allegiances in which the world is bitterly divided. It entails restating the fundamental truths that lie behind all religions, philosophies and traditions. Consideration of these values...leads us to recognize the oneness of the entire human species, an ideal that extends former loyalties and does not abrogate them.

If there is acceptance of this philosophical foundation for the application of unity, traditional rivalries and vendettas must be forgotten, divisive theories and ideologies submerged and national borders transcended. The interdependence implied by the notion of the oneness of humanity requires a relinquishing of any idea or activity that allows for the suffering of even one person.

If there are interdependent, then the suffering of one affects us all. When a person receives an injury to one part of the body, it affects the entire system of that person as the body attempts to heal itself. If the injury is severe, there is debilitation of whole body not just the affected part. The treatment in that situation is multifaceted. The therapy is not only on the injured area but also the whole body receives the benefit of nutrients provided to assist in the healing. Human beings have not yet learnt how to apply this concept of healing to the plant or to the human species itself.

They carry the organic analogy one-step further each component of the body performs essential and specific function, without which the entire body is handicapped. Each human being possesses talents and capacity when given opportunity to acquire skills that contribute to the ongoing progress and development of the species. Those talents and capacities ideally contribute to the richness of the human community as individuals express themselves freely and harmoniously with others. However, humanity has developed institutions and systems that inhibit optimal function of each individual in the collectivity. Because the possession of ingenuity and creativity, humans have developed coping mechanisms that have obscured not only the hidden damages cause by ignoring certain fundamental characteristics of human species, but also the direct

casual connections between the efforts to 'improve' human existence and the devastation wreaked by such 'improvement'.

As long as there is, inhibition of human beings in any part of the planet from developing their individual potentials the entire species will remain handicapped. There is achievement of true unity when each individual becomes an active and functioning participant in the whole performing the skills possessed as constructive and productive contributors to the local,

regional, and global community.

This goal can be accomplished if a balance between the physical and spiritual dimensions of human existence is achieved, enabling productive contributions to human society to be offered as service to ongoing progress and development of the world without fear of exploitation and oppression.

The Baha'I writings include many evocative analogies to explain a vision of unity characterized by diversity rather than uniformity. 'Abdu'l-Baha in the talk in delivered during his visit to USA and Canada in 1912 on Promulgation of Universal Peace offers this description of a flower garden to illustrate the concept:

As difference in degree of capacity exists among human souls as difference in capability is found, therefore, individualities will differ one from another. But in reality this is a reason for unity and for discord and enmity. If the flowers of a garden where of one colour, the effect will be monotonous to the eye; but if the colour are variegated, it is most pleasing and wonderful. The difference in adornment of colour and capacity of reflections among flowers gives the garden its beauty and charm. Therefore, although, we from different individualities... let us strive like flowers of the same divine garden to live together in harmony.

Even though each soul has own individual perform and colour, all are reflecting the same light, all contributing fragrance to all same breeze which blows through the garden, all continuing to grow in complete harmony and accord.

The light that all human reflect is the spiritual foundation for the concept of unity expressed in this book. It manifests the source of all creation, the qualities latent within each creature, including humans that reflect those of the Creator.

There is emerging perception and expression on this aspect of creation by participants in the deep ecology, eco- feminist, and bioregional movements. This passage from the Baha'I writings also alludes to the differences within the human community, emphasizing that this diversity should be a reason for unity

rather than discord, a vision that in the contemporary post-modern ideological environment requires further elaboration.

CHAPTER NINE

THE CHALLENGES OF UNITY IN DIVERSITY

Cultural diversity is an inescapable fact of modern life. Culture refers to a historically inherited system of meaning and significance in terms of which a group of people understands and structures their individual and collective lives. It defines the meaning or point of human activities, social relations and human life in general and the kind and degree of significance or value to be attached to them. A culture is a system of meaning and significance embodied in the beliefs and practice of a people, which collectively constitute the identity. To say that almost every modern society is culturally diverse or multicultural is to say that its members subscribe to and live by different though overlapping systems of meaning and significance.

Sources of cultural diversity

Several forces and influences shape society and give it dynamism. These influences break the boundaries of homogeneity and push the society into a new character and image with open borders receptive to accommodate other distinct values. The receptiveness to other views gives the society its modernity. The pluralities of modern society are an attestation of its dynamism. Cultural diversity in modern society has several sources that facilitate its existence. They are as follows: Newfound freedom and liberty for self-expression. Many societies include different ethnic, religious, cultural and other communities, with their more or less distinct way of life.

Some of these communities suffered protracted deprivation of collective self-expression in the name of nation building or a

hegemonic ideology, and are now keen to exercise their newly won freedoms. Many men and women, profoundly shaped by liberal individualism, take pride forming their views and making their own choices. They naturally arrive at different views of life. The attestation of this is the breakdown in the traditional moral consensus, which both requires and makes space for individual choices.

Influence of Globalization to cultural diversity Globalization too exposes each society to different currents of thoughts, and its members respond to this in different ways. Immigration is yet another source of cultural diversity and it takes many forms. Free movements of people across international borders usually increases when encumbrance such as visa issuances that create barriers have been removed as achieved by unification of countries under one body as done in Europe where countries within the continents integrate under the umbrella of European Union to promote mutual interest. There is a similar convergence of countries for advancement of collective interest within the West Africa Sub Region achieved under the aegis of ECOWAS. There is free movement of nationals of the countries within the continental and regional bodies cited above respectively as each has a common visa for all the countries within its union. Recently, there is a new initiative in Africa, Africa Continent Free Trade Agreement AfCFTA- a platform for African countries to collaborate in several sectors without hitherto national barriers that restricted free movement of man and goods within the continent.

Effects of multinationals to cultural diversity Multinationals move their staff around from one country to another. Members of diaspora return to the lands of origin in their old age. Sometimes such movement becomes inevitable on ground of other circumstances of life like a sudden change of economic fortune of their country of birth, increasing insecurity in their countries of abode that there is no guarantee of his safety and that of the family, afflictions that attention and care from home

country can provide the panacea etc.

In the instances cited above, new ideas and practices are imported as people are reabsorbed back to their former community hence, spring forth new culture as addendum to the diversity.

Phenomenon of Asylum and its influence on cultural diversity

Granting of asylum to fleeing nationals of other countries is a source of diversity. The world is becoming increasingly unsafe as wars, terrorism and violent crimes have taken centre stage in many countries in different continents. Added to these are famine, starvation, epidemic and natural or artificial disasters which the world community is a contending with have compelled movements of people.

It is fact that, people seek a place of safety for themselves and their families away from any occurrence that is a threat to their life. Refuge has been a big issue in recent time as people who flee from social-economic violence, political persecutions and desperate circumstances seek and secure asylum in different countries.

These people integrate within the community with new cultures. As years pass this new culture is entrenched into the community and becomes a dominant feature that shapes the cultural character of the community.

Movement of labour force to developed countries Many advanced and industrialized countries in Western Europe and America are short of skilled and unskilled labour to sustain their economy and break new grounds in their development drive. To this end, they readily recruit immigrants who are usually from the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe.

The brain drain most African countries suffer is occasioned

by enticement of the Western world who lure able body men and women both skilled and unskilled to meet their work force deficits. These prospective workers bring with them their own distinct ways of thought and life, hence increasing the multiplicity of cultures within the community of their abode.

Diversity an intrinsic character of modern society It appears that the sources of diversities within the global community are existential issues which are in divorceable from social-economic configuration of the modern world and the attendance dynamics, it is unlikely that cultural diversity will disappear or extinguish in the foreseeable future, it is not only an inescapable but a more or less feature of modern life. Modern society is open to superior ideas and ideals that shapes a new way of life and enhance the totality of its image. Such society is never saturated, it creates vista of opportunities for accommodation of new members.

How immigrant culture defines diversity in modern society Although, immigration of skilled and unskilled labour is an important source of cultural diversity in modern society, it is not the only one. Even if there is an abrupt end to it, other sources of diversity would remain; it is therefore important to avoid all common mistake of rationalizing diversity and equating it or attributing it exclusively to immigration. Furthermore, the diversity introduced by immigrants is not necessarily deeper or more extensive than that which already obtains in many Western societies. Some of the latter have indigenous people whose ways and thoughts are quite different from those of the rest of the society. More importantly, they also include individuals and groups who take quite different views from the majority of such subjects as homosexuality, gay marriage, cohabitation, relations between parents and children, and the place of religion in public life, family discipline, the

capitalist economy, and respect for the law.

On almost all these subjects, immigrants often share the views of the majority, and the moral and cultural divide between them and the rest of society is narrower and shallower than that separating its own members. It may be self-serving to exorcise immigrant cultures, and concludes that just because immigrants look different, speak differently and came from unfamiliar countries their moral or cultural lives are or must also be quite different from place in which they have come to reside. This is not to deny that immigrant cultures often differ in important respects, but to point out that these and other differences should not blind us to the commonalities and that they are not necessarily more intractable than the other differences found in the receiving society.

Contemporary multicultural society and pre- modern society

Sometimes, there is argument that almost all societies in history except the most primitive have been multicultural, and that there is nothing new or historically distinctive about our age. Although, this is true, it ignores some of the unique features of contemporary multicultural societies. Whatever their differences, almost all pre-modern societies were religious and broadly agreed on many of their basic moral beliefs and practices. Thanks to the absence of a moral consensus the unprecedented importance given to personal autonomy and choice, there is disagreement, which is far more deeper than ever before about the best way to lead individual and collective lives and about the meaning and significance of human activities and relations.

Furthermore, in pre-modern societies minority communities generally accepted their subordinate status, and remained confined to social and even geographical spaces assigned to them by the dominant group. Although, Turkey under Ottoman Empire had large Christian and Jewish communities

and it granted them far greater autonomy than is the case in any contemporary society, but Turkey was not and never saw itself as a multicultural society. It was a Muslim society, which happened to have non-Muslim minorities. It followed Islamic ideals and ran by Muslims who alone enjoyed full rights of citizenship. Non-Muslims infidels or protected minorities enjoy extensive cultural autonomy but few political rights.

Impact of democracy on contemporary multicultural society

Contemporary multicultural societies are different. Thanks to the spread of the democratic ideas of equality of status and rights, minority communities demand equal treatment, including absence of discrimination, equality of opportunity, and equal right to participate in and shape the collective life of society.

In recent years, there is interpretation of equal treatment widely to mean that the state should not identify with a particular ethnic, religious and cultural group as, and should be either neutral or even handed in its approach to its constituent communities. These and other demands taken for granted today would have been wholly unintelligible to pre-modern multicultural societies. The facts that modern societies share a common industrial economy such that their members cannot lead economically self-contained lives that they suffer domination by liberal ideas of individual choice, which they participate in a common political life that cuts across communal boundaries, etc. also add to their uniqueness.

Since deep and extensive cultural diversity is a fact of modern life and is legitimized in terms of widely shared and deeply held liberal and democratic ideas of individual choices and equal treatment, every modern multicultural society needs to find ways of accommodating diverse demands without losing its cohesiveness and unity. Different kinds of diversity raise

different problems and require different responses. The demand of an indigenous people territorially concentrated national minorities; immigrants, etc. are quite different in nature and there can be accommodation for them in the same way.

Diversity without fragmentation

The growing interdependence of the communities of the world over the last century or two has resulted in an increasingly interwoven and complex system of relations. The growth of the Western hegemony that has coincided with the development of the interdependence threatens to impose a uniform set of ideals and values directly and indirectly on all the people of the world. Notions of 'the good life' are increasingly viewed as synonymous with the possession of the consumer 'goods from the West rather than the Judeo-Christian and Enlightenment morals and values that in varying degrees shape Western society.

Because of the increasing dominance of the trappings of Western civilization throughout the world, endeavours to promote cultural diversity have become more vociferous in the last half of this century. As there was disruption of traditional life style of indigenous communities across the globe, there have been efforts to preserve those cultures in various ways. In contrast to the 'melting pot' approach of the United States, some Western countries like Canada express their commitment to the preservation of multiculturalism through open immigration policies and the fostering of community-based events and organizations that enable participants to continue many of the practices that are unique to their culture. Two scholars Clark and Mary in their combined work "Ariadne's Thread: The Search for New Modes of Thinking", expressed the ethic in this way:

The presence of cultural diversity, with the constant exchanging, through travel, trade, intermarriage and so on, of

cultural traits, offers humankind a rich source of new adaptive possibilities for cultural evolution to meet changing conditions in the future...

...Preservation of cultural diversity, far from being perceived as threat to human survival owing to rivalries and differences, needs rather to be respected and fostered by all cultures. Our global goal must not be simply tolerance of diversity, but its positive nurturing.

Each culture represents an important, perhaps crucial, experiment in the unfolding drama of human life on earth.

Multicultural events provides opportunity for members of different communities to learn more about each other, thus fostering increased awareness and understanding of the diversity within the human community.

The increased visibility and promotion of cultural diversity accompanied by stronger feelings of attachment to ethnic roots often cause conflicts among and within different groups. When there is a perception that the open acceptance of diversity as a threat to the preservation of one's own tradition, tension can develop and conflicts arise. When disharmony among individuals arises because of adherence to traditional expressions of culture (including religion), perhaps it is time to examine those traditions in light of a changing world.

Perhaps a re-examination of a certain cultural practice will reveal the reason for its development in the first place many decades if not centuries ago and offer a resolution to contemporary conflicts. Such an analysis will reveal why cultural traits are so important to the members of that group and what makes culture such a powerful aspect of human existence: An excerpt from the job of Clark and Mary cited above:

Each person, in order to retain those attributes we recognize as human, must live in relation to others within a social context, a culture, which gives meaning to individual existence. This needs

for cultural meaning is at once the sine qua non of human existence and the source of our greatest danger...

It is apparent that people everywhere, as they struggle to adjust their traditional world views to meet changing circumstances, must take care that they do not throw out the 'baby' of cultural meaning and bonding with the 'bath water' of maladaptive institutions, lest they end up with new institutions that are destructive of the human psyche itself.

Influence of religion on diversity without fragmentation

Religion, as the most powerful of cultural expressions tends to fill the void in life. It provides answers to many existential questions as life, death and the universe are still mysteries which human faculty has not decipher, however, religion provides escape and provides a hope for transcendental life. Religion has made tremendous impact in human societies by transforming lives and building stable families.

Sadly, in spite of the glowing subject of love, forgiveness, righteousness, and peace which religion espouses, it is the greatest source of conflict and tension. Nevertheless, religion continues to be a powerful force in human existence; it is destined to endure in one form or another. It may be vital to undertake intensive groups' evaluation. It is just possible that

the evidence will offer not only a resolution to the problems that continue to perpetuate the fragmentation within and between national communities but also a source of inspiration to unite global family through guidance for each individual at the interpersonal and community levels. This release of guidance and inspiration has the potential to have a massive impact on every aspect of human activity, a possibility that brings the discussion back to the basic focus of this thesis, the environmental crisis.

CHAPTER TEN

FOSTERING UNITY IN DIVERSITY IN NIGERIA

Nigeria is historically a child of circumstance. The British amalgamated various nationalities with distinct cultures without prior consultation on the component units on the workability of the amalgamation. Hence, more than 250 ethnic nationalities that constitute Nigeria were cobbled together for the advancement of the colonial interest of British which never in any measure bordered about the unity of the country instead they promoted the interest of one region against the others and sparked unhealthy ethnic rivalries with attendant suspicion and acrimony.

Even though the struggle for independence was on the platform of Nationalism, however, beneath the substratum laid a roaring ethnic bigotry and sectarianism and exemplified by the pre- independence political parties, which operated along ethnic line.

Hence, no sooner, sovereignty was attained with the departure of the colonial masters; the maladies sprang up to the centre stage to threaten national unity and cohesion as leaders who wielded state power gravitated to the advancement of ethnic interest to the detriment of national growth. Ethnic distrust and recrimination culminated in the collapse of the first republic and the 30 months civil war, which had devastating impact on the nation destiny.

It is pertinent to state that in ethnic diversity lays the strength of the nation.

The fascinating ethnic composition of Nigeria provides the socio-economic and political advantages of unity in diversity. Democracy together with its attendant challenges is an added advantage for enhancing the strength inherent in diversity. One of the most serious challenges to the successful working of democratic government in every civilization has been the unresolved tensions and conflicts generated by the phenomenon of diverse ethnic and social group. The actuality of plural society challenges the component units to drop any other identity aside from that of citizens to build a virile nation.

As H.C. De Sliver says, these ethnic differences are not wholly negative factors as sometimes imagined. Throughout human history, ethnic difference is the unifying force that gives separate agglomeration of people a sense of community and a strong group identity. This sense of a larger unity of distinct cultures of great values is the spirit of the current and sustained move towards regional globalization for political and economic or military reasons all over the world. The emergences of such formidable powers blocs as European Union, North Atlantic Treaty Organization NATO, African Union and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are eloquent examples of the relevance of regional globalization.

Government efforts for foster unity amidst diversity

There is complete absence of nationalism in the consciousness of most Nigerians. To redress this, there must be re-orientation of the citizens at all levels. A different kind of education and enlightenment must take place in order to make the citizens to appreciate the gains of unity in diversity. The therapeutic policies of the National Youths Service Corps (NYSC), Unity Schools, and federal government secondary schools were instituted as deliberate schemes and programmes to foster harmonious inter-cultural relationship with a view to reduce the sporadic inter- ethnic conflicts.

Establishment of National Youth Service Corps

In 1973, the Federal Military Government under Gen Yakubu Gowon felt that one of the post-civil war inevitable measures that would bring rapid national healing and perhaps mitigate the damaging impact of the war on the existence of Nigeria, as an indivisible nation was to foster unity in the country that just emerged from a sad 30 months civil war. Gowon therefore established the National Youth Service Corps as a policy that makes it mandatory for fresh Nigerian graduates that are below thirty years of age, to undergo one-year national services in ethno- regional area outside one's place of origin or ancestral root. This goes a long way to enhance inter-cultural understanding among the youths who are incidentally the leaders of tomorrow.

Furthermore, another of measure the federal government devised to foster unity in Nigeria was the establishment of unity schools and the federal government secondary schools. The concept was to bring youths from the diverse ethnic groups into close contact very early in life and create an enduring atmosphere of love and trust for each other that will lead to a reduction in mutual suspicion and mistrust. The increasing spate of ethnicity and ethnic conflicts in Nigeria belies the efficacy of these measures. Government established the unity schools and the federal government secondary schools for the evolution of a more harmonious inter-cultural perception leading to a reduction in inter-ethnic conflict.

Concept of federal character and impact of its commission

The unabated search for a just policy for the harmonious coexistence of the diverse ethnic nationalities has been the critical concern of Nigerian politicians before and since independence. The quest culminated in the doctrine of 'federal character' enshrined in the 1979 constitution. Paraphrasing Okpako article, 'Rotating Presidency or looting,' published in Guardian, October 1998, the wisdom behind the 'federal character' is to ensure that the distributions of appointments to

high offices must reflect the multiplicity of ethnic nationalities that make up Nigeria. The states must similarly run to reflect the existence of different ethnic groups or local government areas.

Therefore, Federal government in effort to ensure the implementation and sustenance of federal character to promote national cohesion and unity by ensuring equity in appointments and recruitment in some vital institutions, agencies and Ministries established, Federal Character Commission with statutory responsibility to ensure even distributions of political appointments and employment opportunities, so that no ethnic group suffer marginalization, but sadly implementation has been problematic as some ethnic bigot leaders still manipulate the system to advance parochial ethnic interest.

Imperative to create a new framework for co- existence

In addition, there is urgent need for the ethnic groups to meet and fashion out an indigenous administrative framework that would guarantee a fair, just and equitable co-existence. For now, the focus should be on how to build an efficient system that would meet the yearnings of the Nigerian people for development.

This is a task before all Nigerians and patriots. To accomplish the task, there is need to embrace relevant reforms and legislation to stimulate the citizens thoughts process on the way forward.

It is time to come to terms with the express needs of Nigerian people in the ability of government to rescue them from the present calamity through good governance that deliver democratic dividends to the door steps of majority of the citizenry. Democracy is only relevant to people to the extent that it offers freedom, justice and enabling environment for furtherance of the aspirations of individuals and groups. Nigerians must through consultations, discussions, debates and frank exchanges, which are some of the great attributes

of democracy, achieve a consensus for a just and equitable co-existence among the ethnic groups in Nigeria. It is vital as patriots to initiate and embrace peace in order to find a lasting solution to the carnage that has caused poverty, misery, and shame to Nigeria. There is need for the elimination of the afflictions that have continuously undermined and sabotage meaningful progress in Nigeria.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

WHO QUALIFIES AS A YOUTH

There is no universally acceptable definition of youth. However, a starting point in understanding this conception is an examination of the definition proffered by Rahamann Onike. He defined a youth as a person who is fully mature, energetic, and productive and has the potentials to contribute to the productive economy. At times, chronological age criterion is used; in which case, persons between the ages of 18 to 45 years are youths.

Nowadays, the use of the word youth is becoming more elastic as those who have attained the ages a little above 45 years wish to be recognized as youths especially when they are still healthy, agile and young in physical expression.

In addition, the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary defines youth as, " When a person is young, especially the time before a child becomes adult." The age bracket this definition encapsulates falls in between ages of eighteen to twenty- five years and young adults between twenty- five to thirty-five years.

The concept defined by recourse to certain parameters, sometimes, as a particular age group, as a stage of life or as an attitude. For statistical purposes, the United Nations General Assembly in 1985, the International Youth Year first defined youth as people between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four. In 1995, when the General Assembly adopted the World Programme of Action for Youth in the year 2000 and beyond, it again defined youth as between age fifteen to twenty-four, but acknowledged that the age range varies among different countries and society.

Youth as a spark, that needs no ignition

Youth is that clay, precast in either shape one wants. In the present, this is the sole reason for both exploitation and utilization of youths in the destruction and construction of any nation respectively. It is a fact that, every nation is highly dependent on the youths. Thus, it necessarily follows that youth is a powerful resource, which can either construct or destruct the whole nation. However, for the purpose of this book the definition of youth is limited to the time when a person is young especially the time before a child becomes adult.

It is a controvertible fact that the youth constitute the largest percentage in any existing society all around the world. The youth is the strength and life wire and bedrock of the nation. This segment of the nation is inherently associated with several challenges that expose them to be the most turbulent as well as the most beautiful part of life. It is important to note that the priceless resource of any country is human resource.

The human capital is fundamental in nation building because human being is the corner stone of any development and civilization. Out of the intellect endowments of a man, emerged creative ideas upon which are the currency of civilization and national emancipation. This fact is attestable by the number of countries that are able to attain steady growth and development without natural resource but with deposit of the intelligence of the people and the labour force, which consists largely by the youths.

Therefore, there is no gainsaying the fact that young people are seen as a crucial segment of a nation's development. Their contributions therefore are highly needful. Youth are social agent of change and as the saying goes, "youth are not only the leaders of tomorrow, but also the partners of today." Hence, they are vital segment of any nation. They are dominant force of social -economic and political changes.

The dynamics that shape and influence the youth

The Youth have tremendous impact on the society.

They are the loudest in the society. Both good and bad are traceable to the doorsteps of the youth. The youths are the thermometer to gauge the pulse of the society. They can be catalyst to change but also their actions can as well push the society to the cliff, where it can burst asunder.

Youths are like spring, a beautiful flower in the bloom prime of life. Empowering the segment of the population that are precious asset to future generation of any nation commences at a primary level in the family which is the first place a child encounters the world, before the society and government impact in the overall shaping of the future of the child as he grows, expands his knowledge and acquires experiences. Three pillars influence the direction and destiny of the young people. These are; family, society and government. Negligence of any of the dynamics would affect the station of the youth except others complement in such manner to nullify the impact. A productive and outstanding youth in most cases is the product of functional family, society and government. These dynamics function in different degrees to the overall development of the youth.

In developed countries where the family, society and government do not abdicate their responsibilities to the youths, sundry opportunities are available to leverage on to advance their aspirations. The developed countries and many other countries even in Africa, which appreciate the vital role of the youth as future leaders and the hope for the succeeding generations, create systems that are youth friendly.

In these areas, the youth face little hassles to actualize themselves. The road for making their life dream a reality and harnessing their potentials for nation building, is without 'pot holes' and 'bumps', hence, ambitious and focused youth can become whatever he dreams as there are vistas for such attainment. This is unlike the developing countries particularly in Nigeria where there are dearth of opportunities for the self-actualization of the youths. That is why youths falsify their age because failure to attain the dream success in time occasioned by few or absence of opportunities.

Society is an organic whole where every member acts upon it as it acts upon the individuals. Society is not an empty space but an environment crammed shades of people, individuals and corporate bodies, each with diverse functions, which collectively define the society direction and course. To build a society that has its pride of place, significant efforts ought to be put in place to fashion the youth as agent of positive change by premeditated creation of opportunities for them to attain the envisaged self. Youth are catalyst and must be co-opted in nation building, which demands collective engineering.

It makes a tremendous impact in enlisting in nation building the energies, innovative ideas, resilient spirit, tenacity of purpose, devotion to duty, and hunger for success, desire to make a difference and hosts of other qualities, which defines the youth. A nation that out of omission or commission fails to integrate its youth in development and growth processes will certainly discover that it gravitates in material want and in movement without motion. Such nation will always be a loser at the end.

The demand for inclusive growth where there is no exclusion of major segments of the society, entails ensuring equity in a heterogeneous country so that there is sense of belonging by all ethnic nationalities as the country moves along the path of progress. It is therefore vital to inform and engage the citizens both young and old in all major issues central or even tangential to the destiny of their nation. Citizens must maintain admirable posture of being vocal over all issues and matters that influence the course of their country; nation building is a product of collectivity.

There should be promotion of robust debate across the length and breadth of the country. It is imperative for the creation of platforms where all segments of the society include the youth ventilate on topical issues, proffer solution to problems and jointly deciding all principles and values that will be the bedrock of national ethos.

As a democratic nation the citizens including the youth should have unrestrained freedom to select those who should represent them.

CHAPTER TWELVE

YOUTH AS HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Youth are the hope for future not only in Nigeria but also for all nations of the world. That informs the reason the nations that got their priority right do not toy with this vital segment of the population. Developed countries invest massively in the youth; the future of the country is in the hand of the youth who will ultimately become the leaders of their country tomorrow.

Historical precedents of youth's roles in the nation building

As a matter of historical facts, the youths were at the driver seat in independent struggle in the forties and fifties. The Nationalists who won the independence from Britain after almost two decades of agitations, protests, sensitization, mobilization etc. entered the fray within the youth age bracket. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe was a youth when he returned from USA after his studies to set up his newspapers Pilot and Comet in Gold Coast (Ghana) and Nigeria to awaken and arouse the consciousness of captive Africans for political emancipation from stronghold of colonialism. Sarduna of Sokoto, Ahmadu Bello, Anthony Enahoro, Tafawa Balewa, Ladoke, Akintola, K.O Mbadiwe, began the struggle for independence in their youthful age.

For instance, Chief Anthony was a parliamentarian in his twenties and was twenty - seven years when he moved a motion for Nigeria Independence. These nationalists in youth age were vibrant and firebrand as it were but never resorted to deployment or arm struggle to attain their objective. They shunned violence and conducted themselves peacefully in the

political space stamping out last vestige of colonialism in Nigeria without force of arm.

Failures of youths who came to governance as military officers
Sadly, the Nigeria experiences with the military, which arrived at the nation political scene serendipitously following the overthrow of the first indigenous government in January 15, 1966 was not palatable. The men in uniform at the helm of political affairs in Nigeria in the sixties, seventies and eighties were youths. Gen Yakubu Gowon was 29 years when he became Head of State, Gen Murtala Mohammed, Odemegwu Ojukwu, and Gen.

Muhammadu Buhari etc. were all in the prime of their youth when they took the mantle of leadership. Unfortunately, these youths in the military perhaps out of sheer lack of experience, low education and greed reduced the once buoyant nation with prosperous and enviable future to rubbies from twelve most richest nation to world poverty capital in the midst of vast resources.

This ugly state occasioned by lack of investment in the critical sectors such as; education, power, agriculture and infrastructure. Various military regimes accorded much emphasis and attentions to the sectors that do not directly affect the people nor engineer the economic growth. There was channeling of huge resources to security, war and development of the new capital, Abuja. Nobody has calculated the monetary cost of the Nigerian civil war.

During the war, the federal government spent millions of Pounds in procurement of military hardware, ammunitions, remunerations of soldiers and public relation and diplomacy. Of course, if there was proper management of the circumstances that compelled the ugly side of the nation's history, the Nigeria- Biafra was avoidable. Have you imagined if the fund spent in the war was channel in building infrastructure in Nigeria?

During General Babangida's era, Nigeria spent billions of dollars in protecting the despotic regime of Samuel Doe and in prosecuting the wars in Liberia. Similarly, Gen Sani Abacha invested billions of the nation's hard-earned money in the war in Serra Leone to restore democratic government paradoxically the same man pulled down democratic structure in his country, incarcerated the winner of the freest election

in Nigeria. The development of new capital territory with unbridled urgency in the midst of agonizing miseries of the citizens is another misplaced priority of leaderships in Nigeria.

Today Nigeria the most populous Africa country cannot boast of critical infrastructure like power, which is the catalyst of development and actually ranks lowest in per kilowatt in power generation in Africa.

The vital place of ingenuity to young people

One would have thought that the young men who at various stages took over the government of Nigeria would have been concerned and sympathetic to the plights of the youths. Sadly, and regrettably they not only were indifference but some of their actions and inactions have brought the level of despondency of Nigerians within the youth bracket face which indeed compels male young graduates risks the journey across the Mediterranean Sea in search greener pastures or female graduates spurn their degree for sex slaves abroad.

Therefore, it is reasonable to assert that it is an onerous duty on the present day youths to remedy the deplorable situation they found themselves. To this end, the youth should do the needful, which devoid of violence, coup de tat, insurgency, terrorism or war. All that it demands is for the youth to focus on the challenges. Through honesty, cerebral disposition, courage, organization and self-auditing, the youths will rediscover themselves as Frantz Fanon opine, "Every generation out of the relative obscurity will discover its mission fulfill it or betray it." Young people must be diligent, willing and ready to take advantage of any opportunity that comes their way.

It is vital for the young people not to idle away until government creates opportunity for employment. They should read the sign of times and help themselves; it is a fact that jobs available are few and highly competitive. Besides, there are sundry indices that determine employment in Nigeria especially in the public sector where merit is often at the back seat; hence, young people must appreciate the imperative of ingenuity as one way of escaping the frightening employment situation in the country. Young people must develop themselves to be independent and self-reliance by conceptualization of their own businesses and become employers of labour. In such an era when the job is saturated, only ingenious young people make it unscathed, for it is frightening to live without a means of livelihood.

The value of skill acquisitions to young people

It is essential for the youths to appreciate their strength and limitations and eschew delusions and self-deceits, which would not take them further than themselves. Not every young person must have a white-collar job. Some must learn trade and skills for self-employment. In fact, some young people have to be welder, electrician, plumber, carpenter, bricklayer, artisan, and farmer. The society is organic and each role is essential in shaping its future, every job has a significant role in the growth of the nation.

Most developed nations have deficits of artisans, nurses, carpenters, electricians and other vocational jobs that is why such countries open floodgate for Africans and citizens of developing nations of Asia and Latin America to take up such jobs. As a matter of fact, the jobs no matter how menial they seem are contributing to the economy and somebody must fill the vacancies if their citizens are in short supply in such areas.

Exodus of youths to foreign countries and its perils It must be harped to the young people that escaping the current reality in search of greener pasture abroad, is not a way out of the youth predicament. Worse is travelling through illegality or using unconventional routes, which have proved fatal, as many able-bodied youths have met their Waterloo in such ill-embarked journey. Indeed, the issue of migrating abroad and urban drift in search of greener pastures have a negative impact on the national growth as able-bodied young men needed for vital sector like agriculture and in creative industry daily depart the shore of Nigeria to add to the productivity in the countries abroad.

No nation grows, when there is export of the productive energy of a critical element that his agency of creative ideas and innovations to contribute to other climes glories. Foreign aids

that African countries fall cap in hand, groveling before America and European countries do not import or transfer technology to spring development in Nigeria. Development is an intrinsic unrestrained movement of ideas encased in technology driven in a vehicle of justice, equity, respect of human right and transparency. Nigerian leaders should put their thinking cap and look inward, for there lays the power of development.

The need for the Youths to shun violence and criminalities. The young people must brace up to the present situation confronting them and leverage on their inherent energy, creativity and strength to change the narrative by creating new possibilities to better themselves and impact on nation building. They must shun violence and the hydra-headed devil of corruption, sloth, bribery, greed, hatred, terrorism, 419 and the yahoo syndrome.

A popular dictum says nothing good comes easy. Riches, power and other good things of life flow from God who often tries men heart disposition before enlisting them as beneficiaries of the endless stream of blessings and successes. God time is the best as people often say. Young people must be patience and not disparage humble beginning but rather place high premium on such circumstances. They must be focused and understand that hard work and diligence pay and honest has its rewarding day.

The dangers of sudden wealth and rewards of hard work Not all that glitters is gold. Wealth is good but the youth must appreciate acquisition is a process which time, patience and tenacity of purpose bring and eschew the lure for sudden wealth which have turned many misguided and depraved youths to ritual killing, kidnapping, 419, drug business and yahoo craft. The young ones must understand that many of their role models and people who have attained enviable heights in various spheres of endeavours passed through 'wilderness' and sufferings to become whom they are today. Even those in the other side of the divide who embrace the devils as catalyst for attainment of success, wealth and power live to regret their

actions as the inevitable repercussions confront them. Then it is always too late as they are condemned to mysterious misfortunes, life summersaults, insomnia and premature exit or sacrifice of the life of their beloved. The young ones must acquaint with the dangers inherent in this option the world may present as he contends with the vicissitude of life.

Young people and their future leadership role

For the youth to submit to the common saying that, 'youths are the leaders of tomorrow; they must be followers of today and not only mere followers but ardent followers. To realize this, the youth must spend worthy time to acquire cognate knowledge in the area of their callings and learn wisdom with pragmatic steps and right actions in order to actualize their leadership role in future. What Nigeria shall become in few decades ahead will be proportionate to the processes that are shaping the youth character and capacity today. Education is paramount to open the young people intellectual capacity and shape their character and thought process to attain their future leadership role.

Current challenges of the youth demand collective efforts to change

Is it proper to ignore the aspirations and yearning of the youths? Alternatively, feigns ignorance of the predicaments of today youth. What are the lures that held the youth captives and derail them from demand of nation building? What are the possibilities open for the young people to invest their energy and contribute for the growth and development of their country? These are pertinent questions before all well-meaning Nigerians. As the nation faces the perils of today: kidnapping, terrorism, insurgency, suicide bombing, armed robbery, 417, and yahoo- yahoo sharp practices which are products of the years of negligence, exploitation of youths and indifference to their plights, it becomes imperative for the convergence of all stakeholders in Nigeria project to reappraise the issues of Nigeria youths.

There should be pool of ideas by intellectuals, politicians and wealthy individuals to provide answer to the youth question. Except governments and other stakeholders, take urgent steps to create enabling environment for the youths through education, skill acquisition, empowerment, job creation, re-orientation, incentives for business etc. and political affirmative action and channel their abundant energies to other productive engagement it may be difficult to deliver the nation from the current security challenges.

Some of youths have channeled their energies into wrong ventures, which the nation is harvesting and must be de-radicalized through well thought designs as done by Yar' Adua Government in addressing the restiveness of Niger Delta militants through Amnesty Programme.

Government failures to meet the educational needs of youth

Various governments both military and civilian have failed the youths in addressing the problems by not investing rightly in education, agriculture and infrastructure. The negligence of the educational sector is phenomenal. Low budgetary allocation to education has been the ugly trend.

Absence of educational facilities such as teaching aids, functional libraries, laboratories etc. have hampered educational pursuits, besides teachers are not well motivated through prompt payment of salary and incentives. In certain cases amenities, which served students forty years ago in government owned institutions are still in place, dysfunctional without refurbishments.

Some of the facilities originally designed to serve a limited number of students but overburdened because of the number

competing the use because of increase in student population. The number of students contemplated when they were put has over exceeded without commensurate increment of the facilities.

A number of students struggle with feeding especial those from poor homes where parents do not have living wages or lost their jobs because of downsizing in many organizations, government agencies and ministries occasioned by dwindling economy.

Before the emergence of Gen Muhammadu Buhari 1983 following the military putsch that overthrew the civilian government of Alhaji Shehu Shagari, federal government fed students in the nation tertiary institutions. The military government under Buhari stopped it in 1984; remarkably, Buhari Government commenced feeding of primary school pupils in first tenure as civilian President. In the global ranking of universities, none of the Nigeria Universities falls within the first one thousand universities. This poses a grave danger to youth graduates of universities in Nigeria, as they are disadvantaged to compete globally in a world driven by globalization.

Need to re-form NYSC and disintegrate certain social practices

A scheme such as NYSC which is the first post graduate working experience of educated youths with the first university degree or Higher National Diploma needs reformation to bring it at par with current realities. The scheme often exposes the youth to danger especially in the era of terrorism, insurgency and sporadic ethnic and religious clashes, many youth corpsers on the compulsory service have met with premature death in a cross fire during eruption of sectarian conflagrations. There are sectors in dire need of attentions that the scheme can refashion to serve such national institutions as police and other security agencies including the military where the numerical strength of each of security organization is comparatively small

with the population of the country.

In addition, there is need for the reappraisals of some inherent social and cultural practices against the overall interest of the youths such as slave wife syndrome and female circumcision etc.

Involving corporate and religious bodies in youth empowerment

Religious organizations should deliberately strife to visit the issue of the youths, which has suffered lack of proper attention, the nation is reaping from the fall out of social violence, and criminalities unleashed by the youth with the consequence of high-level degree of insecurity, causing Nigerians to live fear and trepidation. The faith-based organizations should incorporate into their main streams of calendar laudable programmes for youth empowerment. In addition, corporate organizations should as parts of their corporate social responsibilities creates empowerment programmes for the youth such as skill acquisitions, grants and provide facilities for youth programmes.

Indeed, the issue of the Nigeria youth needs concerted efforts;

it is definitely not a problem of the government alone. It cannot be over emphasized the urgency of involvement of religious organizations, corporate organizations and rest of the society in the strides to salvage the hydra headed problems of Nigeria youth. Any danger that springs in the society for instance, the current insurgency and its deployment of suicide bombing and kidnapping for ransom, herdsmen rampage affect everybody living in the country, everybody is vulnerable irrespective of social class or faith.

Hence, it is imperative that these bodies synergize with government to create enabling environment for the empowerment of the young people as they represent the future of this great country.

In conclusion, there is no gainsaying that the youth are vital part of nation building process. Nigeria as a developing nation has to involve the young people from various social groups in envisioning the destiny of the African most populous country. The youths must be provided opportunity for education, job placement and empowerment and enlist their participations in economic activities and engage them in reconciliation and peace building.

The future of the nation rests on these younger generation, building a, prosperous, and stable nation where justice and peace shall reign requires full integration of the youth in the whole processes.

Like building house demands architectural vision, labour, cements, bricks, iron, sand, water and tools, similarly nation building needs also the combination of physical, natural, social, financial, institution and political forces and the participation and synergy of every segment of citizenship and other residence in the nation state.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

CHALLENGES FACING THE NIGERIA YOUTH

There are sundry challenges that confront youths in Nigeria most of which are socio- economic. Some of these issues may be general as they are common to youths in a developing nation, but preponderant of the challenges Nigeria youth battle with are peculiar occasioned by the contentious Nigeria factors which are home grown as they are atypical to youths in other developing nations as Nigeria.

Even within the continent, Nigeria youth have distinct challenges, which years of bad governance have exposed them. The interests of the youths have not been on top priority list of government. Nuhu Ribadu former EFCC Chairman and former Presidential candidate of ACN asserted, "the tragedy of [Nigeria] is that it is one in which the yearnings of the youths are stamped down in to perpetrate a tyranny of interest."

A 2005 UN report on the state of the world's youth revealed that the current generation of young people faces even more complex challenges than the previous generations. The report provides a general sweep of issues affecting the world's youth. The report captures five new concerns: globalization, information and communication technology, HIV and AIDS, youth and conflict, and intergenerational relationships which identified in 1995 as issues, which are likely to make impact on young men and women.

Globalization is a new historical reality propelled by knowledge and technological advancement with unrestricted mobility from one country to the other. The rapid expansion

of markets across national boundaries and the socio-political effects it brings has grave implications for developing countries including Nigeria. There is a consensus that less developed and technologically disadvantaged countries shall be unable to take advantage of the increased opportunities that globalization provides and are to be increasingly powerless and marginalized.

Evidently, successful integration into the global economy is a tall order for Nigeria, considering the challenges that confront majority of Nigeria's overwhelming youth population.

Limited access to qualitative education

Despite enormous progress made in educational sector, there are young people that lack basic skills needed to support their post-school lives. Though high enrolments are reported in many schools under the UBE Scheme, early dropouts, grade repetition, poor education quality mean that many enter adolescence poorly prepared and ill-equipped for work and life. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2006), 33% of person aged 15 and above could not read or write in any language. There was higher literacy rate (79.6%) recorded for urban areas.

The primary school completion rate at the national level is dismal. Only 47% of children had access to secondary school 69.3%, urban and 37.5%, rural; the South West reported highest figure of 69.4%, followed by South-South (48%) and Southeast (32.3%). Equally, those that expressed dissatisfaction with their secondary education were about 43.4%. The level of satisfaction was highest in South West (74.8%) and lowest in the North East (52.1%)

Furthermore, there are significant shortfalls in available educational infrastructure to provide access to a functional and qualitative vocation-oriented education for all Nigeria children and youths. If there is serious intention to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, government should expedite efforts in redeeming the infrastructural deficits in education.

Worse still, the curriculum content and delivery of the school system are hardly consistent with post-school employment requirements. The consequences of the failure to implement effectively the 6-3-3-4 education system are coming to roast. Information and communication technology penetration has been insignificant for the majority of children and youths, except for the rich.

Grossly limited access to employment

For Nigeria, youth transition from school to work is a major challenge occasioned by dearth of employment opportunities, unlike in the sixties, seventies and eighties when jobs were available and even employers visit schools to recruit graduating students to fill vacant positions. Times have changed and situation has deteriorated with nosedive of the economy, which began in the mid-eighties culminating with shutting down of many firms while others produced below installed capacity. Job market is saturated, young people and young graduates end up either unemployed or underemployed. The statement from International Labour Organization perhaps accentuates the circumstances youths face globally in terms of job opportunities, "compared to adults, young people today are more than three times as likely unemployed." It is indeed hard, particularly in Nigeria for the youth to actualize their aspirations because of drastically diminished opportunities.

In spite of the government strides to bridge the unemployment gaps through sundry initiatives, however, the expansion of job opportunities is grossly below the growth of the youth populations. Tens of thousands of graduates both from universities and from other higher institutions are churned out every year but absences of commensurate investments in technology and infrastructure coupled with the shrinking of the economy have resulted in nonexistence of corresponding job opportunities to meet

the increasingly job demands of the most productive segment of society.

It is indeed tragic for the youths in Nigeria with the level of unemployment, like International Labour Organization observed, "being without work means being without a chance to themselves out of poverty" Prolong dependence on imported goods, ranging from tooth picks to tissue papers, polished rice to household furniture, electronics, paints, automobiles, textiles and second hand wears etc. in preference to 'Made in Nigeria' goods and this has tacitly undermined genuine attempts to boost local production.

There is prevalent erroneous perception that locally manufactured goods are substandard, fake, imitation, corrupted and unreliable.

Nigeria's population estimated in the neighbourhood of 200 million has been ready markets for Chinese, American and Europe products. Cheap and substandard goods 'from abroad' have been the sources of spending hard currency by Nigeria importers undermining local productions and keeping the workforce in Nigeria in quagmire.

Indeed, Nigeria as a typical consumerist nation has been supporting the economy and labour force of those countries that are the destination point of her importations and unwitting impoverishing her citizens, throwing the youths into socio-economic doldrums.

Professor Philip Emeagwali, a Nigeria born American, a scientist of international repute, a global leading light in information technology opined, "Those who create new knowledge are producing wealth, while those who consume it are producing poverty."

India, South Korea, Singapore and Malaysia were economies with equal strength in the sixties but today are producers' nation exporting products to the global community on areas

of their comparative advantage.

Repugnant cultural practices

One major challenge, which the youth face in this part of the world, is exposure to certain obnoxious cultural practices. These invariably inhibit the overall development and wellbeing of the youth engaging in the objectionable practices. Slave wife syndrome exemplifies this ugly and harrowing experience of the contemporary Nigeria youth.

This is a process whereby a young woman, particularly teenager is 'married' by another woman to enlarge or set up a family as man would do, that is raise offspring under her name and tutelage. This revolting practice is prevalent and common in the Niger Delta area particularly among the Kalabari's.

Prior to the Nigeria civil war, the practice was solitary involvement of the prospective women in the engagement and the marriage process.

However, after the civil war with the accompanying enlightenment occasioned modification which is for a man to stand in as husband before contracting the marriage.

However, such precondition by the family of the bride does not ennoble the repulsive practice as the women interested in this type of marriage seek assistance of their male relations who are usually never-do-well to pose as intending suitors.

Sometimes the standing suitor with full knowledge of this contrived marriage and grave implication to the sustenance of his lineage tags along until he raises one or two kids for the woman that absconds leaving the young 'wife' to marry his own real wife and raises his own offspring. The most worrisome and pathetic side of this practice is that the young girls involved are encouraged and pressured to be promiscuous in order to raise children for the owners or the woman that pays the bride price.

One writer described the objectionable practice as “woman inhumanity to another woman”.

Lack of access to business support funds

Nigeria youths lack economic opportunities for empowerment and self-actualization. Absence of grants and soft loans for business ventures or for the establishment of small-scale business or medium scale enterprise has made it impossible for the country to harness adequately the energy of its teeming youths into productive activities.

Frightening collateral demand by commercial banks for loans, which is beyond the young ones to fulfill, has made it impossible for young ones from humble background to access loans to support or fund their businesses. Besides, high interest loan that has remained at double digits over the years has been a source of discouragement for the youths business drive.

In recent times, there have been attempts to address the working capital for youths' business initiatives by government and private organizations.

Although, it is still at a micro level vis-a- vis the huge demography of young people in need of such opportunities.

President Jonathan YOU WIN programme a business plan competition, which empowered winners under scheme with capitals to establish business venture. Elumelu Foundation is empowering not only Nigerian youths, but also the rest of youths in the continent by providing working capitals for business ventures.

The Central Bank under the government President Muhammadu Buhari has made available loan grant to creative industry to the tune of 500 million, Naira at 2% interest rate likely youths in this sector will seize the opportunity and advantage of this initiative of CBN to go to the next level.

Inadequate skill acquisition centres for empowerment

Over the years, there have not been measures by government to channel the energy of the young people to productive ventures or open vista for skill acquisitions that create room for self-employment.

Many young people roam the streets, without any useful engagements because of absence of skills like shoe making, tailoring, carpentry, weaving, bricklaying, rewinding, auto repairing and host of others too many to mention.

In the past military regimes, especially in the last two administrations, there were efforts to create skill acquisition centres, and some state governments established such centres in their states.

However, the location is always at urban centres where young people in the rural areas have no access to and the ones within the axis are children of middle and upper class who are interested more on paper qualification for white-collar jobs than learning a trade.

President Jonathan Administration took bold steps in the skill development of the young people with the Community Service Scheme SURE-P, which engaged youths in labour intensive works in construction and rehabilitations of social infrastructures.

In addition, his Graduate Internship Scheme attaches graduates to specialized firms to enhance their skill development, attain competence for employment, and counter those who believe that graduates from the Nigeria universities are unemployable, because of lack of required skill demands by companies.

As it were, there is need for the establishment of skill

acquisition centres in several areas by the local government; there should be synergy between the state government and local council to re-direct energy of the young people especially those not expose to tertiary education to productive activities.

An idle mind is vulnerable to crimes and criminality.

Migration in search of greener pastures

One of the consequences of the nosedive of Nigeria economy in the mid-eighties is high propensity for migration abroad in search of greener pastures.

Dearth of opportunities in Nigeria makes the lure for migration outside Nigeria irresistible option for young people. Some ill-prepared youths embark such journeys through unconventional routes embedded with high risk.

The number of youths the nation loses annually in Mediterranean Sea who tend to cross to Western Europe, Italy and Spain is frightening. Apart of threat by the sea, there are perils of being capture by bandits, terrorists, Islamic fundamentalists in the deserts areas of Algeria, Morocco and Libya.

There was incident of young Nigerians and some others from countries in West Africa en-route to Spain through the desert captured in Algeria by Islamic bandits and confined in isolated house for weeks without water and food with harrowing and horrifying experience of beheading the captives, one each day in the presence of the others.

A Benin boy who survived the trauma spent months in rehabilitation to recover his battered psyche and scrawny flesh. The exodus of Nigerian youths both skilled and unskilled in search of elusive jobs abroad exposed them to life of crimes, drugs, robberies, prostitutions, slave labour and sex-labour.

Lack of access to reliable health support

As young people are generally the healthiest segment of the population, their health needs are easily overlook because they are vibrant.

The HIV and AIDS pandemic has radically altered this, as the young people are the segment of the world population ravaged by this epidemic disease that unleashed devastating blow to the world community more than two decades before, a palliative measure could found to bring succour to the victims.

As a developing country, youths in Nigeria are vulnerable to debilitating diseases and various health problems associated with inadequate national healthcare services. The high incidence of HIV/AIDS infections and sexual transmitted diseases among Nigeria youth is a matter of national concern. This poses one of the greatest challenges to sustainable development.

Poverty and privation worsen by the burden of extended family Nigeria youth face debilitating poverty, as most families in the country exist on subsistence one dollar per day. Hence, young people are from onset expose to poverty and lack with consequent challenges. Poverty shrinks opportunities for self-actualization of the young people.

There are lot of brilliant young people who could not attend secondary school because their family cannot afford it. Some even dropped out because of fund to sustain their education. Indeed, out of school children is majorly on the ground of family poverty. Even now, the government is ensuring that basic education is free, unfortunately, some of these families battling with privation still need the children to hawk and engage in for child labour to augment the meager income at home, and hence access to education to the young becomes remote possibility because of the burden of the family.

Sometimes, the extended family becomes too burdensome to young people who may compel to fend for them. Indeed, it can be taxing growing in family that everybody is struggling to earn a living, poverty is having its toll on the parents, uncles, aunties, brothers, sisters, uncles, cousins etc.

The preoccupation of young people cut in the web of poverty and privation is to go extra mile in sacrificial strides to meet the family financial needs, sometimes the pressure may push them into crime and prostitution.

Mono economy and over dependence on oil Nigerian mono economy restricts the economic frontiers for advancement of the youths, which is the most productive sector of the economy. Diversification of the economy will open doors of opportunities to engage the youths in sundry sectors.

According to the United Nations Security Council's Global Forum, "Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, is also one of the best endowed in terms of natural resources. Yet, it is one of the poorest countries in the world". As in the case with some oil rich developing countries, oil reserved has proved a mixed blessing for Nigeria. It has brought wealth and poverty at the same time! In the mid-seventies Nigeria was among the 12 richest nations as it expanded its oil production at the expense of other vital sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing.

Absence of fiscal federalism conferred the whole revenue from oil to the government at the centre, which shares to the states and local governments disproportionately. This imbalance and increasingly unequal distribution of wealth between different tiers of government deepen inequalities that are the potentials for conflicts in multiethnic nation.

The distributions of material resource are lopsided in the country. However, the bulks of the nation revenues come from oil derive from Niger Delta and South East, which feel so deprived and marginalized, culminating in the restiveness of the

teeming youths especially from the Niger Delta, which waged organized struggle and militancy against the Nigeria State.

For more than eight years, the youths in Niger Delta under sundry militant organizations fought the Nigeria military in creeks and riverine, which drastically reduced the production capacity of the multinational firms in joint venture with the federal government on crude oil exploration.

The result was that the country could not meet the OPEC quarter allotted; hence, the revenue dwindled as Nigeria exported and sold less quantity of oil in the international market. President Musa Yar' Adua lofty Amnesty empowering the youths won back peace to the beleaguered area. Unfortunately, the kidnapping currently escalating with the attendant ransom payment that has become one of the most frightening criminal indulgences of the youths in different part of country originated from Niger Delta youths.

Negative influence Western cultures

Aided by the proliferation of information technology through cable networks, the internet, advance mobile communication facilities, the world has indeed become a global village. The negative consequences, however is that most Nigeria youths not productively engaged hook on to weird Western cultures filtered through the media that alienate them further to their cultural and traditional heritage. Exposure of Nigeria youth through information highway culminates in drug use and abuse, violent criminalities, suicide bombing, bomb running, terrorism, illegal use of firearm, promiscuity, indecent dressing and host of other negative behaviours. Obscene films and filthy music video from the Western world have turned upside down the morals and values imbibe through parental upbringing thus deepening the moral crisis of the Nigeria youth.

Distance from cherished cultural values

There is acknowledgement of the decay of time tested and hitherto highly regarded traditions in contemporary Nigeria to the detriment of its youth, who will emerge as the custodians of our respective cultures and leaders of tomorrow.

This has created a yearning gap, as the prevailing cultural bankruptcy erodes the identity and rich heritage that was a source of national pride among the comity of nations. Embedded in this heritage are the cultures of duty, hard work, social and civil responsibility, sense of labour, productivity, honesty, transparency, respect for elders and the status quo.

Unfortunately, these enduring heritages are sharply on the decline, because of the strange ways, antithetical to the cultural heritage. Sharp practices, cutting corners, sudden wealth, fraud, cultism, exam malpractice, treachery and other ignominies have become trends among majority of the nation teeming youths. This is tragic, as the succeeding generations may not have values to lean on when the current youths take over the mantle of leadership.

Over exposure to the culture of creed and corruption

Today's youth are victims of poor governance and national stagnancy that have made African most populous country a laughing stock in the comity of nations for lack of capacity to address squarely its existential issues and still grovel in material poverty and wants in the midst of vast resources more than half a century it attained sovereignty.

It is unfortunate that Nigeria youth are raised in poor economic environment and in era of social disorientation depicted by avarice, mismanagement, impropriety, embezzlement, deprivation, and marginalization and unbridled poverty in the vast material and human capital endowments and worst in era of entrenched besmirched system that breeds injustices and inequality.

The impacts of this sordid culture to the youth are unimaginable. Ethnicity and lack of national consciousness Multi-ethnicity has been one of Nigeria greatest assets as a nation. It has also been the greatest challenge in the process of nation building. There is absence of a national consciousness and loyalty among predominant youth population. Nigerians often identify themselves, first with their geo-political zone, as Northerners, Southerners or with their ethnic nationality as Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, Ijaw, Fulani, Efik etc. before seeing themselves as Nigerians. The bonding between Nigerians and their country is not deep rooted. Nigerians attachment to their country is tangential. The nation has no primal place in the hearts of preponderant Nigerians, to many every other thing comes first before their country.

There is no insulation of the youth as a critical segment of the society from this common ill among Nigerians. The prevalent erroneous perception is that being a Nigerian is secondary unlike in many countries like America, Britain, Ghana to mention just a few, citizens have strong bond to their country and their country comes first. They are ready and willing to sacrifice for the overall interest of their nation.

This indeed is a major challenge to the vibrant Nigeria youth as the contradictions in Nigeria project, which emphasizes priority of ancestral root over where one resides and contributes to its development stares them on the face.

The youth stand the risks of suffering discrimination in his fatherland based on state of origin or tribe in domicile place he has made landmark contributions to its growth and development.

Where one lives and contributes in its development and growth is more important to one ancestral root, perhaps

where the person may not have lived for years.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

NATION BUILDING AND IMPERATIVE OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

The term nation building as used here refers to a constructive process of engaging all citizens in building social cohesion, economic prosperity and political stability in an inclusive and democratic way.

It also connotes a systematic development process that brings about transformation and actualization of statehood. Furthermore, it is a process through which all people have access to and control of structures and mechanisms that govern their lives.

In some developing nations democratic participation is mostly a preserve of particular gender and older generation. Adult suffrage has been common practice of these nations.

Developed societies have adequate ways to ensure that all citizens fully participate in the political process through legislation and affirmative action where particular gender or ethnic nationality or young people that have suffered historical negligence, marginalization or perhaps lack all the resources and capacity to meet the political or economic power of other groups.

THE MOTIVES OF EXCLUSION OF YOUTHS FROM POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

There is exclusion of young people in political participation in some societies. There are legislations in place to restrain them in certain areas through creation of eligibility age for many elective offices. This action backed by popular theories on childhood development and adolescence, many of which define youth as

social group that is in the stage of becoming adults. There are frequently cited reasons why there is exclusion of young people from political participation in most societies. Until the passage of the Bill, 'Not too Young to Run', political participation of young people in Nigeria in terms of electoral contest was a remote possibility as most of the youth hitherto suffered exclusion as they ineligible to vie most of the elective offices by virtue of age limitation.

Wrong assessments of youth in politics and nation building

Politicians and many of the stakeholders hold youth in contempt as far as nation building is concerned. These adults wrongly assess the young people capacity, ability, disposition, etc. in political engineering and these prejudices have informed the attitude of older people toward youth participation in nation building. It is essential to passionately appraised theses perception and the prejudices or wisdom behind them that have continuously diminished opportunity for youth to participate in politics and therefore make minimal part in nation- building.

Perception of youth incapacity for socio-economic engineering

Most people believe that the young people lack the requisite skills and perceptive for socio-economic engineering and not suitable to access political offices until they attain a level of maturity which comes with expansion of mental knowledge and worldview. The best way to handle the young people therefore is to legislate against them through age barriers. For instance, in some countries you cannot contest the office of the President or governor except you attain 45 years of age. Therefore a young person below age 45 years, no matter the success he has attained or his financial and intellectual capacity is ineligible for Presidential or governorship contest.

False view that youth are intemperate and impatience for state duties

There is a perception that Young people do not have the psychological and emotional stability that the political offices demand. There are strong opinion that the young people are exuberant, irrational and impatience mostly occasion by age. Recently, one of the beneficiaries of Not Too Young to Run Bill, Senator Elisha Abbo publicly assaulted a breast- feeding mother, that action many people felt was disgraceful and opprobrious to a member of the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The Senator later apologized to the nation for his unruly behaviour, however the ill-conceived spontaneous attack to young mother that brought him to odium and public condemnation was avoidable if not for youthful exuberant that perhaps gave him an exaggerate air that as a Senator, he could bully anybody including a breasting mother, perhaps with no consequences.

Perception that youth lack experience in political matters

It is believed that young people has not acquired the needed experience in life to handle political matters. This lack of experience is a major justification for excluding young people

from decision making in most societies. It is also important to emphasize that these ideas are prevalent in all major social institutions, family, school, community religious organizations. It is not a surprise that there are little or no expectations for the young people in the political space. The system does not make provision for the youth. The process that facilitates the political participation of people within their communities as well as the national level are not always transparent besides there is room for the process to be compromised by influence of money, power and connections.

Portrayal of Youth as lacking the motivation to sustain political action

Another frequently used justification for excluding young people is the entrenched myth of youth apathy. There is portrayal of young people as lacking motivation for political participation.

The advancement of this illusion is mostly in the media hype about Generation X Syndrome, which describes young people as a socially inert, self-absorbed group with little or no interest in the political process. The number of young people mostly traders and majority of female folks who are indifference to political processes, especially the exercise of their franchise in electioneering is alarming.

False belief of youth inability to meet the high demands of political offices

The demands for political offices are grave and intense that the young people are inherently unable to discharge them. People often viewed the young ones as lacking the political techniques to transform a nation state therefore need not to become part of the political process, as their participation may be counterproductive to.

Adults' contempt to share political powers parity with young people

The very idea of young people participating as equals is revolting for many adults. The age gap with the youth is always a source of tension to the adults and they are not prepared to bridge it through political participation that would elevate the young people at the pedestal with them. Seniority is pride itself and adults do not want to share power with someone who is in the same age with their son or daughter at home. Rather than work with young people in nation building adults ensure the youth participation is minimal by exclusion achieves through age limitation by constitutional stipulation.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

YOUNG PEOPLE INTEREST IN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Recent research reveals that young people are far from apathetic to political participation as several believed.

In many developed societies, attainment of age eighteen confers the citizen the eligibility to contest elections. At that age, the expectation is that one takes responsibility of his actions and is accountable of his actions and inactions within the ambit of the law.

Young people across Nigeria are showing great interest in political issues and are constantly searching for different ways of ventilating opinions and views on various sectors of the economy.

It would be untrue to assume that youths do not participate in the political process at all, their participation sometimes are at minimal level. Countless programmes seek to mobilize young people politically in neighborhoods and cities across the nation wide. Some of these programmes are initiated by Non-governmental organizations;

Community based organizations, youth organizations and some by international agencies like UN and some of its organs, also some Embassies like America Embassy, British High Commission and international non-governmental organizations like the Forth Foundation, DEEPEN.

The initiatives cover very broad political spectrum on several themes such as importance of transparent political process, voters' education, mobilizing and educating the young people

for political participation in their communities.

Others issues of concern include advocating and training the young ones to be part of governance, structures of the civil society organizations, affirmative action as a tool for political redress of deprived and exploited group, imperative of election monitoring by independent bodies.

Further areas of focus include essentiality of Lobbying and sponsorship of bills in the National Assembly and State Assembly on changes that promote the aspiration of the young people like, "Not Too Young to Run Bill."

These laudable initiatives, which come under the platforms of public lectures, seminars symposiums, workshops, conferences always have tremendous impact in enhancing the knowledge base of the youths and increasing the lure for political participation.

Undoubtedly, there is widely belief that these platforms hold the promise of continuous expansion of the number of youth participants in electoral processes.

Finally, the task of nation building will continue to be a nightmare, if the citizens do not commit themselves seriously to it by unrestrained carrying out their civil and legal obligations and ensure that justice, equity, and fairness become the signpost of socio-economic and political activities.

It is not enough for the nation to pride of abundance human and natural resources when there are absences of commitment for the conversion of these potentials to assets at least to ensure better life for greater number of the citizenry.

The love of the nation and the future it holds beckon for the appreciation of its diversity in laying the fabrics of the nation-

building by bridging the gulf therein; pull down the edifice of ethnic chauvinism, dismantle the walls of religious bigotry and erect the pillars of unity, across all divide.

All the shenanigans referred as 'Nigerian factor' that define Africa most populous country and held it captive for decades must be arrested and detained to guarantee the attainment of country manifest destiny.

There must be conscription of Nigeria youth as co- captain in the voyage of building a nation, which exterminates terrorism, sectarian violence and all form of criminalities usually unleashed by those within the youth bracket because the youth have been made an integral part of the process and now act as preserver with faith and loyalty to the country.

Emerging order that is titling in favour of youth leadership

Across the world today, the prejudices against young people taking over the leadership position is gradually being dismantled, young people are emerging in the political space, the shackles that hitherto held them behind and make them 'stranger' in the political affairs of their nation. Young people are itching to be part of leadership of the state. In pre- independent period lots of young people participated in the struggle to extricate Nigeria from the suffocating grip of colonialism.

However, after the first republic collapsed the young military officers that took over governance, procured the services of civilians of older generation to assist them run the government. At the twilight of the first military epoch, when the government lifted the ban on politics, hordes of civilians who dominated the political space were majorly from the class that collaborated with military regimes of Gen Yakubu Gowon, Gen Murtala Mohammed and Gen Olusegun Obasanjo. Unfortunately, the number of youths among this class was infinitesimal. Hence, political participation of the young people in the second republic was minimal.

The situation got bad when the economy commenced its tailspin journey under a highly corrupt Alhaji Shehu Shagari government of the second republic. All the various military regimes that came up after the second republic procured the collaborations of civilians outside the youth age bracket.

The civilians were empowered by these regimes and positioned to take over leadership in democratic era. Added to this fact is the poor management of the economy by the military governments, which affected the conditions of the youth and disempowered them. Life became hard and harsh for Nigeria youth as they struggle to eke a living. Absence of jobs for both secondary school leavers and university graduates couple with dearth of other opportunities to

catalyze for self- actualization compound the crisis the youths contend with in Nigeria, hence political participation under the scenario became also impossible.

Hence, circumstances and the conspiracies of the older generation made it difficult for youth participation in politics and nation building.

Nevertheless, things are changing. The young people are becoming more political conscious; they are asking questions and have realized the depth the old generation has betrayed them. To remain docile and passive in the vital sector that bakes nation destinies would be undoing and greatest harm they do to themselves and the country.

The young people are entering into the political fray to take the destiny in the hand and eschew the idea of being chronic onlooker where the older generation scramble and share the common patrimony leaving a miserable infinitesimal portion while carting away the lion share with impunity.

Hence, young people mounted so much pressure for the National Assembly to pass a bill of 'Not Too Young to Run', which cleared a legal ground for many young people to contest elections on the available political offices in the land.

Today there is Young Progressive Party YPP that perhaps symbolizes the recognition the name, youth or young people has come to take their rightful role as partners in the socio-political evolution of Nigeria.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

EXPERIENCES OF THE CONTEMPORARY NIGERIAN YOUTH

As it is common with most developing countries with high fertility rates and reduced infant/ child mortality, demography indicates that the youth i.e. those within the age bracket of 10 years to 24 years form a very high percentage of the national population.

The youth estimated to constitute 39 percent of the world population, with 80 percent of this in the developing, emerging and transition economies. This demands a very high sense of responsibility from national educational, health and developmental planners.

The United Nation General Assembly in 1984, recognized, "the profound importance of direct participation of the youth in shaping the future of mankind and the valuable contribution that youth can make in the implementation of the New International Economic Order based on equity and justice."

The vital organ of world body is also convinced, " of the imperative need to harness the energies, enthusiasm and creative abilities of the youth to the tasks of nation building...". The body, which Nigeria served as President of its 44 section in 1989 under Major General Joseph Garba (rtd) further emphasized that the United Nation should, " pay more attention to the role of young people in the world today and to their demands for the world tomorrow." Many countries have taken steps to chart a development course for their youth, with emphasis on enhancement and actualization of

their intellectual, social, emotional, ethical, physical and cognitive potentialities.

These positions show that no government leaves the resources of its youth to waste away. Unfortunately, the Nigeria youth are victims of national economic planners, moral bankruptcy, leadership failure and social disorientation that have been sad commentary of the country in the past three decades and half years.

As government, attention dwindles on education and youth development as attested by low budgetary allocations as result of competing interests in other sectors coupled with high degree of corruption, mismanagement and squander-mania, which expose the youth to varieties of harsh experiences that traumatize the psyche and ultimately affect their personalities. Deviant behaviours become escape route for some of youth as life of crimes and criminality turned out to be the dominate features.

Growing up in a distressed and gloomy economy is disturbing and worrisome. Living in a country laid prostrate with a philistine stamp by its rulers can be terrible and traumatizing. Growing up in a country with uncertain future defines with socio-political and economic instability can be tragic. Growing up in environment where justice, equity and fairness have taken flight is a nightmare.

These are illustrations of the plights of Nigeria youth as they face the difficulties of each day and the challenges their nation has compelled on them for the 'misfortune' of being young. The privileged class, the politicians and adults have score to settle or covert interest to advance usually employ the youths as cannon fodder. When the chips are down, the youth are the escape goats and first line of sacrifices and hunted in any untoward or unpalatable eruption or upheaval.

Vulnerability to extra judiciary killings

The Nigeria youth face excruciating tough time with the security agents or law enforcement operatives. If there is any breach of law in anywhere and at any time, the youth are the initial, suspects even before the police conducts investigations and they suffer detention in cell until the 'right button is pressed' before they regain freedom. Youth are the most vulnerable if any crime occurs within a neighbourhood, they must panic or rather, escape because the law enforcement operatives must come for them insofar as they have not established the culprits. In the ongoing confrontation with Boko Haram insurgency, many innocent young people suffer summarily execution by the military on ground of being youth and therefore supposedly aiding the deadly terrorist group or suspected member.

The young people are the first suspects even if adults commit the crime. The young people are the ones the police arrest and detained for wandering, loitering, sleeping under bridges and other sundry civil offences. Sadly, if nobody can arrange their bail, or they lack fund to 'buy' their freedom, police execute some of them to create room for new inmates. They tagged those who suffer such fate as armed robbers killed on gun duel with security operatives. Sometimes, the suspects and the corpses displayed in media briefings by the security agents to highlight their gallantry are innocent youths who are victims of extra judiciary killings. The victims end up in an unmarked grave because the system does not provide self-auditing to burst the high cover up by the security operatives.

Harassment and assault by security operatives

The youths are subject to human right abuses by overzealous security men. The youth face highly exasperating stop and search of the security operatives who in most cases do not exhibit professionalism in their conducts but unbridled display of naked power as oppressors. Sometimes, ordinary household items in bag attract the prying eyes of

these agents, who ask for settlement there is no offence against the law. Many timid girls have been raped by law enforcement agents who hooked them with one contrived offence or the other and whisked them away for sexual gratification as a precondition for freedom. The police and the security operatives have victimized many innocent young people on trumped up charges during stop and charge.

Deployment as political thugs

There is exclusion of the young people from being major stakeholders in political parties. The configuration of parties is principally as money guzzlers, and the insatiable taste for funds makes them vulnerable to the control of moneybags. Since there is emasculation of most Nigeria youths financially, their participations in party executive structures are very limited.

Worst is that in big parties, the privileged olden occupy the portfolio that should be for person within the youth age bracket. The youth are only good as henchmen and hirelings. They are the ones politicians use as thugs during electioneering.

They are armed with lethal weapons to intimidate opponents and their supporters. They disrupt the political campaigns of the opposing party that offers greatest challenge to the party that procured their services. They abduct, maim or assassinate marked politicians or individuals perceived as obstacles to realization of their masters' ambition.

Employment as agents of election malpractice

The youths deployed by political parties or their candidates in the electioneering period, perpetrate electoral malfeasances. Multiple thumbs printing, ballot box snatching, intimidating potential voters, harassing the electoral umpires, election monitors and journalists are actions carried by young people at the behest of political

parties or politicians that paid them.

Use to execute covert dirty jobs

The youths are the ones evil men deploy to settle scores with their opponents. They are in political and socio-economic environment to advance criminal interest. They involve in assassination, kidnapping, terrorism and organized violence in promotion of political interest, ethnic interest, and religious interest or in furtherance of personal interest of paying masters.

Deployment for political campaigns

No political campaign can take place without involvement of the young people who usually drive the event and do the jobs that demand energy. They mobilize participants drawn majorly among people within the youth age bracket.

The youth are in technical, welfare, protocol, transport of political campaigns committee. They are usually the one who comb every nook and cranny to persuade or compel their mates to attend the event.

Use as tool of entertainment and excitement of privileged class

Nigerian youth are the ones involved in various genres of entertainments. In any event, either political or social events the young people through their gift and talents in comedy, dancing, acting and music excite and thrill the privileged class, politicians and businessmen reducing their heart pressure and extending their life span.

Use for ferrying illicit goods or smuggling

The young people smuggle contra-banned goods and illicit commodities in the country. They are adept in risky businesses as age may confer them a certain degree of irrationality to critically assess risky business ventures. Youth age is the age of adventure. It is the age of risk taking with little or no consideration of the consequences. Many young people believed

nothing could hold them from advancing their businesses interest, not even government policies. Hence, they find it difficult submit to government ban of any good.

Deployment for drugs trafficking

Drug cartels seek services of young people in the illicit drug world. They recruit young people, train them in the art of outsmarting immigration and custom officers in various international airports. Unfortunately, countless number of Nigerian youths have been jailed or executed across many countries in Middle East, Islamic countries and Europe on account of drug trafficking.

Exposure to privation at the home front

As the nation economy nosedives, per capita income depreciates. The attendant reduction of household incomes and soaring inflation brought debilitating poverty at the home front. Many families live below one dollar a day as poverty and lack ravages homes, parent spend less time in attending the needs of the youth at the critical period when they are most impressionistic and susceptible to external influences from role models, peer groups and societal pressure.

Dearth of youth groups and their communal activities

Community based youth organizations are sharply on the decrease or if not extinct because of unstable social environment and increasing downward economy of the nation, which made many youth contend with personal survival. Undesirables, who may be surrogates of one big politician or powerful personality in the community, use the group to advance parochial interests of their masters.

Fractured learning and fragmented education

For more than three decades, learning in Nigeria has been a terrible nightmare. The negligence of education by various military and civilian governments has been phenomenal.

Academic calendars in tertiary schools have been distorted because of sporadic riots by students but more especially incessant unrest by academic and non-staff unions, which have been in battle with government on one issue or the other leading several times to closure of high institutions. This usually culminates to crash programme.

Besides, one of the effects of the arbitrary closures of high institutions that have been the trend for decades now is the increase duration of academic programme- students have to spend more years to graduate than the programme ought to last in undisrupted academic calendar. The poor learning environment and moribund facilities including standard library, functional laboratory, recreation facilities, science equipment etc. have compounded the burden youths face today in pursuit of high education.

Under this enervating condition the quality of education is suspect as the tertiary institutions have continued to churn out half-baked graduates who cannot compete internationally with counterparts in other countries. Little wonder, developed countries do not recognize the academic certificates obtained in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. America and Europe subject brilliant young scholars' immigrants from Nigeria to further learning and oral or written exams before they can authenticate their certificates as professionals irrespective of the degree awarded to them from tertiary schools from the Nigeria.

Religion as refuge and succour for the youth

The aftermath of poor economy, which has led to massive unemployment of the young people, is the lure for spirituality. The Nigeria youth traumatized by economic violence they contend with endlessly turn to religion succour to escape the frightening harsh realities. Unlike years gone by when preponderant percent of worshippers are old people, but nowadays in Nigeria, youths are the ones that fill the worship centres in both churches and mosques. The government has

failed in all ramifications, the youth turn to faith-based organizations for survivals. Sadly, the young ones are no longer involved in critical thinking that leads to innovations and inventions. Morning and nights, they are captive as they bore the Almighty God with questions and entreaties whose answers should come from their political leaders who continuously syphon the nation's wealth with impunity leaving the country poor and dry.

Kidnapping, ritual killings and child trafficking

Kidnapping has become a very lucrative venture in Nigeria. What began in Niger Delta with the kidnap of expatriates and employees of oil firms spread to the South East before engulfing the rest of the country. It was a fall out of the confrontation between the militants and the federal government. In the heat of the battle, some of the militants forced to relocate from epicenter Gbaramatu kingdom where the recruited other youths from other states, particularly the South East to continue the trade of kidnapping which brought enough finance through ransom. Gradually many young people who realized that kidnapping is a low risky crime with astronomical dividend joined the venture. There is trend in Nigeria for huge appetite and irresistible interest to any business that is high yielding, hence, in all the geo-graphical zones, kidnapping is thriving as young men of criminal tendency run amok kidnapping anybody from wealthy people to commuters on transit.

Underemployment and contract staff phenomenon

One of the unfortunate issues that confront Nigeria youth is under employment. Most corporate organizations take undue advantage of the over brewing unemployment in the country to exploit the young people who they recruit under stringent conditions with meager salary structure. There is exposure of unskilled youths, especially those who work in factories to perils, because their jobs involve the deployment of

huge machines, chemicals and other harmful equipment or materials. However, in the conditions of service, there is no protection for them in view of the level of danger they are expose daily in their duties. Some of the unfortunate one suffers different levels of harm; some maimed while others die on duty yet no compensation to them or their family in case of death. Because of absence of regulatory authority and conspiracy of law enforcement agents, the situation continues unabated as most foreign owned companies, particularly the ones by Chinese, Korea, and India etc. are culprits in these cheap labour and inhuman treatments of Nigeria youth.

The contract staff syndrome, which is common in the banking sector, oil sector and other sectors where multinational corporations are doing business, is sad experience that confronts Nigeria youth, who form over 90 percent of the labour force under this obnoxious recruitment scheme. Contract staffs are highly discriminated against in remuneration, incentives and working conditions. The management exploits them, assigns bulk of jobs to them, yet the payment is grossly meager. The contract staff is thriving, because it is a racket venture for top management in the firm who float labour recruitment firms and outsources to fill the personnel of needs of these multinational companies or blue chip companies. Of course, they pay these contract staffs stipends, without the rights, accorded to genuine employees while the bulk of money go the owners who incidentally are in top management positions in the bank or multinational firm.

The need for credible youth development policy

It is imperative for the articulation of a credible national youth development policy to redeem young people from the brink of 'disinheritance' to a new status of authentic heirs of the assets of the nation. There should be rehabilitation of the youth psychological, emotional wellbeing and otherwise traumatized by years of exploitations by boosting their confidence in

creativity and innovations.

The government should create enabling environment for the young people to learn trade, hone and apply their skills, acquire education and advance their competencies. Furthermore, there should be creations of opportunities to harness the potentials of the youths and in addition, there should be availability of jobs opportunities to the youths to move away their minds from crimes.

The country has vast resources to meet these aspirations of the teeming youths after all the fundamental duty of government is the protection and welfare of the citizens and guaranteeing their wellbeing and the future of the coming generation.

A concerted effort by government, parents and the society in addressing holistically the woes of day's youths in Nigeria is needful to enable reinforcement of their value as critical asset to the nation and the society.

Indeed, contemporary youth experiences in Nigeria are peculiar than the youths in other parts of the globe and different from what the youth passed through in the sixties, seventies and early eighties before the country economy nosedived. It has been disturbing times for youth in Nigeria from the mid -eighties to the now.

Nonetheless, there can be reversal of the ugly trend by giving the youth sense of belonging by an inclusive youth participation in national development. It is counterproductive to continue the exclusions of youth in matters affecting the destiny of the country. Their frustrations except critical stakeholders urgently address them will spell doom to the country.

A UNESCO poster on development and care of the children

shows an African child asked what he would like to be when he grows up. Startlingly, the response of the child is 'ALIVE'. That answer was a strong metaphorical message, which encapsulates that the greatest challenge confronting a child born in African, particularly in Nigeria is to live and grow old because there are sundry potential threats to life.

To be alive as it were is to survive all the perils and dangers contending with life in Africa, which Nigeria situation exemplifies: epidemic, poverty, diseases, sectarian violence, wars, polluted environment, malnutrition, famine, terrorism and host of others spatial limitation will not permit their enumeration. Conspiracies of these denominators couple with lack of political will to find lasting solutions to the glitches and agonies of the youth who have been victims of failed system are tremendous challenge to young people in Nigeria.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

YOUTH AND NIGER DELTA SITUATION

The oil and gas deposits in this region is huge and accounts currently for more than 80% of Nigeria crude extraction, and more than 70% of the revenue that service the entire nation's economy. Oil deposit is an immense contribution of this region to the wealth of the nation; Niger Delta suffers marginalization in terms of development.

Government has renewed commitment to addressing the age long neglect and above concerns of the Niger Delta that led to the creation of OMPADEC and later NDDC with specific mandates on infrastructural development for the region to redeem its infrastructural deficit.

However, the Niger Delta youths not satisfied with the pace and quality of development projects started organizing different groups for peaceful protests.

This led to a gradual erosion of peace in the geo-political zone, as the youth devised strategies to carry out their agitations including confrontation, which often times brought them to direct conflicts with the law enforcement agents.

The hardliners in their ranks soon took over the centre stage because; they saw no significant improvement in their living conditions and well-being, when there are massive investments of revenues derived from their territory in magnificent development Abuja and Lagos.

The hardliners emerged because of the lacunae created in the dialogue process by the various actors involved. They became more aggressive and confrontational.

They cited failure of the dialogue process from the times of the great King Jaja of Opobo to his abduction in 1887, the Wilkins Commission of 1958, and Rio-De Janeiro 1st Earth Summit, the Ogoni Bill Right, and the Ijaw National Congress (INC) dialogued on various platforms with Kaiama declaration in 1998.

Another worry was lack of trust in the government's engagement process and perceived insincerity on the part of other actors as attested by the hanging of Ken Saro- Wiwa one of the nation foremost playwright, novelist of international repute, former President of Association of Nigeria Authors and his Ogoni agitators by Abacha on trumped up charges. Since then, it has no hold barred.

Those issues increased the level of violence and bloodshed in the region. Though, there are those still genuinely striving to call attention of the world to the plight of Niger Deltans, so many groups have emerged with self- serving and criminal activities, which has called to question the intention of these divergent groups.

Militancy in Niger Delta and emergence of kidnapping for ransom

Following the Ijaw youth's proclamation of the Kaiama Declaration in 1998, which was an agitation for resource control, the Delta region that was hitherto, known for its high level of hospitality, is now in a continuous turmoil of youths either against themselves or against government security agents.

The region has become a hotbed of youth's militancy, terrorism,

kidnapping, piracy and other violent activities that emanate from oil business.

Kidnapping for ransom in the Niger Delta was by militant youths under the following clandestine organizations: Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF), Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV), Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) and Martyrs Brigade amongst others.

The incidence of kidnapping or rather hostage taking has assumed an alarming dimension in the Niger Delta as it has moved from the noble agitation for the control of their natural resources to unbridled avarice. Kidnapping, hitherto known only in Niger Delta is now daily occurrence in other places particularly in the North West and South West.

One of the major weapons employed by the various ethnic militias operating in the area was kidnapping of expatriates in the oil firms in the Niger Delta. At time, there was a lot of sympathy for the militants because the cruelty of Nigeria State to the geo-political zone that is the main stay of the economy yet the area was grossly underdeveloped with environmental pollutions as the only 'gains' of having crude oil deposit.

Funds from trillions of dollars from the sales of crude oil from Niger Delta have rapidly developed cities like Lagos and Abuja. However, when the soft targets of the militants extended to Nigeria employees in the oil sector and prominent citizens and the family members of wealthy people in the area, the militants lost sympathy of many Nigerians as it dawned on them that Niger Delta struggle had suffered bastardization by opportunists.

The spread of kidnapping to other parts of the country is the fallout of the militants' struggles and the subsequent confrontations with the military.

The militants dislodged from operation bases like the

Gbaramatu Kingdom and other such places relocated to other areas where they continued their kidnapping as means of survival. The other groups of kidnappers are the non-militants who believed that the crime pays handsomely with minimal risk.

These groups non- militants kidnappers follow the trend of mass rush to endeavours perceived as lucrative without reflections of the durability. As the security, dislodged the kidnappers, they fled to the Southeast and recruited other youths. The Southeast became a hot bed for kidnappers and other areas in country gradually became engulfed in the kidnapping trade.

Military confrontation with militants and Amnesty Programme

The crisis deepened as the military declared war on the intractable youths involved in the agitation the creeks became battleground. Perhaps, the military underestimated the strength and resilience of these youths who took upon themselves to free their zone from clutches of economic oppression by the federal government.

Their fighting was for resource control, for infrastructural development and for justice. The geese that lay the golden egg deserve better rather than trampled. The oil areas including Southeast and Niger Delta had suffered utter negligence, their God given resources, oil and gas is the main stay of Nigeria economy, deployed to develop Lagos and Abuja.

Sadly, the Niger Delta and Southeast withstood the worst of oil explorations: destructions of farmland, pollutions of the environment with dangerous elements that are health hazard, destructions of fishing in the rivers and ponds.

The Niger Delta and Southeast faced the inherent dangers of

oil spillage and continuous gas flaring, yet federal government and its joint venture partners in the crude oil exploration, the multinational oil firms were indifference to the plight of the oil communities.

The battle went on between the nation military and Niger Delta militants; oil production drastically became declined.

Nigeria became poorer as its major revenue source had been affected, however, Musa Yar' Adua Government realized that these youths could not be subdued by force of arm especially against the backdrop that the militants have better knowledge and dexterity to operate in the creeks which was the battleground than the military.

Hence, the government then initiated Amnesty Programme, which brought reconciliation, settlement and empowerment of the youths. The militants gave up their arms and peace returned to the area and oil production rose up again.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

YOUTH AND NATION BUILDING

In the word of late Kofi Annan, the Ghanaian born former UN Secretary General, "No one is born a good citizen; no nation is born a democracy. Rather both are processes that continue to evolve over time. A society that cuts itself off from its youths serves its lifeline."

Thus, for every nation to develop and to meet up with the developmental targets there is need to define the role of young people play in the world and in particularly, their contributions in nation building.

Developed countries and the United Nations have long noticed the key role youth play in nation building and pay tremendous attentions in youth developments through policy thrust that creates enabling environment for the countries to harness and exploit the potentials of the young people.

Such nations constantly remind that the youth are evolving leaders tomorrow; hence, they put in place for such youth opportunities for self- actualization. Such opportunities include sound education, skill acquisitions, employment, sports development etc.

This is why it drew international attention the important role young people play in the world and particular their potential contributions to global developments. It is worthy to note that the strength of the youth of any nation strengthens the country itself in all ramifications. This is why most developed countries have long learnt to promote youth programmes and

policies.

A former President of America enjoined his compatriots to stop thinking what America would do for them but what they would do for America. This profound statement arises from the fact that the youth owe society some obligations, which they should not shy away.

As vital segment of the society, there is no insulation of the youth from the nation's successes and failures; invariably, they act upon their nation as the nation acts upon them mutually. It may be important to examine the roles according:

Tackling poverty and hunger

There can be integration of youth in fighting poverty and hunger- the greatest predicament of developing countries particularly in sub-Sahara Africa, which Nigeria typifies. Poverty has been the central cause of brain drain in Africa. Most young people seek greener pastures on the shores of Europe, America and Asia due to poverty and hunger ravaging their communities.

The government can harness youth energy and numerical strength, as it were in the strides to ensure food security for the nation. The youth can be galvanized into the mainstream agriculture by providing necessary incentives that will lure them.

The full participations of the youth in agricultural sector will create jobs in the value chains and eventually boost people's income. Poverty will take the back seat therein.

Strategic dealing with illicit use of drugs

A major challenge among the youths is drug abuse. Most young people turn to drugs out of frustrations and inability to find a purpose in living especially when hit by chronic joblessness.

There should be articulation of special strategies to refocus the youths and educate them on the dangers of drug abuse. Government and other stakeholders can strategically co-opt young people from socially disadvantaged backgrounds such as commercial sex workers, refugees, ex-convicts, illicit drug users into action plans in the community geared towards combating the illicit use of drugs.

This proposal for strategic deployment of young people's arouse from the obvious fact that there is distrust between most youth and adults but there is chemistry among young people occasioned by shared experiences and similar circumstances that define their contemporary existence. However, the strategy to address the abuse of drugs with this methodology is its execution within the broad view of providing economic opportunities to young people cut in the drug web as to dissuade

them from engaging in illicit drug abuse and trafficking, this will motivate others trapped in the world of illicit drugs to discontinue.

Making education free and compulsory

One of the main causes of underdevelopment in most Africa countries is the negligence of education. Education is bedrock of development. An educated person can execute various initiatives with little or no supervision.

When young people are educated, they play important roles in social and economic development of their nation. They co-operate with state and non-state actors in decision processes and aggregating lofty programmes to turn their country around in all sectors.

Their positive actions go long way in nation building. Government plays vital role in stimulating education and given it direction in accordance with developmental policy in the sector.

The government can institute compulsory and free education at least in the primary school, which is a foundation where further learning springs up.

Free post primary education is also vital for nation that makes education a top priority, otherwise scholarship will provide opportunities in post primary and tertiary school students. In addition, it is vital to organizing programmes aimed at enhancing the students' knowledge base, international exchange programmes, specialized training, and personal development schemes and facilities.

Capacity building for the youth

Secondary school education and university education are

enough to equip young people with the technical skill to participate fully in nation building. Capacity building has been the most prevailing strategy in developed countries of Europe and America in empowering the youth and meeting the human capital needs of the industries.

There can be initiation of platform for leadership and personal development training to best equip the educated minds on how to lead the community and understand how to meet challenges when they do occur. Exposure of Young people to various skills such as communication skills, management skills, sales skill and market skills will empower them to contribute effectively in nation building.

International business initiative

One of the basic requirements for youth leaders to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with focus eight goals which entails development of a global partnership to create a matrix of business relationships across other parts of the world.

International business foray will open new level of empowerment and capacity for the youth and attendant financial inflow into the country. It is also vital to encourage young leaders to develop their own project and advocacy campaigns toward actualization of MDGs.

In addition, business relationships with counterparts from others parts of the world will assist to build trust among young people to crack the pillar of racialism and diminish recriminations based on diversity. Indeed, as the young people, interact with one another across nations in business partnership; it will have overall impact global peace and security.

Entrepreneurships and self-reliance

Academic qualifications acquired in various institutions of

learning are vital, however, there are young people who are not disposed to scholarship but gifted in businesses and trade. These youth have proclivity for self-reliance and independence. Their interests are in acquiring basic skills in manufacturing and various forms of trade.

They are the youth involve in micro, small and medium scale businesses. They grow their business venture, with small capital and blossom with aplomb and management acumen.

However, it is important to strike a balance between young people with passion for academic acquisitions and those who do not have such aspirations. Hence, there can be introduction of entrepreneurship and skill acquisition in youth programmes for proper national growth and development.

The nation can harness other areas of youth development and contribution by engaging young people in taking care of the under privileged and disabled, often neglected by the society. The integration of young people into the pursuit of this primary goal by selling the idea to them, that they can make a difference in the life of other people

CHAPTER NINETEEN

NIGERIA YOUTH AND THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Millennium Development Goals MDGs adopted in the year 2000 by all the world's governments as a blueprint for building a better world in the 21st Century. The MDGs represents a global partnership, this arose from the commitments, and targets set at the world summits of the nineties.

As a declaration, it consists of internationally agreed framework of 8 goals and 18 targets, complemented by 46 technical indicators to measure progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.

These were indicators of course, adopted by a consensus of experts from the United Nations, IMF, World Bank etc. Simply, the MDGs focus the efforts of the world community on ways to achieve significant and measurable improvements in people's lives. The eight goals are mutually reinforcing and directed at reducing poverty in all forms. The last goal, which is global partnership for development is about the means to achieve the first seven goals.

The millennium Development Goals include:

- " Eradication of poverty,
- " Achieve Universal primary education
- " Promoting gender equality and empowering women, "
- Reducing child mortality,
- " Improving maternal health"
- " Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases "
- "Ensuring environmental sustainability"

" Developing a global partnership for development

There are targets set for the attainment of the goals in 2015. Three of the eight goals relate directly to health namely: reduction of maternal mortality by three- quarters, achieving child mortality by two-thirds and combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.

Nigeria success rate in implementation Millennium Development GOALS

Although Nigeria was among the 189 countries that signed the Millennium Development Goals in September 2000, yet she has not achieved full implementation of the goals, however, she has made appreciable strides in some target goals. The federal government is making giant strides in primary education where it is improving enrolment through sundry measures including feeding the pupils and tuition free.

The country has also improved on primary healthcare; however, there are still so much to improve on in order to attain the target goals of achieving two-third child mortality and three- quarter maternal health, especially in annual budgetary allocations.

The greatest area Nigeria has done much in MDGs is combat of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. Various governments since 2000 have attacked frontally HIV/AIDS, malaria, meningitis etc.

The government demonstrated a strong will and commitment in combating epidemic in the country, during Ebola out- break. The urgency and attention accorded to it and the synergy between the federal government and the government of Lagos where the disease first reported saved citizenry the tragic experiences in Liberia and Serra Leone with thousands of deaths.

Nigeria government has not been able to provide adequate

water and nutrition for the citizens. Hunger and poverty still ravage the populace despite the enormous human and natural resources in the country. Nigeria has become the poverty capital of the world because of the level of privation that has hit high heaven overtaking China and India, which hitherto used to host the largest number of poor people in the world.

According to 2005 review of Nigeria Millennium Development Goals, the country has the adequate potentials to attain some of the Millennium

Development targets: achieving universal primary education, ensuring environmental stability and developing a global partnership for development. The report stated further that given the current policy environment and strong political will, there is also the likelihood of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger by 2015.

Sadly, four years after the decade projection, the rising inflation, and an economy that is just emerging from recession, dwindling per capita income couple with massive unemployment that has impoverished the preponderant percentage of people.

Similarly, the rate of achieving the Millennium Development Goals varies across the globe. Out of all the countries of the world, countries situated in Sub- Sahara Africa Region, due to their stagnated development, have recorded least success in eradicating extremely poverty and hunger.

Despite the commendable strides of federal government in pursuit of the MDGs on educational sector, the country is yet to record 80 percent success in the universal basic education programme due to out of school children and increased in drop-outs children of the school age and low enrolment rate in the nation's educational system.

There are still high incidences of child mortality in not only Nigeria, but also it cuts across Sub- Sahara Africa. Maternal

mortality has reduced due to improvement in primary healthcare however; it is still far cry to meeting the target. There is reduction in incidences of HIV/ AID. Anti - retroviral drugs and other medications are available in hospitals for patients with HIV. However, government needs to increase its budgetary allocation in the healthcare delivery system. Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) in collaboration with other world bodies indicated that the developing countries, which include Nigeria are still struggling to realize fully the Millennium Development Goals.

Youth roles in implementation and actualization of MDGs

Thus, for every nation to develop and to meet up with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) there is need to define the role of young people play in the world. Youths have roles to play in ensuring full implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. The future development of any nation depends on the youth. Hence, there is the need to examine the reference and provision for the youths in the actualization of the MDGs. There is no much reference to the problems of the youth in the global agenda for the 21'st Century. Youth reproductive health issues including unintended pregnancy, abortion, HIV/ AIDS and other sexuality-transmitted diseases as they affect the youth ought to be an integral aspect of the agenda and targets of the Millennium Development Goals. Since youth, decisions about their sexual and reproductive health affect not only their lives, but also the health of the global community. Definitely, this justifies the necessity to include it as part of the targets of Millennium Development Goals.

More importantly, youths need to be involved in promoting and propagating the ideas, philosophy and ideals of the Millennium Development Goals especially at country level. Government also needs to include young people in developing and implementing strategies for effective realization of the

Millennium Development Goals. In addition, there is the need to include youths as part of the country delegations to General Assembly meetings that have Millennium Development Goals MDGs as subject matter.

Such exposure will open opportunities for the Youth people to work towards achievement of the MDGs with focus on the last of the eight goals, which entails development of a global partnership, by creating a matrix of business relationships across other parts of the world. International business foray will open new level of empowerment and capacity for the youth.

Furthermore, it is also vital to encourage young leaders to develop their own project and advocacy campaigns toward actualization of MDGs. Youths need to be encouraged to support and mobilize for MDGs through advocacy. Youths can equally be involved in monitoring and profiling progress report of the country's MDGs.

They are also to support government in tailoring the implementation of the MDGs to suit the local needs, circumstances and realities. The aspect of the MDGs, which is concerned with the achievement of universal primary education for all by 2015, did not cater for the Nigeria youths. Hence, there is necessity to expand the scope beyond primary education.

This is because education demand for a youth to acquire the needed skills for gainfully employment or to be qualified to join the public service or private sector is obviously more than the advocated primary school education. This makes the issue of youth empowerment relevant. Youths as the most active population of the nation can as well serve as volunteers in advocating, promoting and monitoring the policy performance of the nation towards Millennium Development Goals.

In conclusion, youths should eschew criminality and violence

in its entirety and create peaceful atmosphere for the government's economic policy and programmes to thrive. They should avoid and desist from cult practices, and other vices that destroy their future as prospective leaders of tomorrow.

To this end, all hands must be on deck to build a dreamed prosperous nation from the enviable foundation laid down by the country founding fathers before vicious circumstances and forces of retrogression terminated the march to greatness.

It is imperative to focus on building a virile, egalitarian, just nation where nobody stands oppressed but all irrespective of socio- economic class stand equal before the law; a nation where no one is discriminated against on the bases of religion, tribe or gender.

It is non-negotiable for emergence of a nation that upholds the principle of merit as its currency, where unity in diversity is uphold both in norm and in practice and finally a nation where peace, love and justice reign supreme.

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INDEX

A

Anthropological history, 3-5
Asylum, 75

B

Bauchi crisis, 56

C

Capacity building, 168
Chrislam, 43

D

Democracy, 90

E

Early newspapers, 9
Ethnic groups in conflict, Horowitz, 58-9
Ethnic pluralism, 55
Extra judiciary killings, 145-6

F

Federal character commission, 89
Feudal system, 8
First coup, 15-7

I

Internal colonialism, 49

J

Jos riot, 45
J.S Tarka, 48,59

M

Mantra of change, 33
Melting pot approach, 81
MDG, 171-7

N

Nation building, 131
Nationalists, 10
Nigerian armed forces, 100
Not too young to run, 132-3,138,142
N-power, 134

O

Oil boom of the 1970s,20-1

P

Perils of youths in foreign countries,
103-4

S

Sectionalism, sectarianism, 37,85
Slave wife syndrome, 118-9
Supreme council of the revolution,
46-8,100

T

The Baha'I writings, 70-1
The British colony, 85
The contract staff syndrome, 154
The hardliners, 158-9
The militants struggle, 161
The sociological approach, 54

U

Underemployment, 154

W

Western hegemony, 80-1
World religious survey, 42

Y

Youth, 92-7
Youth Apathy, 135,137

Z

Zango-kataf imbroglio, 50

ABOUT THE BOOK

The Book graphically dissects the concept of unity in diversity.

Sundry postulations that reinforce its imperative in a heterogeneous society and the contending dynamics in Nigeria historical context driven either by ethnos hegemonic struggle and the consequent fatal narratives, which have undermined the country's manifest destiny.

In addition, it captures challenges of today Nigeria youth and the imperative to integrate young people in nation building as leaders of tomorrow.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Beauty Odiaka Cletus hails from Illushi Esan South East Local Government Ubiaja in Edo State. She is a legal practitioner, former company secretary who has had stint in the Oil and Gas sector. She is married to her heartthrob Cletus Ebhodagbe and blessed with lovely five kids.

Beauty and her husband share burden for Nigeria Unity, Nigeria youths, and nation building, which they champion through the platform Initiative for Fostering Unity in Diversity, Youth and Nation Building, an NGO, which they are co-founders.

The organization is making novel foray into reality show, “Naija Unity House” conceived to diffuse ethnic and religious tensions, and advance unity and cohesion in Nigeria through promotion of tolerance and deference for the nation’s cultural diversity.

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