

ADVANCED SOCIAL STUDIES
for
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NIGERIA**



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Chapter Twenty-Nine

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CULTURAL- SOCIAL PROBLEMS RESULTING FROM THE PLURALISTIC NATURE OF NIGERIA

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**Comparative analysis of the cultural social problems
resulting from the pluralistic nature of Nigeria.**

Nigeria is a heterogeneous society with effective pluralism that is rooted in diverse cultures. In order words, Nigeria is a society which comprises of many kinds of people or things. The three main languages in Nigeria are Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa. Apart from these three main languages of Nigeria there are other different languages such as Gbagi, Tiv, Idoma, Nupe, Egbira, Kanuri, Fulfude, Edo, Ijaw, Efik, Ibibio and so on that are used as a yardstick for determining the variability of Nigeria culture. Each of the ethnic group in Nigeria has its language and elements. Otite (1990) identified 374 ethnic groups in Nigeria.

Nigeria is highly heterogeneous in nature with diversity in terms of multi-tribal cultural, religious and political sphere. It is no gain saying the fact that Nigeria as a nation had been kept below the level of development expected of her by the

indices of a pluralistic state mentioned above. Nigeria heterogeneous nature with reference to religion, politics and ethnic pluralism has besieged Nigeria and kept her running round the vicious circle in terms of sustainable development. Nigeria came into being as a nation in 1914 when Sir Frederick Lord Lugard amalgamated the Northern and Southern protectorate of Nigeria under a single administrative system.

Before this date, the political entity called Nigeria today was administered in separate smaller units. The Northern Nigeria, the colony of Lagos and the Southern Nigeria (Ademoyega 1981:2)

The British brought all the ethnic groups together for administrative convenience not minding their differences in culture, Religion and politics. Today, Nigeria's political problems emanated from the British who took over, administered and abandoned the government and the people of Nigeria.

When the British came to Nigeria as an imperial nation to take over rulership of the country, they met people of the South free and North. In order to administer Nigeria to their own advantage, the British introduced the indirect rule system of government, thereby rubberstamping the political state of the nationalities of Nigeria.

This according to Bamgbose (2004: 120) was one of the evils that outlived British administration. The three major ethnic nationalities in Nigeria prior to colonial rule had distinct forms of government, the feudalistic, oligarchy in

the North, the centralized monarchial democracy in the west, among Yoruba and decentralized democracy in the east among Ibos. The Hausas were pagans from the religious perspective. They were conquered by the fulanis who subsequently introduced Islam. The Yoruba's and the Ibos practiced traditional religion before Christianity was introduced among them. Prior to independence, three power blocs were established - Kaduna in the North, Sir Ahamdu Bello, the Sarduna of Sokoto was the leader, Obafemi Awolowo was the leader in Ibadan in the west. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe was the leader in the east (Enugu). This was the pattern that was the prelude to the independence of Nigeria.

With the calling forth of regional representative to the constitutional conferences that brought independence the political leadership of the country was born and nurtured along ethnic line Ngele (2008). That today we still talk about cultural social problems is as a result of pluralistic nature of Nigeria.

CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF TERMS

These operational terms, politics, religion, ethnicity and pluralism used in this study have been defined for the purpose for clarity.

RELIGION:

Religion has no single definition as a social phenomenon. It has been posing difficulty for the scholars to

define because it has several segments from which people approach it. Religion as the oldest discipline in human society is the most difficult word to define. This is as result of people having different perspectives according to their disciplines.

Yinger (1970: 7) sees Religion as a system of beliefs and practices by means of which a group of people struggles with these ultimate problems of human life. It expresses their refusal to capitulate to death, to give up in the fact of frustration, to allow hostility to tear apart their human association. Yinga stated that men need some absolute values to enable them live harmoniously in this problematic world of suffering. He emphasized that science had been unable to solve human problems which only religion can supply meaning in moments of serious crises and uncertainties. Ekwunife (1992: 1) define Religion as man's awareness and recognition of his dependent relationship on a transcendent being the wholly order, expressible in human society through belief worship and ethnical or moral behaviour. Here, the clergy recognized or appreciated man's knowledge of a higher being more than him which is the origin of faith in religion.

Experience has shown that every religion in relation to politics functions as a catalyst to man's ultimate problems

Horby (8th Edition) sees Religion as the belief in the existence of god and gods and the activities that are connected with the worship of them

POLITICS

Leshe (1970:6) defined politics as a sphere of purposeful behaviour through which we seek to live better than we do now, while Mankle (1967:12) defined politics from two perspectives.

Positively he said, politics is a noble quest for good order and justices while negatively he said politics is a selfish grab for power glory and riches.

Hornby (2000: 657) defined politics as "the science and Art of Government" it is the science dealing with terms, organization and administration of state or part of one with the regulation of its relation with other state.

The word was derived from two Greek words, Polis meaning 'City state' or politics, meaning 'a free born'.

According to the Greek philosopher, Aristotle who coined these words in Markle (1967:32) he saw a man as a political animal. He stated the three guiding principles to politics thus:

1. It involve a state
2. It requires entering into relationship with other people as a way of satisfying man's unlimited wants
3. It involves rival group as to make it competitive.

Politics as a science or art of governing through legitimized government means that it is indispensable social organization established in every society for the purpose of formerly enacting, codifying and enforcing the laws and values of a particular society.

ETHNICITY

Achele (1983:3) sees " Ethnicity as a discrimination against citizen because of his place of birth". Ethnicity and Tribalism are used interchangeably in Nigeria.

PLURALISM

Hornby (8th Edition) Sees Pluralism as the existence of many different groups of people in one society; for example people of different races or of different political or religious beliefs.

Kalu (2000: 133) threw more light on indices of a pluralistic society when he alluded to the fact that pluralism has many dimensions Viz: Sociological level, the cultural values, so that the consistent part of the nation – state may have competing visions about life and the good of the nation. The heterogeneous nature of Nigeria in terms of diverse religious, ethnic and political affinity had made her a veritable pluralistic society.

CULTURAL – SOCIAL PROBLEMS RESULTING FROM PLURALISTIC NATURE OF NIGERIA.

Nigeria as a nation since independence has been facing the task of national pluralism for national integration. On this note, the efforts to build one indivisible nation from the numerous ethnic nationalities have created problems as well. They challenge the context to which cultural pluralism is directed for national integration after independence. They constitute a clog in the wheel of national progress and

development. The infest social solidarity and damage economic and social development

Thus:

Ethno-Politic-Religious sentiments are widespread in Nigeria, these, at times, end up in the disruption of peace and resulting into loss of innocent lives and destruction of properties. Amali and Jekanyin (2013) , there have been incidences of such cases in Kano, Bauchi, Jos, Maduguri, Aba, Zangokataf. The incessant incidents of mayhem and violence in Jos, Maduguri, Kaduna and other parts of Nigeria have been linked to politico ethnic problem. However, religion have been employed to ginger a National support to justify incidence leading to violence in Nigeria. It is in this respect that the Arch Bishop of Abuja (Anglican Dioceses) condemned the violence in Jos not as religious but as due to social/economic tribal and cultural differences. The nation Newspaper, March 12th 2010. in addition, there is tribal loyalty and affiliation that have become a way of life of Nigerians especially when it comes to political power that dictates the economic wellbeing of the people. This has translated into corrupt political practices as often witnessed in the conduct of elections in Nigeria. The political leaders are often accused of appointing people that can help influence their chances of winning elections to head and administer the affairs of the independent National Electoral commission (INEC) a body charged with conducting election to political offices in Nigeria.

The same thing is applicable to the judicial offices in

Nigeria. The organ that is expected to be the moral umpire of its citizens have failed in its responsibilities of upholding justice and where they uphold justice, it is often delayed. Thus, the judiciary is ineffective to check abuses in the society, more so that the rate of corruption within the judiciary itself creates doubts about its integrity. Public and media comments on Nigeria judiciary is at best not encouraging as there have been complaints and reports of high degree of corruption favouritism, chauvinism and misapplication of justice based on tribal, religious and geo-political affiliation of Nigeria judges (The National Newspaper Thursday 17, 2012) to make matters worse, Nigeria though rich in mineral, natural and human resources is still a poor country and rated as the 43rd poorest nation in the world (Wikipedia 2007), 2012) Her poverty has been attributed to misappropriation of public funds, lack of efficient planning and control of Nigeria economic resources.

According to (National Bureau of Statistic 2012) the rate of unemployment is 24% high. These are attributes that breed idleness among Nigeria youths leading to the creation of anti-social vices such as theft, armed robbery, thuggery to mention but a few prevalent and the Nigeria society. These are problems that urgently need to be addressed in the efforts to build a united, indivisible and virile nation.

The Boko Haram saga has equally become a thorn in the flesh to Nigerians. Nigerian colonial master sowed seed of discord between Christianity and Islam – the two major religious bodies that held its way in socio-political scene of

her national life. Kanu (2000) painted a true picture of the scenario created by British imperialism which laid the foundation to suspicion and rivalry among the ethnic nationalities and religious groups in Nigeria when he posited. Meanwhile a contrary wind blew in the North as the root of Islamic fundamentalism was sowed. This veritable religions and political challenge to Christianity was nursed in the early days of independence. The conflict between Christianity and Islam was at first an aspect of regional rivalry and development.

This ethno-religious plurality has not been for the best interest of Nigeria as it has been the basis for many conflicts. Nigeria as a nation –state has “witnessed the most perturbing and unprecedented upsurge of religious disturbance”.

Anugwom and Oji (2003:143). Religious riot has remained a constant threat to peace in Nigeria and has continued to threaten the continued coexistence and habitation of the different ethnic nationalities that make up the country. One of the major religious crises ever witnessed in Nigeria on a large disturbing scale was the malitasinc religious riot which took place in Kano in 1980 (Okwueze 2003:143) in Jimets Yola in 1984, in Gombe. Formal Bauchi State in 1985. these were followed by religious disturbances in Illorin in 1986, in Bauchi town in (1991), Kano (1991) zango-kataf 1992 and sharia riot (2000) in the Northern states of Zamfara, Kaduna and reprisal attack in the East. For the first time in the history of Nigerian' riots occurred in Aba

umuahia and owerri (Anugwom and Oji: 2003:9) and Ugo in Awka Ibo State. Religion in Nigeria functions as a means for the perpetration of violence, fueling ethnic consciousness, solidarity, acquisition of political power and socio-economic gains. Massive killings and the wanton destruction of lives and vandalizing of properties for those considered infidels or who pay allegiance to other religion. This is traced to acrimony between the two dominant religious group – Islam and Christianity which had often resulted in the struggle for power and supremacy bitter feud and wanton destruction of life and property. Nigeria Government's inability to curtail the overzealous Islamic radical and faceless militant group has left the Nigerian Nation on the brinks of being called a terrorist state. Some fanatical elements have used religions differences to cause troubles that harmed innocent citizens of this Country Nigeria. Kidnapping is rampant especially in Delta region of Nigeria. Bombing of churches and public places have chained lives and properties in Nigeria. This religious madness like cataclysmic vortex devastated the ground for sustainable socio-economic development of Nigeria.

In addition one finds heterogeneity prevailing for there are more than 250 ethnic groups that exist in Nigeria. Every Nigeria is conscious of his origin place of birth and language spoken. As a result most problems and crisis are viewed and addressed in relation to these concepts. These are psychic that constitutes great problems for Nigeria as a nation commenting on the issue of ethnicity in Nigeria,

Achebe (1983:5) says:

Nigeria was called a mere geographical expression not only by the British who had an interest in keeping it so, but even by our nationalists when it suited them to retreat into tribe to check their more successful rivals by the British who had an interest in keeping it so, but even by our nationalist when it suited them to retreat into tribe to check their more successful rivals from other parts of the country. Nothing in Nigeria's political history captures her problem of national integration more than the chequered fortune of tribe in her vocabulary. At our independence in 1960, our national anthem which is our Hymn of deliverance from British colonial bondage has these lines. "Though tribe and tongue may differ in brother hood we stand"

This was in the opinion of Achebe (1983:7) "a most ominous beginning" and not surprisingly, this brotherhood lasted only six years. And ever since then, a Nigeria child seeking admission into a federal school, a student wishing to enter a university; a graduate seeking employment in the public service; a business man tendering for contract will fill a form which requires him to confess his tribe. Nigeria educational curriculum has failed to address these problems. Thus, there has not been a desired consciousness that would lead us to a strong and united democratic society as contained in our National constitution (1999).

SUMMARY

This paper examined the cultural social problems resulting from pluralistic nature of Nigeria. It could be rightly said, that cultural pluralism has caused many problems in the polity and lives of Nigerian people: the process of development in Nigeria has faced challenges from politics, Religion and Ethnicity. These social dynamic problems have weakened and hampered the development of institutions necessary for building a nation. Even in situations where the leadership as well as institutions responded by initiating some pro-active measures, such measures have always been aimed at promoting ethnic, religious and political interest of favoured region or clique and not the general or national interests of Nigerians. This is sequel to the hormone of religious bigotry, ethnic sentiment and political disorientation that flows through our veins.

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