

Impacts of Ethnic-consciousness on Political Development of Nigeria's Fourth Republic

Social Sciences Research

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Abstract

Nigerians have never benefited from the much-desired development after independence since 1960 in spite the uninterrupted democracy for over two decades. This is due to the discrimination among the citizens in their political participation. The political elite are highly divided along ethnic and religious lines for their selfish gains since the First Republic. This is due to the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates in 1914 by the British colonialist. Nigeria had hardly ever been united as a nation. People from each region treat others as aliens resulting in lack of trust, hatred and fear of each other. Politicians use the situation and base their campaigns on religion and tribal affiliations instead of ideology. It resulted in the military coups d'états of 1966 and 1983 respectively. In spite of the rich human and natural resources of Nigeria, majority of Nigerians remain poor. The objective of the paper is to interrogate the effects of ethnic consciousness on the political development of Nigerian Fourth Republic and recommend the solution to the menace. The paper uses qualitative method of research with data gotten from secondary sources. It adopts integration theory which among others presupposes that citizens of a country need to be united for peace and development to thrive. Fourth Republic post-democratic elites have the responsibility of uniting Nigerians for the provision of the much-desired good governance. To this end, the paper recommends that the Fourth Republic politicians adhere to politics of ideology and get rid of ethno-religious politics of divide and rule.

Keywords: *Colonial-masters, democracy, development, integration, politics*

Introduction

Nigeria is a country which is complex and difficult to govern. There are lots of cleavages in Nigeria bordering on ethnic, religion, region and even economic differences. These make the political development of Nigeria a herculean task. The North-South divide continues to widen as the politicians of the country tend to benefit from the gulf in their illicit political struggles due to the marriage of strange bed fellows in the name of amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates to form a single entity called Nigeria which has led to political stagnation in the country in many ways.

It reflected in paradoxes of Nigerian statehood. According to Yunusa (2010), governance in Nigeria is replete with many contradictions, paradoxes, pathologies and regulations that currently plague the federal system. There is uneven development of the two different regions of Nigeria. While the southerners that are well advanced in western education are populated by Christian majority of mostly Igbos and Yorubas in the Eastern and western regions respectively, the majority of Northern Hausa Muslims are less educated.

Petroleum resources which is the major source of Nigerian economy is derived from the less populated Niger Delta area in the South and the larger populated North does not have endowment of the natural resources. Whereas the less educated northerners have high level of political enthusiasm, the more educated south suffer from political apathy. During the registration of voters using Data Capturing Machine in 2006/7, the southern state governors were threatening their citizens with refusal of non-registered members from receiving treatment in public healthcare centres and non enrolment of their children into public schools the complaints in the North were under age and double registrations (Obaka, 2014).

Nigeria suffers from incessant ethno-religious conflicts. This is due to the fact that, everyone regards the person from the other ethnic group as a rival who is a threat to him and therefore relates with him with hatred, fear and non-trustworthy. Nwaorgu (2002) notes that; it could thus be seen that the people, that made up the Nigerian federation constantly lived in fear of one another. And because of the fear, they are envious of the member of whichever ethnic group that occupies presidential position resulting to enmity. Therefore, as Rodney (1982) puts it, much of human history has been a fight for survival against natural hazards and against real and imagined human enemies. That is why Nigerian politics have been centred on tribalism devoid of ideology. Aluaigba (2009) notes that; The Nigerian political processes have always been smeared by ethnicity.

Ethnic politics has affected the political development in many ways right from independence up to the present Fourth Republic. The crises centred on the eligibility of the Vice President Jonathan to act as the president while Yar'adua was sick and for him, as incumbent president to contest election into the office having completed the tenure of late Yar'adua (Adeniyi, 2012).

Bad as the ethnic politics looks, it is not a hopeless situation. It is the responsibility of the present political elites to provide the much desired cohesion. Nigeria can be historically divided into four eras as follows:

1. First era was amalgamation period from 1885 to 1914;
2. Second era was nationalism struggle from 1922 to 1960;
3. Third era was democratization period from 1960 to 1999;
4. Fourth era is the present integration struggle.

The work is structured into six parts. After this introduction is the literature review. The third section is theoretical framework which dwells on Integration Theory for the evaluation of the crisis of ethnic politics on Nigerian development. The fourth part of

the work presents the overview of the impacts of ethnicity on the political development of Nigeria which is followed by the efforts made towards integration of Nigeria. Finally, the sixth part is the conclusion and recommendation.

Literature Review

The issue of ethnic-consciousness in Nigeria has attracted the attention of many scholars, politicians and interest groups in many ways. The problems of disagreement among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria started even before the independence of the country. While struggling for the British colonial masters to grant Nigeria independence, there erupted crisis of ethnic coloration among the nationalists. Akanji (2014) pointed out that, the policy was a pointer to age-old bitter north-south dichotomy and lack of understanding or better put ethnic rivalry, mistrust and suspicions in the country.

As the ethnic political problem emanated from the period of amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorates to create Nigeria as a nation in 1914 it continued up to the time of independence and beyond. Gberevbie and Oni (2014:71) affirmed thus: The disparities in economic and educational development between the south and the North magnified Nigeria's ethnic and religious tensions and resulted to struggle for state power by the various regions that insinuated groups, ethnic and regional conflicts in Nigeria even uptill now. The diversities and disagreements among the ethnic groups in Nigeria in the present Fourth Republic has been in existence over time. And it had been a major factor in Nigerian politics.

What is happening in Nigeria is not, unexpected. This is because, as people define their identity in ethnic and religious terms, they are likely to see an "us" and "them" relations existing between themselves and people of different ethnicity or religion (Huntington, 1997). Nigerian factor is an issue of many ethnic nations under the state nation. And the elites of the various groups set aside ideology politics but toe the line of

ethnic and religious politics in wooing the people to themselves. In line with this, Magstradt (2011) notes that; Nigeria is not a natural-state. Originally a British colony, it was drawn up primarily for the administrative convenience of its colonial rulers. The problem with Nigeria is that, the major ethnic groups that make up the state; Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba never reached any agreement to come together as one nation before the British Colonial masters forced them together. And, the union was never for the benefit of the country but for the economic and administrative benefits of the British Government.

Making reference to the ethnic problems of Nigeria, Williams averred that: As the political class lacks national acceptance and cannot spearhead a national mobilizing ideology, it resorts increasingly to the politicization of ethnicity, too much attachment of religious differences and awakening of pristine and atavistic norms and practices (Igbuzor, 2005). Due to lack of general acceptance at national level, most of Nigerian political elites adhered to ethnic and religion politics for their recognition. And this leads to divisive politics of divide and rule as a result of which the cohesion of Nigeria has become a mirage.

Politicians from both regions of Nigeria never regard Nigeria as a nation-state that is worth working for. While the north referred to it as “the mistake of 1914”, the south saw the Nigeria-state symbolic structure as a mere geographic expression (Owelle, 2005). As none of the leaders believe in Nigerian-project, all of them remain local and ethnic heroes. Nwaorgu (2002) asserts: The country never had national heroes, what it had was ethnic champions. The way Nigerian leaders reduce themselves to local heroes can be seen from the political parties formation in the first republic when AlhajiTafawaBalawa, a Northern Hausa-Fulani was the head of Northern People’s Congress, Chief ObafemiAwolowo, a Western Yoruba was the head of the Action Group (A.G) and Dr. NnamdiAzikiwe, an Eastern Igbo was the head of the National

Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC). When each of these political party leaders became leaders at their respective regions, acceptance of either of them at national Nigeria at independence inherited a weak socio-political structure, a defective and unbalanced federation, an intensification of ethnic consciousness and rivalries, a subverted indigenousethos of government and culture, and above all, inexperienced leadership (Akintoye, 2014). Looking at Nigeria from Akintoye's point of view, it was never expected to be united as a nation. That is the reflection that still hunts the unity of the state even after 6 decades of its independence.

According to Magstradt (2011), regional animosities exacerbated by religion, ethnic and linguistic differences, erupted in bloody civil war in 1967 when Eastern Nigerian seceded as independent state of Biafra. The war was as a result of the coup and counter-coup of 1966 in which the Nigerian army was divided along ethnic line. It was more of the Igbos versus the Hausas. And at the end, many lives were lost and lots of property was destroyed and Nigeria never returned to normal again as the war has maligned the peaceful coexistence of Nigerian citizens. Thereafter, the feeling of hatred heightened and each ethnic group started regarding the other with derogatory names. Hausas call Igbos *Nyemmiri* which ordinarily means 'bring water' in Ibo language; Igbos and Yorubas call Hausas *Aboki* which means 'friend' in Hausa language and both Hausa and Igbos call Yorubas *Ngbati*, *ngbati* which means 'when, when' in Yoruba. Yorubas are also called *Be erebe* which is a coined name by Hausas.

The history of inter-ethnic relations has been quite discordant. The Igbo are still suffering over their role in the civil war which ended 30 years ago, the Igbos and Yorubas are unable to forgive the mistrust, betrayal and acrimony of their past relations, and the Hausa and Fulani are always ready to recall the history of uneven development of the country and the advantage accruing to the south as a result. Every

ethnic problem is perceived from this tinted history and enforced by it (International IDEA, 2000:981).

Agitation for the share of the national cake in terms of provision of development for a particular region of favoured ethnic groups is another major factor that results in ethnic conflicts. Because of the complains of injustice of the government in power perpetrated against the other people different from the head, all the major ethnic groups have threatened to secede at one time or the other apart from the Biafran struggle in 1967 that resulted in the civil war that lasted for 30 years. Yorubas agitated for secession in 1953 and 1954; Hausa and Fulani tried in 1953 and 1966 and Igbos initially attempted in 1964.

Corroborating international IDEA, Jega noted that:

Political instability arising from the absence of an enviable political culture, religious intolerance and fanaticism, ethnic rivalry, uneven distribution of development projects and amenities, and concentration of wealth in the hands of a proportionate lazy few are some of the internal threats facing the country (Jega, 2007:198).

The use of ethnic and religious differences for political gain by political elites who turn around to use their victory in favouring their relations and supporters alone perpetuate continuous ethnic consciousness and division in the society.

Theoretical Framework

The amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorates in 1914 to create Nigeria as a nation-state makes the unity of the country a difficult task. For a better understanding of the crises rocking Nigeria's unity, many scholarly theories could be adopted for the understanding of the impacts of ethnic consciousness on Nigerian political development. These include: Marxist theory; Political Economy Theory,

Conflict Theory and Structural Functionalist Theory among others. But, Integration Theory most suits the analysis of the subject.

This article adopts integration theory as propounded by Milward (1992) to analyze our understanding of how unity is enhanced from formerly disparate group promoting what is common to them while de-emphasizing their areas of differences. According to Milward (1992), "Integration is simply the adaptive response of plural, small and medium size states to global challenge they could not face individually". Far from replacing the nation-state, integration is a strategy to consolidate it.

Integration presupposes the existence of diversity in the society as a form of pluralism which could be ethnic, socio-cultural, economic, linguistic or political by which each group may be marked to the point of engendering some measure of self-consciousness that can hinder the process of creating a sense of territorial nationality. Yunusa (2010:46) notes that, the territorial unit so created through integration process is to reduce tension in a pluralistic society in order to bring about unity and homogeneity.

According to Mazrui (1994), national integration is the establishment of a single national identity and the commitment and loyalty of the citizens to a central authority. In relation to Nigeria development the problem of much adherence to the ethnic identities Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba and the many other varied ethnic minorities resulted in much emphasis on ethnic-nationalities rather than state-nationalities.

The prominence of the notion of national integration in debates on Nigerian project hinged upon the historical antecedents and diversity of the country as a result of the intrusion of British colonial power and the amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorate in 1914. (Abdullahi & Baba, 2014:387)

The merging of the northern and southern protectorate by the colonial master worsened the diversity in Nigeria. The Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba tripod goes a long way to divide

Nigeria apart from the other minor divisions within the regions. The Christian/Moslem dichotomy that rocks the Nigerian unity also calls for understanding of the situation.

To achieve the much desired cohesion in Nigeria, Dukor (2002:xii) points out that; interest means understanding, dialogue, awareness and acculturation among all the ethnic groups. This calls for cooperation and the need to liaise with the elites of the various ethnic groups to allay the fear of each other.

Impacts of Ethnic consciousness on Nigerian Political Development

The high level of consciousness of the ethnic nations in Nigeria has affected the integration of Nigeria as a nation in many ways in the present Fourth Republic. The ethnic conscientiousness resulted to conflicts of different dimensions. The conflicts included the political, command and religion aspects. As a result of ethnic cleavages, the much feared insecurity of a nation due to external aggression has changed in Nigeria. The much fear in Nigeria is tribal conflicts which is more worrisome during elections.

Elections time in Nigeria have turned out to be war time. There is often mass exodus of families who live outside their places of origin to their native homes during elections due to fear of violence. This is because, election time results in opening other hidden violence-related factors that caused grievances like ethnic or religious difference. This can easily be noted when a comparison of the 2007 and 2011 elections are made.

The 2007 elections under Maurice Iwu as the INEC chairman was marred by irregularities and beyond acceptable standard (Human Rights Watch, 2007) and the results were rejected by the candidates of the two major opportunity political parties, the AC and the ANPP. The case was contested in courts up to the Supreme Court. Even the winner himself admitted that the election that brought him to power was neither free nor fair. Yet, it did not record any post election violence because, the winner,

Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'adua of PDP and the candidates of the two major opposition parties, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar and Mallam Nuhu Ribadu were all Hausa men. In contrast, the 2011 presidential election which was won by President Goodluck Jonathan was free and fair. Duruji and Segun (2014:209) pointed out that; the assessment of 2011 elections was largely positive for example, the United States Secretary of State at the time, Mrs. Hillary Clinton declared; "The historic event marks a dramatic shift from decades of failed elections and substantial improvement" over the 2007 elections. Apart from the US Secretary of State, all other international and national election observers applauded the INEC for conducting acceptable elections. The resultant post election violence that erupted led to the death of 800 people.

The victory of Jonathan from the south provoked the Hausa/Fulani of the North. It was because he contested against a Northerner, General Muhammadu Buhari of the ANPP. The only factor that could be used to explain these paradoxes is ethnic consciousness. To the Northerners, political power is the only thing they are endowed with. Therefore, out of power means they have lost out in all aspects of Nigerian benefits. Alhaji Maitama Sule once insisted on why the north should continue to rule;

Everyone has a gift from God. The Northerners are endowed by God with leadership qualities. The Yoruba man knows how to earn a living and has diplomatic qualities. The Igbo man is gifted in trade, commerce and technological innovation. God so created us equally with purpose and different gifts (Eborugwo, 2017).

The regional division of labour envisaged by Hausa leaders has so much affected the psyche of the people. It has created high political enthusiasm among them. They attach a lot of importance to politics to the extent that, during registration of voters, wherever they are based in the south, they travel to their respective home-states to register. In the same vein, at election time, they make sure they travel home for election too. And to worsen the situation and conform to the analogy, the peoples of southern

region have high level of political apathy, especially in the south east that is predominantly of Igbo extraction. During elections, the major complain from the north centers on under age voting and double voting. In contrast, the reports from the south is that of non registration for election and, hence, no participation through voting.

Another variance of ethnic or regional conflict in Nigerian Fourth Republic is religious crisis due to the introduction of the Islamic Sharia law. The Northern governors, beginning from Zamfara State, started introduction of the penal code of Sharia law and this resulted into rifts between the Hausa/Fulani governors of Northern origin and other citizens of Nigeria. Adebite (2000:63) warned that: With prominent Christian leaders and some eminent lawyers describing Sharia as illegal and unconstitutional and the Moslem leaders on their part hailing the Zamfara Sharia expansion as a welcome development, a possible showdown was clearly in the offing.

The fear of Adebite was confirmed. When attempts were made for the passage of the bill to legalize the Sharia law in some states, it resulted into altercations between Muslims and Christians in those states. Notably among the states are Kaduna, Niger and Kwara States where lives were lost in the outcome of the process.

What Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859) referred to as "Tyranny of the Majority" becomes very clear in Nigerian politics once again in the present Fourth Republic. With about half of the population, the north which is Hausa dominated continued to determine who rules Nigeria. The North remained the fulcrum of power around which others revolved. It did not matter what the North did or did not, it was always on the winning side (Agboola, 2014). The ethnic politics that Nigeria is known for right from the First Republic continues to divide Nigeria in the present Fourth Republic. As it is at the moment, no part of Nigeria can win presidency without the support of Hausa/Fulani of the North. Northern Nigeria continues to determine the president as it has been dominating the politics of the country right from independence in 1960.

Nigerian leaders from independence in 1960 to 2020

S / N	N a m e	Period in office	Duration	Region
1	AlhajiAbubakarTafawaBalewa	1/10/60-15/1/66	5y.3M.15D	N o r t h
2	General AguiyiIronsi	15/1/66-29/1/66	6 M . 1 5 D	S o u t h
3	General Yakubu Gowon	1/8/66-29/7/75	9Y.6M.29D	N o r t h
4	General MurtalaMuhammed	29/7/75-13/2/76	6 m . 1 5 D	N o r t h
5	General OlusegunObasanjo	13/2/76-1/10/79	3Y.7M.18D	S o u t h
6	AlhajiShehuShagari	1/10/79-31/1/83	4 y . 3 M .	N o r t h
7	General MuhammaduBuhari	31/12/83-27/8/85	1Y.8M.28D	N o r t h
8	General Ibrahim Babangida	27/8/85-26/8/93	9 Y e a r s	N o r t h
9	Chief Ernest Shonekan	26/8/83-17/11/93	2 M . 2 2 D	S o u t h
1 0	General SaniAbacha	17/11/93-8/6/98	4Y.6m.21D	N o r t h
1 1	General AbdulsalamiAbubakar	9/6/98-29/5/99	1 1 M . 2 D	N o r t h
1 2	Chief OlusengunObasanjo	29/5/99-29/5/07	8 Y e a r s	S o u t h
1 3	AlhajiUmarYar'Adua	29/5/07-5/5/10	3 Y . 2 5 D .	N o r t h
1 4	Dr. Goodluck Jonathan	5/5/10-29/5/15	4Y.11M25D	S o u t h
1 5	General MuhammaduBuhari	29/5/15-25/5/20	6Y.4m.2D	N o r t h

Source: Compiled by the author (2021)

As the table indicates, from independence on October 1,1960 upto October 1, 2020, a period of 60 years, Southerners, ruled the country for a total of 17years, 6months and 19 days leaving the remaining 42years, 5months and 12days in the hands of the Northerners. It was worse off prior to the present forth republic. From 1960to the return to civil rule in 1999, a period of 38years, 7months and 28 days, the southerners ruled for just 4years, 4months and 25 days leaving the remaining 34years, 3months and 3 days for their northern counterpart. This situation adds to the many disproportionate North-South relationships. Out of the 15 times that power changed hands at Nigerian national

level, only 4 people of Southern origin benefited, although Obasanjo assumed office twice, first, as military head in 1976 after the assassination of his principal, General Murtala Muhammed and secondly, as the president in 1999 in the present Fourth Republic. For a southerner to be the head in Nigeria was all through fate of accident and never by design (Onyekpe, 2002).

- Tafawa Balewa was assassinated for General Agui Ironsi to become the Head of State;
- General Murtala Muhammed was assassinated for General Olusegun Obasanjo to become the Head of State;
- General Ibrahim Babangida was forced to step aside for Chief Ernest Shonekan to be made the head of Interim National Government (ING);
- General Sani Abacha and Chief M.K.O Abiola had to die for Obasanjo to be elected president;
- Yar'Adua had to die of sickness for Jonathan to be sworn in and later elected as the president.

Ethnic politics heightened the national tension in Nigeria. The elites of the various regions express the tension and frustration of their people in the Nigerian nation. Accordingly;

A major element of the struggle had been mutual tension between the elites of the North and of the South and this has resulted in concession by southerners that the more population Northern would always have the upper hand in any majoritarian electoral contest. In the same vein, the Northerners were of the view that the more educated southern elites would dominate state institutions. (Ovwasa & Olarewaju, 2014:72)

The ethnic tension among the major ethnic groups in Nigeria has resulted in deeper hatred. Instead of the feeling of oneness as members of same country, there is expansion of animosities. Whereas the Hausas of the North feel that they are the owners of Nigeria

and others are aliens, the Igbos and Yorubas of the south regard Hausas as lazy people that slow down Nigerian development.

The Ethnic support that paves way for the victory of the elites results to nepotism. The appointment often gets tilted towards relations and supporters without recourse to merit. This goes in line with the observation of Achebe (1983:19) that: "Nigeria on the other hand, is a country where it would be difficult to point to one important job held by the most competent person we have". Nepotism and favoritism have beclouded the leaders in their appointments.

Nepotism in government makes all the fights against corruption a charade. Corrupt political appointees become untouchable due to the process through which they assume office. The struggles of all the agents of government fighting corruption such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission (ICPC), the police and a lot of others end up in frustration as there is no objectivity in handling of their cases. It is very difficult to lock up fraudulent relations or supporters that are in position of authority. The vicious circle of mediocrity, corruption and underdevelopment continues unbroken when an incompetent and favoured individual is in the office and he continues to loot the treasury, development becomes a mirage.

Conflicts and agitation for secession: The injustice that is being displayed in the ethnic-centered leadership results in the resultant agitation for secession in the east where the call for Biafra Republic has become clear. The youth have created new militia known as Eastern Security Network (ESN) that is very dangerous and targets security personnel. This is in addition to the Independent People of Biafra (IPOB) which has been in the agitation all this while under the leadership of Nnamdi Kanu. Likewise, in the west, a group lead by Mr. Sunday Igboho has given the herdsmen quit notice which has caused tension in Nigeria. There are agitations for the secession of the Igbos of the East for the

actualization of the creation of Biafra State. Likewise, the Yorubas of the West are agitating for secession for the creation of Oduduwa Republic.

Efforts towards Integration of Nigeria as a Nation

Right from the colonial era, all the governments in Nigeria have been mindful of the differences of the various ethnic groups and had to struggle for the peace and unity of Nigeria. This had been done through many ways. One of the major means Nigerian government adopted through the constitution was federal system of government. Right from 1946, the colonial government adopted Richard's constitution which introduced the federal constitution. There were Eastern, Northern and Western Regions. The regime of General Yakubu Gowon created 12 states after the Biafran war and the subsequent military regimes continued to create more states until it reached the present 36 states of Nigerian federation (Dukor, 2002).

Another constitutional consideration for the success of Nigerian federation is the condition set for the president of the country to emerge after presidential election. The 1999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria section 134 (2) insists that;

A candidate for an election to the office of the president shall be deemed to have been duly elected, where, there being more than two candidates for the election,

a. He has the highest votes cast at the election

b. He has not less than one-quarter of the voter cast at the election in each of at least two third of all the states in the federation and the federal capital territory Abuja (FGN, 1999).

The constitution guides the spread of the votes the aspiring president must win to be considered as being voted by reasonable sections of Nigeria and not just a limited portion of the country.

Federal Character Commission (FCC) was also introduced. It is a system that was introduced by the government to ensure even spread of public positions among the states that make up the federation. These policies include quota system, catchment area, indicating religion or ethnic group (Nwaorgu, 2002:130). It is the FCC which emphasises equal representation of people from the different segments of the Nigerian society as basis of man power procurement and reward in public sector (Gbenevbie & Oni, 2014).

In the FCC arrangement, each state must have representative as minister and Ambassador or High Commissioner. It is also considered in the promotion and the appointment of public officers and in military and paramilitary institutions. The admission of students into unity schools and tertiary institutions in Nigeria depends on the FCC activities to some extents.

As a country that rely on monolithic economy mostly based on the revenue from petroleum resources, the federal government adopted a revenue allocation formula in order to use it for the sharing of the federation revenue derived from oil among the Federal, States and the Local Government Areas (LGA). The central authority collects all the resources beforesharing it accordingly. In Nigeria, revenue allocation is taken to be the distribution of national revenue among the various tiers of government in the federation (Ohiomu&Oluyemi,2018).

For the satisfaction of the federating states, certain formula has to be agreed upon which is to be used in the sharing of the state revenue and this arrangement becomes a rallying point for the unity of Nigeria.

Analysis of revenue allocation formula in Nigeria:

<i>SN</i>	<i>Beneficiary</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1.	Federal Government	48.50%
2.	36 States	26.72%
3.	774 Local Governments	20.60%
4.	Centrally controlled special Rind	4.18%
	Total	100%

Source: Ohiomu and Ohiyemi (2018).

The establishment of National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) by the government of Nigeria in 1973 shortly after the Biafran war is a major unifying factor. It was meant to form part of the efforts by the government in the post war Reconciliation, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation (3Rs). It was established by General Gowon regime by decree 24 of 1973 and was moderated in 1993, by Decree 51 by Babangida regime, twenty years after establishment. One of the major objectives of the NYSC scheme is: To develop common ties among the Nigerian Youths and thereby promote national unity and integration (Nigerian Scholars). NYSC is meant to give graduate youth the opportunity to familiarize with other parts of the country and have good idea about what is obtainable in other regions of different ethnic groups and cultures. It operates in a way that youth get posted to other parts of Nigeria outside their regions of origin and institution they graduated from.

Another factor that creates room for integration is sports fiesta. The only time Igbos, Hausas and Yorubas show sign of oneness is when Nigeria is participating in international sports fiesta, especially football. Irrespective of ethnic affiliation, all Nigerians celebrate the victory of Super Eagles and if the reverse is the case, they mourn the loss together. Morankiyo (2012) notes that; It is expected by the fans that all members of the team cooperate to uplift the entire nation. In the end, everyone

overlooks our differences, giving way, to unity and patriotism. Participation in National League also contributes to the integration of Nigeria as it gives the youth the opportunity to relate together. Considering the role sports play in Nigerian struggle for nationhood, the government of the country spends a lot of money and engages lots of personnel in the activities of national sports.

Conclusion

The fusion of the various ethnic groups in Nigeria and the amalgamation of the northern and the southern protectorates by the British colonial masters through force have caused more problems for the country than been a blessing that is expected. Instead of harnessing the advantage of large size the togetherness suppose to offer to move the nation forward the ethnic differences resulted in rivalries leading to stagnation or even backwardness in political development. The result of the unresolved differences resulted into the first and the second military coup d'états which lead to the termination of the First Republic. After 6 decades of independence, in the present Fourth Republic, the embers of ethnic politics is still hunting the progress of the nation. The tilting of political development towards the regional origin or ethnic group of the president and the nepotism at play makes the cohesion of Nigeria a difficult task. The situation arises from the enormous power at the federal level and the ethnic politics devoid of ideology that is common in Nigeria. Most political parties right from the First Republic were formed with ethnic affinity. Therefore, politicians use ethnic or regional affiliation as the bases of their campaign and after winning an election, their support. Apart from the military incursion into Nigerian politics due to tribal rivalries, it also led to electoral violence at various levels impeding political development. And corruption in office has escalated. Human development becomes a herculean task due to

corruption and mediocrity. A combination of all these factors results in the stagnation of political development of Nigeria.

In spite of all the ugly situations that ethnic consciousness caused in Nigeria, all hope is not lost. For the restoration of political development in the country, the paper recommends that, credible persons in government that desire for the need to unite Nigeria have to be at the helm of affairs. They should form alliance with the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) on the need to proffer solution to the ethnic differences in the country. And, by doing so, the elites of the country including the traditional rulers, religious and political party leaders must be involved in the struggle for national unity. 'To defend her unity' as enshrined in the National Anthem has to be practiced. There is need to change from being rhetorical towards show of interest in achieving the desired unity.

Mass education of all the people, especially the elites of the various ethnic groups is very important. This can be achieved through different means. It can be by placing advertisements in the television, radio and newspapers. By regularly listening to the jingles in the electronic media about the evil division causes and the benefit of unity, and reading or viewing the pictures inside newspapers change the psyche of the people. Nigerian film producers and actors also need to be encouraged to produce films that send messages in this direction.

In like manner, Nigerian musicians should be involved in the fight against disunity in Nigeria. There are many instances where songs were used to educate the people in the past. One of such works was done by Bob Marley, the reggae star. During the Africanism struggle, he released his popular track *Africa Unite*. More so, South African musician, Lucky Dube sang against war and crime and summed it up thus: *Your mother didn't tell you the truth 'cause my father did not tell me the truth*. In the same way Sonny Okosun and his band Ozzidi was popular for his songs on Pan Africanism. As the

efforts of all these musicians were not in vain, songs directed towards Nigerian unity can influence the mindset of those who clamour for division.

Organized sectors such schools, religious groups and social groups should organize programmes such as seminars and symposia through which to educate the masses on the importance of being united in peace.

Nigerian federalism that has failed to achieve the much desired unity needs to be structured to reduce the power at the center through constitutional process. The present 36 federating states whereby none can adequately fend for herself makes state governors resort to the status of beggars depending on the federal government for survival. There is need for structuring to make each of the 6 regions be madestate to be strong enough for self sustenance. When this is achieved, the central government becomes less powerful and therefore, less attractive.

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