Research Paper

Federalism and Ethnic Diversity in Nigeria

Ojo Idowu Akinwumi
Department of Political Science, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Ezeanya, Emeka Vincent
Department of Political Science Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Afolabi, Oladiran
Department of Political Science, Bowen University
afolabioladiran@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT
This paper takes an exploratory look at the issues of ethnicity in Nigeria from a historical perspective. It shows the interplay between ethnic rivalry and the challenges of National Security which have in the current dispensation become very compelling with rampant cases of bombings, terrorist attacks, murder, and all sorts of vices in some parts of the country. The paper underscores the principle of "Unity in Diversity", and it relevance to institution building, including the protection of our nascent democracy. In addition, diversity issues concerning culture and religious differences, including political affiliations should not hinder the relative peace and stability Nigeria have hitherto enjoyed. The paper further provides insights towards enhancing stability and integration in Nigeria.
KEY WORDS: *Culture, Democracy, Ethnicity, Ethnic Rivalry, National Security, Politics, Religion, Federalism, Diversity.*

I.   INTRODUCTION

The identification of ethnicity as the major problem of all vices associated with the Nigerian body polity has made the subject a dominant theme in the study of issues concerning the country's unity and the question of national security. Indeed, anything that has to do with federalism must evaluate critical issues of ethnic relations. As Jinadu (2004) rightly puts it, 'the study of ethnic relations in Nigeria has passed through a number of phases reflecting changes in the country's political and social status as well as changes in fashions and trends in the social science research agenda. Indeed, ethnic pluralism is an essential aspect of the structure of new African states. Other forms of pluralism are equally important. For example, we have religious pluralism defining the various coexisting religious organizations and practices such as traditional religion, Islam and Christianity. Thus, analysts interested in such diverse issues as nationalism, decolonization, national integration, political parties, military intervention, corruption, economic development, structural adjustment, democratization, violent conflict and social vices have all considered the 'ethnicity' variable.

The challenges affecting the Nigeria Federalism have been an historical and persistent one. Before the colonial era, conflicts were more of tribal groups struggling to take over territories. Since the colonial era and even after Independence, the conflicts in Nigeria have been ethnic, religious, political and even cultural. The forced cohabitation of the different parts of Nigeria without the people consent led to a lot of distrust and suspicion, especially among leaders of the different ethnic, religious and political groups in the country. Today, the size and population of Nigeria for which we ought to draw strength from as a Nation has become questionable. The story is about ethnic rivalry everywhere, quota system, resource allocation, federal character, etc. People have consistently challenged our continued existence as a nation and many call for National constitutional Conference. Since the end of the civil war in 1970, ethnic violence has persisted and politics has become a zero sum game with the winner take it all. Corruption has become institutionalized and with the fear

---

of the unknown, fairness, equity and justice has been thrown away (Aluko, 2002). According to Lewis (2011), the corrupt nature of the Nigerian state gives the political competition a distinctly winner-takes-all nature, as those in power have access to the revenue streams. According to Ekanola (2006), despite its oil riches, a number of problems inhibit its development. Many of its problems stem from its origin as an artificial colonial construct which lumped together a variety of separate peoples. For Babawale (1991), many 'Nigerians' deceive themselves by thinking that Nigeria is one. This is wrong because the presence of unity is artificial. Also, for Anderson (1991), Nigeria is not a Nation. It is a mere geographical expression. There are no "Nigerians" in the same sense as there are "English" "Welsh" or "French". The word 'Nigeria' is mainly a distinctive appellation to distinguish those who live within the boundaries of Nigeria from those who do not.

As espoused by FEHN (2011), the greatest bane to Nigeria's development as a nation is ethnicity. Mutual Suspicion, distrust and hatred amongst the diverse ethnic nationalities have steadily been on the rise since Independence. Disagreements are often expressed through violent acts which have given birth to a violent culture in some parts of the country today thereby threatening the socio-economic development of Nigeria. Fighting corruption has become a great task. Government has not been able to fight corruption effectively especially as persons indicted often whip up ethnic sentiments in defense of their position. Ethnic conflicts in Nigeria and Africa in general arise as a result of scarcity of political resources, multi- culture, religion, militarization of ethnicity among others. These conflicts cannot be ignored.

In 2002, the Miss World Pageant was moved from Abuja to London in the wake of violent protests in the Northern part of the country that left more than 100 people dead and over 500 injured. The rioting erupted after Muslims in the country reacted in anger to comments made by a newspaper reporter. Rioters in Kaduna killed an estimated 105 men, women, and children with a further 521 injured taken to hospital. In 2010, more than 500 people were killed by religious violence in Jos. Between 2010 till date, a popular Islamic sects known as Boko Haram brought chaos in the country, which has led to loss of lives and properties. From all indications, the events of Boko Haram have been due to ethnic and in some cases religious rivalry with some very unbelievable demands for a country which constitutionally is regarded as a secular state. So, Nigeria has been bedeviled by ethno-religious conflicts with devastating human and material losses since the return of democracy in 1999. But the Boko Haram uprising of July 2009 was significant in that it is not only set a precedent, but also reinforced the attempts by Islamic conservative elements at imposing a variant of Islamic religious ideology on a secular Nigerian state (Anyadike, 2013). Nigeria faces several security challenges. The country is the scene of widespread violence, criminality and outright insurgency, such as Boko Haram in the North East. The spread of illegal small and light weapons has become quite substantial (WARN, 2013).

While regional dimensions of Nigeria are often discussed in politics, especially the North-South division, the federal system aims to prevent mobilization based on religion, ethnicity or narrow regionalism. Since 2010 at least 3000 people have been killed in the attacks by Boko Haram incidents, with the UN claiming that more than1200 were killed in the period May-December 2013 alone (BBC News, 2013). As espoused by Osimen, et al (2013), deep ethnic fears generated by in-built structures that promote unequal access to power and resources is being exploited. "The Yoruba man has done his own after eight years, he handed over to an Hausa man, and an Ijaw man was on the throne till 2015, now the president Buhari is from the North West.However, it is important for all Nigerians to be part of the solution to the recurrent diversity related violent of conflicts in the country. Diversity is not about how we differ; rather, it should be about embracing one another's uniqueness (Adesuyi, et al, 2011). According to Albert (1999), diversity refers to human differences in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, ideology or social class. It calls attention to the fact that human beings are not born the same and even when they are, some environmental factors make them to have diverse social, economic and political orientations. It is on this premise this that this paper interrogates how Nigerian system has managed diversity.

Is Nigeria Federal system since colonial days has been characterized by different problems ranging from religion, ethnicity, Political instability among others? Is population force that suppose to strength the unity of the Centre poses thread due to over two fifty (250) ethnic group and over five hundred (500) languages? Is religion and ethical problems metamorphosis to Boko Haram in the Country? Are problems of ethnicity, quota system, resource allocation and Federal Character are threat to socio-economic development of Nigeria? Thus, the ethical problems confronting artificial construct call Nigeria and how the problem could be managed to achieved unity despite the diversity is the concern of this paper.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
The general objective is to know why the Nigeria Federalism has been persistently challenged in management of the Country diversity.
The specific objectives are to:
1. Appraise the concept of ethnicity, its emergence and challenges to Nigeria managing diversity.
2. Examine ethical diversity and its challenges in Nigeria federalism.

---

3. Evaluate federalism as a framework for federalism.

II.   METHODOLOGY

This paper make used of descriptive method of research and the report is based on qualitatively analysis of the content of the materials derived from the journals and books that was being used.

THEORETICAL DISCOURSE
ETHNICITY

Ethnicity according to Enloe (1978) cited in Azeez (2009) is an artificial basis of identification and collective organization, conjured up by outsiders looking for an efficient instrument of political and economic control. It is therefore considered a strategic weapon chosen by a disadvantaged group as a new mode of seeking political redress, or by a privileged group in order to protest its advantages. Ethnicity is also seen as a socio-cultural entity while inhabiting the same state, country or economic area, who consider themselves biologically, culturally, linguistically or socially distinct from each other and most often view their relation in actual or potentially antagonistic terms (Cox, 1970 cited in Azeez, 2009). In this context, ethnicity is a group of people who share a common heritage, language, culture, religion, and ideologies that relate to customary ancestry.

FEDERALISM

Federal system according to Daniel J. Elazara provides a mechanism which unites separate politics within an over-arching political system so as to allow each to maintain its fundamental political integrity. This mechanism is constituted by the distribution of powers between two governments, general and constituent, in a way designed to protect the existence and area of authority of both which, according to the traditional norms, are considered to be co-ordinate governments.

ETHNIC RIVALRY AND CHALLENGES OF NIGERIA FEDERALISM

Most developing countries are ethnically diverse and ethnicity may lead to increase in civil strife. In fact, with the heterogeneous nature of Nigeria, the tendency of the various nationals is towards parochial consciousness at the expense of national consciousness (Osinubi2006). Ethnicity refers to relationships between groups whose members consider themselves distinctive, and these groups may be ranked hierarchically within a society.

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, Igbo, accounting for 62% of population, while the Edo, Ijaw, Kanuri, Ibibio, Ebira, Nupe, Gwari, Itsekiri, Jukun, Urhobo, Igala, Idoma and Tiv comprise 33%; other minorities make up the remaining 5%. The official population account of each of Nigeria's ethnic group has always remained controversial and disputed as members of different ethnic groups believe the census is rigged to give a particular group numerical superiority. Ethnic group is a "group of people having a common language and cultural values". These common factors are emphasized by frequent interaction between the people in the group. Looking at ethnicity from a historical perspective, Nwosu (1999) stated that the colonization of Africa and several other third world states ensured that peoples of diverse culture were brought together under one country.

To him, because of the mission of colonialism, most of these peoples were not well integrated into the new states. Instead, some of the imperial powers cashed in on the cultural divergence of these countries to ensure the examination of their objectives. He further said, "it is thus not surprising that years after colonialism, these states remained lowly integrated. This low level of integration has precipitated crises in many of the countries. This clearly depicts the situation in Nigeria where the amalgamation of the North and South in 1914 was purely a British creation without any input from the people of Nigeria about their desire to be governed as one country.

Also, as expressed by Welsh (1996), violent and intractable internal conflicts in recent years in Somalia, Liberia, Rwanda, Burundi, and Sudan are as a result of the failure of states in sub-Saharan Africa to cope with ethnicity.

He examines the association of ethnic identities with the colonial period and the 'instrumentalist' contention that ethnicity was invented for political purposes. He notes both that the imperial powers in Africa did little to prepare the colonies for independence and also that, given the imperatives of the colonial system; it was unrealistic to expect them to do more.

To Kazah-Toure (2000), the spread of a mighty wave of ethnic tensions and conflicts threatens national unity and harmonious inter-ethnic relations. Even though more complex factors have been at the base, conflicts and struggles in Nigeria are increasingly manifesting in ethnic forms. He stated further that elsewhere on the African continent, violent and bloody conflicts are more often assuming inter-ethnic and inter-ethno/ religious proportions. The need for the principle of equity to be applied in the administration of the emerging nation dates

back to the colonial period. The fear of domination, which developed in the minds of minority groups, coupled with inter-ethnic suspicions among the majority group helped to prove the fact that Britain and even Nigerians recognized the fact that they are not one people.

The major languages spoken in Nigeria represent three major families of African languages: the majorities are Niger–Congo languages, such as Yoruba and Igbo; the Hausa language is Afro-Asiatic; and Kanuri, spoken in the northeast, primarily Borno State, is part of the Nilo-Saharan family. Even though most ethnic groups prefer to communicate in their own languages, English as the official language is widely used for education, business transactions and for official purposes. English as a first language is due to our colonial experience and is used only by a small minority of the country's urban elite, and it is not spoken at all in some rural areas, with the majority of Nigeria's populace in the rural areas, the major languages of communication in the country remain indigenous languages. Some of the 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. Nigerian Pidgin English, often known simply as 'Pidgin' or 'Broken' (Broken English), is also a popular lingua franca, though with varying regional influences on dialect and slang. The pidgin English or Nigerian English is widely spoken within the Niger Delta Regions, predominately in Warri, Sapele, Port Harcourt, Agenebode, Ewu, and Benin City.

Omuabor (2000) believes that suppression of ethnic conflicts by force is never a lasting solution. It is like Cap-ping a seething volcano. Sooner than later, it erupts. He gave the instance when Nigeria's former self-styled military president, Ibrahim Babangida, annulled the results of the June 12, 1993 presidential election; violent protest took over the streets of most cities in Western Nigeria. To him, the feeling in that part of the country was that it had been robbed of a golden chance to produce a civilian president. The undeclared winner of that election, Moshood Abiola was Yoruba, the predominant ethnic group in that region. Furthermore, he asserts that the events of that period are generally believed to have given birth to the Oodua People's Congress (OPC), an unusually militant Yoruba group that uses violence to redress perceived injustice against the Yoruba. He stated that the birth of the OPC symbolizes the new spirit among the Yoruba to 'square up' to any ethnic group that works against in interest. This development to him led to the formation of Arewa People's Congress (APC), an unusually militant Hausa group, to counter the activities of the OPC. OPC and APC aside, a group of militant Ijaw Youths called Egbesu Boys also evolved out of recent Ijaw wars with the Itsekiri and Ilaje ethnic nationalities in the oil-rich Niger-Delta. His submission is that, but for the absence of uniforms, these groups are ethnic armies who have sworn to defend and fight for the interest of their ethnic groups.

National Security and Social, Cultural, Religious and Political constraints in Nigeria
Security is the backbone of any society. It is tied to its social, political, economic and cultural growth.

Negligence of this vital ingredient of development has led to all manner of social ills, including violent crimes such as armed robbery, ritual killings, child trafficking and other crimes (Onifade, Imhonopi & Urim, 2013). In Nigeria today, we are faced with many challenges of security crisis especially in Plateau, Borno, Kano and Kaduna states in the North and some parts of the Niger Delta. As espoused by Ekanola (2006), Nigeria is not an ethnically homogenous society, having come into being accidentally, as a product of British imperialism. Today, rather than integrating into a cohesive community with a common sense of national identity and destiny, citizens of Nigeria are returning more and more too primordial affiliations for identity, loyalty and security. Instead of forging a united front and presenting a concerted effort to face the challenges of achieving a true federal system.

THEORECTICAL FRAMEWORK
FEDERALISM
"Federalism is a form of government where the component units of political organization participate in sharing of powers and functions in cooperative manner through the combine forces of ethnic pluralism and cultural diversity among others tend to pull their people apart. Delicate arrangements of this kind, where carefully worked out, provide sufficient room for the coexistence of the centre- seeking and centre- fleeing forces" (Tanumo 1998:13)

"a devise for limiting government power by dividing it between national and various regional governments based in different regions of the country. Federalism like the separation of powers between organs of unitary government is an important instrument of Constitutionalism" (Nwabueze 1992:107)

"the method of dividing powers so that the general and the regional governments are each within a sphere, and coordinating independent" (Wheare 1870:11)

REASONS FOR FEDERALISM
- Fear of domination.
- Cultural differences.
- Administrative efficiency

- Economic reasons
- Geographical Contiguity
- Historical reasons

CHARACTERISTICS OF FEDERALISM
- Federal state is a product of union among various component parts of units, each of them retains its power according independent jurisdiction,
- The component units such as states transfer it sovereign power to a large political entity (central government) that represent and direct the affairs of the entire political system or country,
- The political power is share between the central government or regional or state governments where each with his own executive, legislative and judicial councils
- The power is divided and distributed between the two levels of governments (federal and state) and each of them has jurisdictions over its subjects.
- The power to function is contain in a written constitution and spell out in the constitution.
- The amendment of the constitution is usually rigid.
- The federal union is a permanent union

    The basic assumptions of the theory of Federalism on the impact of ethnicity on the survival of the Nigeria federal system are that the available resources are not evenly distributed to take care of all the region in the country equally, therefore unhealthy competition due to different ethnic background. The essences of federalism is for equal distribution of resources and power to all section of the country for the benefit of unity despite the differences in culture, ethnic, language, wide geographical location and the fear of domination of some section of the country over others. All these challenges are consider by federal system and it adopt federal character principle and quota system in allocation of resources. Going by Daniel J. Elazara "a mechanism which unites separate politics within an over-arching political system so as to allow each to maintain its fundamental political integrity". So federalism is structured in such a way that it can accommodate different ethnic group and different natural resources is accrued into a central purse and distribute according to the revenue allocation sharing formula.

ETHNICITY IN NIGERIA FEDERAL STATE.
Table 1: Some of the major Ethno- Religion Conflict in Nigeria from 1991 to date

Ethno- Religion Conflict	Year	State
Jukun-Kutch	1991	Taraba
Zango-kataf	1992	Kaduna
Tiv-Jukun	2001	Wukuri, Taraba
Ogoni-Adoni	1991-1994	Rivers
Itsekiri- Urbobo	2000-2001	Delta
Ife- Modakeke	2001	Osun
Aguleri- Umeleri	1995-1999	Anambra
Yoruba-Hausa Community	1999	Shagamu- Ogun
Ijaw- Ilaje	1998	Ondo
Religious clashes	2007-2012	Kano
Basa- Egbura	1997-2012	Nasarawa
Eleme-Okirika	2000	Rivers
Hausa- Fulani-Sawaya	2001	Bauchi
Fulani- Irigwe and yelwa	2005	Shendium Plateau
Hausa- Yoruba	2002	Idi-Araba Lagos
OPC- Hausa Trader	2000	Lagos
Offong and Oku-Iboku	2000	Cross river
Boko Haram Insurgency	2009	Borno and other State
Religious Conflict	2006	Borno
Farmers-Headers Conflict	2000,2014 to date	Benue and other state
Army Shiite clashes	2015	Zaria, Kaduna
Niger Delta Avengers	2016 to date	South/south States

Source: Targba (2017

Table 1: above shows different ethnic challenges experiences in Nigeria in the recent years and several universal prescription and formulas that have been popularized. Failure to resolve conflicts over access to commonly valued scarce resources, and over divergent perceptions of socio-political situations, has the high potential of degenerating into genocide or fratricide as it occurred among the Ife and Modakeke (Yorubas) in South/Western Nigeria, Zongon-Kataf (Hausas) crisis in Northern Nigeria, Aguleri and Umuleri (Igbos) in Eastern Nigeria, and the Tiv –Jukun of Middle-Belt, Nigeria, and the Hutu – Tutsi of Burundi and Rwanda in East Africa (Osinubi & Osinubi, 2006).

The problem of building a nation from a collection of ethnic groups is one which most nations of Africa face today. Nigeria is a plural society, defined by cultural and institutional diversities of the ethnic groups of various populations, and with people practicing three main religions (Christianity mainly in the South and Middle Belt, Islam mainly in the North, and traditional religion in every part of the country). There have been various statements about the extent of Nigeria's ethnic pluralism, from the two hundred and fifty mentioned by the colonialists, and even half that number by superficial observers, to the figure of three hundred and seventy-four ethnic groups. Admittedly, Nigeria is a very complex country with the behavior and relationships of individual and groups determined by imperatives of cultural symbols and strategic social institutions. Different people are predisposed to conceptualize political and economic resources and the access to them in divergent ways through their own coded lenses (Otite, 1999).

The disunity of the major ethnic groups in the country was very much evident in the events that unfolded between 1946 and the attainment of independence in 1960. During this period, the Igbo - Yoruba ethnic rivalry and the North-South majority-minority ethnic group cleavages became unmistakable. For instance, "the Yoruba Igbo rivalry was finally played out on the floor of the Western House of Assembly where the Action Group exploited ethnic sentiments and the pitfalls of the electoral college system to edge out Azikiwe who had won a seat in Lagos and was widely expected to have been elected into the House of Representatives from that constituency" (Olukoju, 1997). The North-South hostility reached its peak in the pre-independence era in 1953, when the North refused to go along with the AG-led motion for independence by 1956. The events that followed culminated in the famous bloody Kano riot of 1953, which lasted from May 15 to May 20, 1953 (Albert, 1999).

The differences between groups in terms of their receptivity and adaptability to modernity or duration and intensity of Western impact also affected the relationship between ethnic groups (Sklar, 1994). For instance, the Yoruba and the Igbo of the South were more receptive to Western education than the Hausa-Fulani of the North; hence the educational imbalance between the South and the North, which still exists today (Uzoigwe, 1999). The Yoruba and the Igbo became urbanized and politically conscious more quickly than the Hausa-Fulani, who by 1952 obviously lagged behind the former by practically all the Western yardsticks for measuring development and civilization (Olukoju, 1997). Realizing their disadvantaged position in the country, the Northerners were determined to protect their own interests in the political arena, given their perception that Southerners already controlled the educational and economic sectors. Consequently, the North refused to go along with the rest of the country and threatened to secede when Anthony Enahoro moved the motion for independence in 1953, to be effective from 1956. Events following this refusal produced the Kano riot, which further intensified the Yoruba–Hausa-Fulani hostility and the resolve by nationalist leaders to perpetuate ethnic interests above national interests. It was the anxiety and fear by the Northern nationalist leaders that they would lose out in the struggle for power and prestige, when in 1947 the Richard Constitution compelled the peoples of the Northern and the Southern protectorates of Nigeria to work together under the same legislative system, that made them appeal to religious and ethnic sentiments to unite the Hausa-Fulani constituency against the Southern people (Albert, 1999). Their effort was quite successful; until today, they have been able to dominate the political landscape of the country.

However, it took ethnic hostility to a new level, and Nigeria has not been able to get out of its debilitating effects. It has greatly hindered the chances of Nigeria becoming a nation in the true sense.

Ethnic tensions between the diverse ethnic nationalities in Nigeria are pointing towards the fragmentation of the country. This was confirmed by an intelligence report from the United States of America, which warned that Nigeria might disintegrate within the next 15 years (Ekpunobi, 2005). Indeed, the country is witnessing an increase in violence along ethnic lines. Previous attempts to facilitate unity in the country have been largely constitutional and structural. With the adoption of federalism, various constitutional provisions have been put in place to guarantee the federal character of the Nigerian state, with the conviction that these would promote national unity, foster national loyalty and give every citizen a sense of belonging to the nation notwithstanding the diversities of ethnic origin, culture, language or religion that may exist (Yakubu, 1999). These provisions have not recorded the expected level of success, as some of them tend to jeopardize national interests in the quest for ethnic balance. Besides, it is observed that much of these constitutional provisions have

not been respected in the history of the country. Political elites and the same officials who are supposed to guarantee the sanctity of the constitution have consistently violated them (Albert, 1999).

In Nigeria, governments and the citizenry have been concerned with the principal goal of managing ethnicity, which had shown clear signs of subverting the nation-building project. Federalism, the creation of regions and states and local governments, the shift from parliamentary to Presidential, the institutionalization of quota systems, the prohibition of ethnic political parties, and the adoption of the federal character principle are some of the approaches that Nigeria has taken to manage ethnic diversity. Given the sheer multiplicity and fluidity of the territorial and cultural cleavages that can be used to justify the demands for new states and the federal resources they bring with them, there is no certainty that the states-creation process will ever be concluded in Nigeria Analysts have attributed the limitations of the ethnic management policies to improper implementation, distortion of visions and lack of political will.

III. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to overcome and outgrow the problem of ethnicity in Nigeria, the paper recommends the following:

- It is important that political players and institutions embrace the principles of true federalism. There is the need to evolve relevant constitutional and legislative mechanisms to address areas that will promote social cohesion among various groups and interests.
- There is need to rethink and improve on policy and institutional means of dealing with ethnic concerns arising in the country. For instance the youth should be empowered by creation of jobs or acquisition of skill so that they will not be instrument of ethnic conflict in the country.
- A process of legislative and constitutional review should be initiated to assess the Country Constitution and amend some areas that have been found to give rise to ethnic problems like zoning arrangement should be strictly practice otherwise some region will feel marginalized and create ethnic tension in the country.
- . The federal, state and local governments should be evolved in programmes of cultural and political education and orientation that seek to promote the principle of federalism so that the political contestants as well as the generality of the citizens will imbibe principles and practices essential for sustainable true federalism. Such programmes must also address specific tendencies that create ethnic problems in country.
- It is pertinent to consider ethnic issues and problems that are affected or capable of affecting the attitude, confidence and cooperation of all groups and segments that make up the Nigerian federation. For instance, the indigene settler issues should be properly defined by the federal government through relevant law.
- It is also necessary to explore the gaps and grey areas in the national constitution that are responsible for various problems like Boko Haram, Herdsmen militancy ravages the Northern part of the country, series of communal blood–bath in some parts of the country that threatens the foundation of Nigeria and generate crises. We must address how these gaps can be bridged. For instance, Sovereign National Conference opens to all groups and sections in the country to table and discuss what their grievances are and how Nigeria should be governed.
- There must be massive food production, provision of social amenities, good and affordable housing, and assurance of equity, fairness and justice in all spheres of our national life. This should be pursued and enacted.
- There should be proportional representation, which allows all the minorities in the country to be represented at local, state and national levels.
- There should be serious and practical commitment to sharing the burdens and rewards of citizenship with equity. There should be fair and equitable development, recognition and acceptance of the fact that each group is entitled to a minimum level of self-determination within the national framework, a national policy which ensures that no group, no matter how small is denied it just rights and entitlements, as such denial leads to frustration and inability to identify with the nation state.
- The government should continue to build a political culture that supports dialogue and accommodation between groups. This is no doubt, a long and difficult process in any society, but it should be encouraged.

REFERENCES

[1]. Adesuyi, N., Albert, I.O. &Kan, T. (Eds.) (2011). Unity in Diversity: Diversity is Positive for Nigeria. A Collection of Essays published by Heinrich Boll Foundation.
[2]. Albert, I.O. (1999). "Communication in the Escalation of Ethnic and Religious Conflict". In Uwazie, E., Albert.
[3]. Aluko, M.A.O. (2002). The Institutionalization of corruption and its Impact on Political Culture and Behaviourin Nigeria. Nordic Journal of African Studies. 11 (3): 393-402
[4]. Anderson, B. (1991). Imagined Communities. London: Verso Publications. Pp. 11-12
[5]. Anyadike, N.O. (2013). Boko Haram and National Security Challenges in Nigeria: Causes and Solutions. Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development. Vol. 4, No. 5.
[6]. Babawale, T. (1991). "The Poverty of Leadership". This Week. October 7, P. 30
[7]. Ekanola, A.B. (2006). National Integration and the Survival of Nigeria in the 21st Century. The Journal of Social,Political and Economic Studies. Vol. 31 March, Pp 279-293

[8].   Ekpunobi, C. (2005). "Senate, US Military Chiefs Discuss Intelligence Report". Daily Champion. August 2. FEHN (2011). The Foundation for Ethnic Harmony in Nigeria. www.fehnnigeria.orgs

[9].   Giddens, A. (1994) Sociology (2nd Edition) U.K. Polity Press, Oxford.

[10].   I.O. & Uzoigwe, G.N. (Eds.) Inter-Ethnic and religious Conflict resolution in Nigeria. London, Lexington Books, Pp. 25-29

[11].   Jinadu L.A (2004). Explaining and Managing ethnic conflict in Africa: Towards a Cultural Theory of Democracy. Uppsala University Forum for International Studies Lecture, 5th February.

[12].   Kazah-Toure, T.(2000.) "The National Question in Nigeria: A focus on the Hausa and The Fulbe (Fulani)", Draft Paper presented at the Conference on The Management of National Question in Nigeria, Organized by the Programme on Ethnic and Federal Studies. University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.

[13].   Lewis, P. (2011). Nigeria: Assessing Risks to Stability. Centre for Strategic and international Studies.

[14].   Nwosu, I. N. (1999). "Nigeria in the Management of Sub-Regional Conflicts".In Sanusi, A. (Ed.) Selected Themesin Nigeria Foreign Policy and International Relations. Ilorin, Nigeria: Sally and Associates. Pp 106-119

[15].   Olukoju, A. (1997). "Nigeria: A historical Review". In Okafor, F.U. (Ed.) New Strategies for Curbing Ethnic and Religious Conflicts in Nigeria. Fourth Foundation, P 31

[16].   Onifade, C. A., Imhonopi, D. & Urim, U. M. (2013). Addressing the insecurity challenge in Nigeria: The imperative of moral values and virtue ethics. Global Journal of Human Social Science, Vol. 13 (2), pp. 53-63.

[17].   Omuabor, V. (2000.) "Ethnic Conflicts – When Tribes and Tongue Differ", in Ethnic Conflicts – Counting the Human Cost. News Africa (UK) Limited. Pp. 10–15

[18].   Osimen, G.U.; Balogun, A. & Adenegan, T.S. (2013). Ethnicity and Identity Crisis: Challenge to National Security in Nigeria. IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science. Vol. 16, Issue 4 (Sept. – Oct.) Pp. 79-86.

[19].   Osinubi, T.S. and Osinubi, O.S. (2006). Ethnic Conflicts in Contemporary Africa: The Nigerian Experience.Kamal Raj. Journal of Social Science. 12 (2) 101 – 114.

[20].   Otite, O. 1999. "On Conflicts, their Resolution, Transformation, and Managements". In Otite, O. and Alberts, I.O. (Eds.) Community Conflicts in Nigeria, Management Resolution and Transformation. Ibadan, Nigeria: Spectrum Books, Pp. 1–32

[21].   Sklar, R.L. (1994). Nationalism and development in Africa. California: University of California Press. P 36 Uzoigwe, G.N. (1999). "The History of Ethnic/Religious Relations. In Uwazie, E., Albert, I.O. & Uzoigwe, G.N.(Eds.) Inter-Ethnic and religious Conflict resolution in Nigeria. London, Lexington Books.WARN (2013). Is the African Giant Drowning but not Waving? Exploring a Coordinated Approach to the Nigerian Security Challenges. West Africa Network for Peace building:) Policy Brief.

[22].   Targba (2017) The Impact of Ethnicity and Religion on the Survival of Democracy in Nigeria. Yar,Adua University Journal of Social and Management Sciences.

[23].   Welsh, D. (1996), "Ethnicity in sub-Saharan Africa." International Affairs Journal on Ethnicity and International Relations, 72 (3): 477-491.

[24].   Yakubu, A. (1999). "Ethnicity and the Nigerian Constitutions". In Uwazie, E., Albert, I.O. & Uzoigwe, G.N.(Eds.) Inter-Ethnic and religious Conflict resolution in Nigeria. London, Lexington Books to national security.