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IBE JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

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EDITORIAL NOTE

Ibe is a word from the Igala language, a language which is the largest ethnic group in Kogi State, North Central Nigeria. The word means "thought"; thus, naming the journal *Ibe* at once brings to the fore the particularity and universality embedded in the aspiration of the journal. The aspiration is universal to the extent that it keeps in view the enduring characteristics of philosophy as encompassed in being rational, speculative and dealing with the ultimate end/nature of things. It is particular to the extent that it does not lose sight of the historical contexts within which reason, speculation etc. are expressed. *Ibe* suggests the African context and particularly, the Igala context is that which drives the expression of the universality of reason as will be articulated in this journal.

This edition is a collection of interesting papers which cut across the various sub-disciplines of Philosophy. The bulk of the papers in the collection are centered on issues in Ethics as well as Social and Political Philosophy. Some of the concerns that are considered include: 'good governance', 'human dignity', and 'politics'. One interesting thing about these papers is that they also relate the issues discussed to African thought. Most importantly, the thoughts expressed in these papers expand the frontiers of knowledge.

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CONTENTS

Shallow Ecology and Biodiversity Conservation in Urhoboland of Nigeria's Niger Delta Mark Omorovie Ikeke

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Abstract

One of the gravest environmental problems confronting planet Earth is biodiversity loss. This refers to the destruction of animal species, plant species, or other organisms, especially due to anthropogenic activities. This problem is affecting many regions in the world such as Urhoboland in Nigeria's Niger Delta. Biodiversity which refers to the diversities and varieties of all life forms in a community or location contributes vitally to human health, survival, and the well-being of the entire ecological system. In Urhoboland, biodiversity has been lost through oil and gas exploration, agricultural and industrial activities, herdsmen attacks and violence, and other things that pollute the land. Through a critical hermeneutics and analytic method the paper argues that many anthropogenic activities as

listed above are informed or inspired by a shallow ecology that sees the only value of biodiversity or the ecosystems as human utility. The ideology of shallow ecology sees no need to pay attention to conservation unless it benefits humans. The paper shows that plants, animals, and other organisms have value and worth of their own and not simply because they are valuable to human beings. This being the case, biodiversity should be conserved in places such as Urhoboland. The paper concludes that if this is done, it will help to create a sustainable Urhoboland.

Keywords: Shallow ecology, deep ecology, biodiversity, conservation, Urhobo, Niger Delta, Nigeria, environment.

Introduction

Biodiversity plays an important role in ecosystemic health and the well-being of humans. The destruction of biodiversity reduces many vital

services that different organisms and beings contribute to the ecosystems. Services that human beings derive from biodiversity such as pharmaceutical raw materials, aesthetics necessary for mental well-being, religious functions, eco-tourism, and so on are greatly lost or diminished. The conservation of biodiversity is essential. Human life and the survival of other beings and organisms in the universe depends on it. Biodiversity is useful for many reasons such as consumption use value, productive use value, social value, ethical value, aesthetic value, ecosystem value, economic value, etc (Srivastava, 2010, 110-112). Stated differently, biodiversity matters for it "…maintains ecosystem function, ensures human survival, enhances human societies, creates economic value, teaches important lessons, and can inspire new ways of feeling and thinking" (O'Brien 2010, 51). In the *Convention on Biological Diversity*, it is stated that:

> The Earth's biological resources are vital to humanity's economic and social development. As a result, there is growing recognition that biological diversity is a global asset of tremendous value to present and future generations. At the same time, the threat to species and ecosystems has never been so great as it is today. Species extinction caused by human activities continues at an alarming rate. (Secretariat of the Convention on Biological
> Diversity of the United Nations Environment Programme(SCBD-UNEP) 2011, 1).

Recognize that: "Biodiversity is the earth's primary life support system and is a precondition for human survival" (Rajagopalan 2011). Statistically, the current rate of global biodiversity loss is troubling; "The World Wide Fund for Nature's Living Planet Report 2022 documents a 69% average loss in the abundance of mammal, bird, reptile, fish and amphibian species since 1970. The populations of vertebrates living in freshwater ecosystems have declined even more, by 83% on average over the same period" (London School of Economics and Political Science 2022, 1). This is besides what is happening to plant species and other organisms. The dire state of global biodiversity loss has also been decried by many other authors (Rolston, 2012; Rozzi & Poole, 2009; Rim-Rukeh, 2009; Wenz, 2001; Ikeke, 2021; Asthana & Asthana, 2010; Edema, 2023).

There is hardly any region of the world that is free from biodiversity loss. The Niger Delta of Nigeria has also been gravely affected by biodiversity loss. No area of the Niger Delta is free from biodiversity. This includes Urhoboland. The concern of this paper is on biodiversity conservation in Urhoboland of the Niger Delta. By way of the procedure, the paper will examine and clarify the basic concepts, present the fundamental principles of shallow ecology, look at the situation of biodiversity loss/conservation in Urhoboland, examine the implications of biodiversity loss for Urhoboland and argue for the way forward to conserves biodiversity in Urhoboland.

Conceptual Framework

This paper's key concepts are shallow ecology, biodiversity conservation, and Urhoboland. To understand shallow ecology, it is

important to understand ecology. Ecology can be defined as "the study of the interactions between organisms and their environment. The 'environment' is a combination of the physical environment (temperature, water availability, etc and any influences on an organisms exerted by other organisms-the biotic environment"(Mackenzie, Ball & Virdee 1998). Another way to understand ecology is that it has two main branches-autecology (which deals with individual organisms and their environment) and synecology (which studies interrelationships among groups of organisms or species living in an area (Ikoni 2010). Shallow ecology which is also called light green ecology refers to:

> A worldview or set of beliefs which reflects a utilitarian and anthropocentric attitude to nature, based on materialism and consumerism. It seeks technological solutions to major environmental problems, rather than a change in human behaviour and values. For example, shallow ecology promotes the recycling of waste rather than preventing waste in the first place (*Oxford Reference*, 2012, 1).

From the perspective of policy:

> Shallow ecology policy goes so far as to recognize that the environmental crisis has to do with ecosystems, but it only attempts to find technical fixes to modify or moderate industrial environmental impacts. Such an approach embodies a 'management of resources' ethic that sets humans apart and superior to the rest of the biophysical universe. Under this approach, environmental systems are

perceived as 'goods' and hence become understood through the traditional economic frameworks of technocratic-industrial societies. It assumes that society can continue with the same forms of response and that no fundamental change in patterns of behaviour is required. For shallow ecology, for example, education is primarily public relations to make people aware that they must 'shop green and recycle'. Costbenefit analyses fail to appreciate the multitude of intrinsic values in the natural world which are open to human life. (*Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential* 2020, 1).

Beyond the shallow ecology viewpoint above is another viewpoint that is also branded as shallow ecology, it is called the unrestrained that: "…holds that humans may do whatever they like to the planet, permitting the brutal exploitation of nature. The latter is sensitive to the potential damage of such unrestrained exploits to future people, using the theory of externalities of modern economics" (Heyd, 1992, 205). The popular version of shallow ecology is called later in the previous sentence, this shows some concern for nature. The one of major concerns for this paper is the unrestrained type.

What is biodiversity conservation? It means "…the variety of life forms; the different plants, animals and microorganisms, the genes they contain, and the ecosystems they form" (Srivastava, 2010, 101). Another way to define it is that it is "…the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part"(

SCBDUNEP, 1992). Biodiversity or biological diversity is of three types-genetic (genetic information carried in all animals, plants, and microorganisms), species (variety of species in a habitat), and ecosystem (broad differences in ecosystem types). Conservation deals with preservation, protecting, keeping, and storing from harm and damage. Biodiversity conservation refers to efforts by human beings to prevent or reverse damages affecting plants, animals, microorganisms, and other realities in nature; and this is to ensure that ecosystems and their lifesupporting ways are maintained and species are preserved in their diversity; while observing suitable utilization of ecosystems and species (Srivastava, 2010, 123). This idea of what biodiversity aims at is also corroborated by the following statement that biodiversity conservation can also be seen as: "the preservation of genetic variation, the diversity of species and populations and also life support properties of ecosystems, such as climatic and drainage effects" (Mackenzie, Ball & Virdee 1998, 271).

Urhoboland is located in Delta State in Nigeria. It is located in the Western Niger Delta. They are the major ethnic group in Delta State. The area that Urhoboland covers is mainly inhabited by the Urhobo ethnic nationality though today people of other ethnic nationalities also dwell there and have made it home or do their businesses and occupations there. The area is part of Nigeria's Niger Delta and shares many of the characteristics of the Niger Delta. The area is endowed with vegetation, agricultural resources, petroleum resources, and other natural resources (Abotutu, 2015, 16). The native language of the Urhobo people is the Urhobo language, and many also speak English and other adopted

languages. The Urhobo people are: "… the fifth largest ethnic group in Nigeria, 15th largest in Africa, and consistent with statistical data, they are the 51st largest ethnic group in the world. One of the largest oil producers is Nigeria, the 21st in Africa and the 45th in the world" (Gbinije, 2013, par 2). About traditional administration there are "… 24 kingdoms in Urhobo land approved by the Delta State Government, namely: Agbon, Agbarho, Aravwarien, Agbarho-otor, Olomu, Udu, Ogor, Uwherun, Evwreni, Ughievwen, Ewu, Okparabe, Effurun-otor, Oghara, Ijerhe, Mosogar, Oruarivie-Abraka, Umiagwa- Abraka, Okpe, Orogun, Okere-Urhobo and Uvwie" (Gbinije 2013, par 10). The two other kingdoms are Ughelli and Agharha-Warri.

Fundamental Principles of Swallow Ecology

Swallow ecology is anthropocentric, focused on and solely concerned with human interests and desires. If it will benefit the human, well and okay. If it will not benefit the human then it is not important to be attended to. It is focused according the Arne Naess, propounder of deep ecology on the prosperity of affluent peoples in wealthy nations (Naess, 1999). Shallow ecology was a term used by Naess to contrast deep ecology, while deep ecology is concerned with the intrinsic value of all things, shallow ecology is simply focused on the prevention of pollution and attends to environmental issues only as they affect human beings. He writes: "The shallow ecology movement has just two objectives: Combating pollution and combating the depletion of natural resources. The objectives are isolated from the broader problems concerning ways of life, economic systems, power structures, and the differences between and inside nations" (Naess, 2008, 1). The implication is that: "For

example, a deep ecologist would clean up a pond because plants and animals deserve a pristine habitat and the woods should be allowed to evolve at their own rate. A shallow ecologist would preserve the pond so his children have a place to swim and the watershed quality improves" (Sullivan, 2009, par 7).

Things that characterize shallow ecology include: any preservation should be to meet human needs, with no need for radical change; and present lifestyle should be continued but there should be an aim to prevent what damages the environment because of humans, and its special concern is protecting the lifestyles of those in developed nations (Srinivasan, 2022).

In opposition to shallow ecology is deep ecology:

The core theme of deep ecology is the claim that all living things have the same right to live and flourish. This means that the interests of other living beings have to be treated as seriously as the interests of humans. A rainforest, for example, can no longer be regarded as a valueless wood resource. Instead, it is a collection of living things, all of which have a right to live and flourish. Nature is said to have intrinsic value. It is valuable even if humans can find no use for it. From a deep ecological perspective, climate change is wrong because it will affect the wellbeing of billions of living beings. Even if we could provide a way of protecting humans from climate change, it would still be a bad thing because many other living beings would suffer. Another aspect of deep ecology is the idea that we should

expand our idea of who we are so that it includes the natural world. This is known sometimes as the expanded self. If we harm nature then we are really harming ourselves. Deep ecology rejects anthropocentrism in favour of ecocentrism or biocentrism

(Deep and Shallow Ecology Explanations, n.d, 1)

A key supporter of shallow ecology is Anthony Weston, an American philosopher and interpreter of Aldo Leopold. He does not go as deep as deep ecology and asserts that rights should not be given to trees and other organisms and for him there is no need for environmental ethics to preserve the planet and for the sake of future generations, our approach must be pragmatic. Swallow ecology considers human beings as distinct and separate from the environment. Human beings as it is are placed above and higher than other things in nature. It is human beings who create value, all values are anthropogenic and focused on human interests. Only human beings have intrinsic value, and all others in the environment have instrumental value. The environment should only be maintained because of its value or contribution to human beings. Human beings and other things in nature are placed in competition with one another, instead of being in mutual synergy and commensalism. As it is humans are parasitic.

There should be no limit on economic growth and social development as far as they benefit humans. Note that: "Shallow ecology practices pragmatic and anthropocentric forms of environmentalism such as focusing on issues such as pollution control and resource conservation" (Study Smarter, n.d, par 4). In the same place, it is stated that: "Shallow

ecology is an environmental perspective that primarily focuses on the sustainability of the environment for the benefit of human beings. It promotes actions like pollution reduction, resource conservation, and environmental clean-up primarily because of their impact on human health and wellbeing, as opposed to the intrinsic value of the natural world itself" (Study Smarter, n.d, 1)

Arising from the above there are three main principles of shallow ecology: weak sustainability, limits to growth, and intergenerational equity. The first means that sustainability can be practiced but only for the benefit of humans. Capitalism needs to be moderated so that it does not destroy the earth to the detriment of humans. There is nothing wrong with the sustainable use of natural resources so that they are not depleted. This is done for the good of human beings. So governments can have policies in place to regulate fishing, farming activities, use of wilderness, etc. There should be limits on economic growth so that the earth can meet the needs of its population. There should be the practice of intergenerational equity. The earth should be maintained so that it meets the use of future generations. But realize also as discussed above there is the unrestrained type of shallower viewpoints that asserts that human beings can exploit nature without restraint. This is very dangerous for biodiversity conservation.

The Situation of Biodiversity Conservation in Urhoboland

There is natural biodiversity loss that comes from the extinction of species that occurs in the process of evolution as in the process different species have died out (Srivastava 2010). This is not the one of concern here. The one of concern here is the one caused by human activities.

Human activities that can cause biodiversity loss are agriculture, hunting, habitat destruction, deforestation, extractive industries, population growth, migration, war and violence, and so on. Richard Leakey, a Kenya paleoanthropologist, conservationist, and politician writes: "For each of the Big Five (extinctions), there are theories of what caused them, some often compelling, but none proven. For the sixth extinction, however, we do know the culprit. We are" (Rajagopalan, 2011). As rightly noted by another author, "Species are becoming endangered and suffering extinction, ecosystems are being degraded, and genetic diversity is diminishing at a historically accelerated rate, mostly as a result of direct or indirect human activity" (Adelson, Engell, Ranalli, and Anglen, 2008, 362). Causes of biodiversity loss include habitat fragmentation, pollution, overexploitation, introduction of exotic species, and natural calamities (Rim-Rukeh, 2009).

In the present era, Ukpong corroborates this fact when he argues that biodiversity loss and eventual extinction are caused by human activities such as development and agriculture, and within a region such as Nigeria's Niger Delta, 40% of plants and animal species have disappeared (Uchegbu, 2002). It is imperative to remark here that Urhoboland is part of the Niger Delta and whatever is affecting the Niger Delta is also affecting the region. Human activities such as activities in the economy, production, and commerce are major culprits in biodiversity loss (Francis, 2015).

Urhoboland in terms of landscape "covers from mangrove swamps to the rain forest. There are many rivers, streams, and forest" filled with fauna and flora (Ojaide, 2022, 3). The land is rich with "a high

biodiversity of insects, reptiles, birds and mammals… over 100 species of fish" but they are endangered today (Ekuerhare, 2007). From the experience of this present writer when he was growing up in Otogor town in Ughelli Noth Local Government Area there used to be a lot of monkeys, bush babies (galagoes), squirrels, and antelopes in the forests in the area. You can hear the cry of bush babies and their jumping in the bush. But today the situation is different. Many of them have been killed and they have lost their habitat as a result of the felling of trees to build houses for human habitation, markets, and other factories. The streams that used to be filled with fish and other animals are no longer so. This author remembers while growing up going to catch fish and hurt other animals at night that were readily available at the edge of the waters and bushes. The reality is that biodiversity in the Urhoboland has been gravely depleted.

Many factors are responsible for the depletion of biodiversity in Urhoboland. Environmental degradation arising from air pollution, marine pollution, and gas flaring have serious negative impacts on flora, fauna, and ecosystems. Note that: "Various species of plants and animals that help to sustain lives are often destroyed with serious ecological consequences. For human populations, farmlands for food production are destroyed. Cultural artefacts are also destroyed which could also create socio-cultural conflicts" (Anikpo, 2015, 4). In places like Effurun-Otor, Jesses, Amukpe, Afiesere, Erhumukohwarien, and other oil-bearing communities in Urhoboland ecosystems have been destroyed and gas flares have killed fishes, threes, birds, and animals, and brought aquatic creatures into extinction (Abotutu, 2015, 16). General Patrick Aziza

writes concerning the rich biodiversity in Urhoboland before the coming of oil companies as follows: the Edenic paradise in the land has been lost as a result of oil exploration has the serene environment and blissful streams and rivers are not polluted (Abotutu, 2015, 18) What is written about the effects of oil spillage in Out-Jeremi in Urhoboland equally describes what has happened in the many other locations where there is oil spillage in Urhoboland. It is noted that in Out-Jeremi, "The ecological and environmental deterioration have contaminated wildlife and plants (Okadigwe, 2015, 34).

Economic growth does affect biodiversity growth. There has been a debate on economic growth and biodiversity conservation. The reality is that both are needed but a delicate balance has to be struck keeping in mind the view on sustainable development. Urhoboland like other locations in the Niger Delta and indeed the world is also empiercing climate change. It is undeniable that climate change is taking place. The seasonal weather patterns that were known in the Niger Delta are no longer there. Some years back the rainy season used to last from about May to September every year. Today even in the heart of the dry season in January and February you can still experience the rains. And when the rains come, they are more horrendous than in previous years. The overflooding of the banks of the river Niger in recent years has led to loss of human lives and destruction of biodiversity. Many villages and farmlands and forests in Urhoboland were also flooded. These led to the destruction of biodiversity. Climate change it leads to the migration of plants, human beings, and animals, and their habitats are endangered and these animals move for safety (Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, 2011, 9).

In summing up what leads to biodiversity loss in Urhoboland and beyond, let it be known that:

> Many fragile species are endangered as the changing climate alters their ecosystems faster than they can adapt. As we develop the land so that it can house human beings or otherwise indulge our desires, the animals that lived, fed and bred there must find news habitat or die off. As we turn fertile ground into large-scale, industrial farms growing a single crop, the variety of plant life in our ecosystems shrink. Pollution of the air, water, and soil profoundly affects the millions and billions of other creatures with whom humanity shares this planet. In sum, declines in biodiversity are the product of a degraded global environment (O'Brien, 2010, 4-5).

It is not only oil exploration and exploitation activities that have caused biodiversity loss in Urhoboland. The activities of herdsmen had also caused violence and destroyed plants and animals. Herdsmen come into Urhoboland and enter into the forests and people's farmlands. Their cattle trespass and trample on valuable plants, and trees, and kill organisms on the land.

Implications of Swallow Ecology for Biodiversity Conservation in Urhoboland

The tendency is that a shallow ecology values only economic growth. It cares little or nothing about conservation unless it brings utilitarian goods to humans. Conserving plants and animals for only humans is not acceptable. Swallow ecology sees no need to put moral restraints on

economic growth. When the paper speaks of limits to economic growth it does not mean that there will be no economic development. But it should not be to the detriment of ecological conservation. The unrestrained version of shallow ecology leads to exploitation without any limits. A person who follows the unrestrained version of shallow ecology will not even think of the effects of biodiversity exploitation on others but is concerned only about himself/herself. This is what drives oil companies in Urhoboland. They are most often for the profits they can make and not the well-being of the people in the oil communities.

Shallow ecology pays attention only to how the earth will benefit human beings; and if it will not benefit human beings, human persons should not care about it. The logic that humans should care only for what benefits humans is assailable. The fact is that there are species of animals, birds, organisms, and plants that may not be useful now but can be useful in the future. But that present human beings may not know now. Realize that: "The loss of forests and woodlands entails the loss of species which may constitute extremely important resources in the future, not only for food but also for curing disease and other uses. Different species contain genes which could be key resources in years ahead for meeting human needs and regulating environmental problems" (Francis, 2015, 23). The fact is that consideration for biodiversity should move beyond the human interest to the well-being of the environment. Some species are being lost that are crucial to future environmental wellbeing. The author just cited notes clearly that species are not just resources but have value in themselves (Francis, 2015). For the shallow ecologist, we can dump garbage into the streams in the land, fall down trees, kill and even

vandalize animals and birds in as far as humans are not affected. Human utilitarian pleasure becomes the yardstick for measuring what is moral. It is a return to the Protagorean maxim "Man is the measure of all things." Shallow ecology is "limited to wanting to change the consequences of climate change, rather than going back to the causes behind it, mainly human activities. Deeply anthropocentric, shallow ecology would be a vain attempt to keep humans, especially those in developed countries, almighty over nature, with minimal adjustments to preserve life on earth" (Khalfaoui, 2023, par 3).

The anthropocentric attitude and practice are dangerous, for

> One of the things that have contributed to biodiversity loss is the human attitude of anthropocentrism and domineering over nature. The perception is that nature is there for human utility and that humans can do whatever they desire with nature. Deep ecology affirms that while for essential needs humans can use nature they should not devalue or devastate nature. Humans have a responsibility to conserve and protect. This attitude of ethics with ecological responsibility, need to be accepted by individuals, groups, and oil company in the Niger Delta. Oil companies should be attentive to the tremendous benefits that biodiversity has for humans and also the ecosystem services they render (Ikeke, 2020, 85).

> Urhoboland has suffered much because of a prevailing attitude of shallow ecology. With such an attitude; oil companies don't care about

the destruction of biodiversity. It is how to satisfy the foreign shareholders that mainly concerns them. They don't even care about how it will benefit future generations. Vital biodiversity resources are being lost daily as a result of oil activities as shown above.

Because of its extreme anthropocentrism, shallow ecology concerns itself only with resource depletion and pollution, and not with complexity, diversity, decentralization, autonomy, symbiosis, classlessness, and egalitarianism (Naess, 1999). The pollution concern is not with the integrity of nature and the good of the entire biotic community. The concern is simply with human benefit. Pollution should be stopped because it negatively affects human beings. The human duties are to fellow human beings and never to anything else. If pollution causes harm to other aspects of nature and damages ecosystems and biodiversity it does not matter. It matters only when it affects human beings. Resource depletion does not matter unless it affects human beings. The implications of all these for Urhoboland should be apparent. It is only human lives that matter in Urhoboland. Shallow ecology takes human beings on a slippery road. Oil multinational companies in Urhoboland may not know that they are operating from the perspective of shallow ecology, but they are. For oil companies, they care little or nothing for the environment. All they are interested in is the oil in the land and gas resources. And for many of the oil multinationals what matters to them is the profit that they can make for their shareholders. This is why they allow massive destruction to biodiversity just to prospect for oil, they flare gas no matter the law of the land, and ultimately the human lives in the land are dispensable. Environmental racism is taking place in the Niger Delta. Oil

multinationals use substandard equipment on the land and cause occupational and health hazards to the people. John Vidal writes that when there was an oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico the oil companies responded immediately to clean it up and do remediation work oil spills happen frequently in the Niger Delta but government and the oil companies hardly act decisively to curb these spillages; this clearly show and the issue of a double standard (Alimigbe, 2011, 24-25). It is as if the human lives and environment of those in the Gulf of Mexico are more important than those in the Niger Delta.

Shallow ecology, not the unrestrained type, does have a role to play in biodiversity conservation in Urhoboland. But it is a limited role and there is a need to move beyond the philosophy of shallow ecology. Beyond human interests, there is a need to put the well-being and welfare of nonhuman species into consideration. Shallow ecology does not require a radical and revolutionary change in human behaviours towards the environment. What only matters is that what will harm human beings is prevented or avoided. This motive for environmental conservation is not enough. Simply adopting a shallow ecology ideology will lead to more environmental destruction.

Some Way Forward for Biodiversity Conservation in Urhoboland

What is the way forward for biodiversity conservation in Urhoboland and even the entire Niger Delta? Things cannot just be left the way that they are. Shallow ecology is an inadequate ecological system for maintaining and conserving biodiversity in Urhoboland. This paper proposes that a richer philosophy that can help in biodiversity conservation is Afroecosolidarity (or a philosophy of

Akpojemudiakugbe). This is a philosophy that posits that all lives and beings on earth and indeed the entire universe should stand together. No life should be less important or left behind.

   Afroecosolidarity shares similarities with the ecological development paradigm. There is a need to halt the mass extinction of species in Urhoboland by ensuring that development projects are those that are suitable to the landscape and environment of the area, there is sustainable land use management, there are policies in place to ensure the right use of environmental resources and the citizens are made aware of what they can do (Abotutu, 2015). Humans must move beyond their anthropocentric interests and it is not just enough to think of visible mammals and plants but of microorganisms that we cannot see; so there should be careful study of environmental impact before projects are embarked upon (Francis, 2015). Economic development and the development of social infrastructure should be driven by ecological values. The precautionary principle should guide economic development and the implementation of scientific-technological development. What is the precautionary principle? The principle which emanated from the Treaty on European Union states that even when there is no conclusive scientific evidence on the effects of activity or substance on the environment, the environment should be given the benefit of the doubt and protected from harm (Stranks, 2008). This principle should be applied all through Urhoboland. Whatever will harm the environment, even if it will benefit human beings should be avoided as much as possible. Unless it is for the necessary survival of human beings.

The reality is that it is not only human beings that should count, which is what shallow ecology is all about. Many philosophers and environmental thinkers have argued for the recognition of non-human lives in various ways. Land Ethics asserts that the land is a community and ethical consideration should be given also to non-human lives such as organisms in the land (Leopold, 1999). Animals also count in terms of moral consideration (Singer, 1975; Regan, 1985). There are intrinsic values in nature and human beings have moral values to conserve these intrinsic values (Rolston, 2012). The African value of Ukama emphasizes that human beings are related to nature and that their lives are incomplete without nature. The philosophy of Afroecosolidarity advocated here emphasizes that humans should live in love and care for nature and should not superimpose over nature (Ikeke, 2021). Indigenous cultural traditions from the Native Americans, the Aboriginals of Australia, Indigenous peoples in Africa, Latin America, Buddhist ethics, Hindu ethics, etc all show that human beings have a strong link with the land or nature (Ikeke, 2020).

The value of Afroecosolidarity does not just spread on its own. People have to be made aware of it. It should be propagated. There are international agreements and statements on biodiversity that place obligations on governments, individuals, and other groups to conserve biodiversity. These statements often are not known by many. These statements include- the International Convention and Biological Diversity, T Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration, the Convention on the International Trade on Endangered Species, the Antarctic Treaty, the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty, etc. Indeed,

some of these treaties do not apply to Urhoboland but Urhoboland and the Nigerian government can learn from them.

Preservation of sacred groves and traditional religious sites such as sacred forests should be embarked upon. Before the Western concept of nature reserves and the establishment of sanctuaries in both land and marine places, African people already had sacred groves, sacred forests, and many other landscapes that were protected from human industry and habitation. This tradition should be upheld. The two following articles from the *United Nations Universal Declaration* on the rights of indigenous peoples are revealing:

> Indigenous peoples have the right to practice and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect, and develop the past, present, and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artifacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature. Indigenous peoples have the right to manifest, practise, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies; the right to maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to their religious and cultural sites (United Nations, 2007, 11-12)

The Urhobo people have a fundamental group right to ensure that their traditional sacred and religious sites are preserved. Oil multinationals and other capitalist globalizing forces rooted in a shallow ecology ideology will care nothing for these sites. All that matters to them is the profit. there should be a move away from anthropocentric ethics.

There is nothing wrong in human beings making use of nature but it should be done in a morally sustainable manner. Another way forward is the promotion of environmental assessment. This can be seen as "…the means by which the conservation value of a site may be assessed without detailed and timeconsuming surveys of its entire biodiversity. Sites may be selected on the basis of a small number of conspicuous and sensitive species which are taken as indicative of the larger community" (Mackenzie, Ball, & Virdee, 2010, 271).

Conclusion

The paper has examined the meaning of shallow ecology and related it to biodiversity conservation in Urhoboland. Shallow ecology the paper shows affirms environmental conservation but only if it is beneficial to human beings. It is an anthropocentric and utilitarian ideology or philosophy. If there is any value in nature it is the value that it has for human beings. This idea of shallow ecology the paper notes can negatively affect biodiversity conservation. Human beings don't have to care about biodiversity or other beings in nature if they are not useful to humans. It fails to acknowledge the intrinsic worth of other beings and realities in the universe outside human beings. This kind of attitude drives the exploitation of the earth for resources. This idea of considering only human interests often makes human beings dominate nature without caring for total ecological well-being. Swallow ecology especially the unrestrained version needs to be frontally critiqued and deconstructed. If this is done and biodiversity is conserved not just for the good of humans but the entire ecological community, a sustainable Urhoboland will emerge.

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Maritime Security Challenges in Nigeria: Reflections from Conversational Philosophy

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Abstract

At the mention of maritime insecurity, what often comes to the mind is the topical issue of piracy in the open oceans. But it is more than that, as it has also to do with the illegal activities such as crude oil theft, kidnapping and smuggling that take place not only in the world's oceans but also in regional seas, territorial waters, rivers, and ports. However, outside the high-profile piracies recorded in off the coast of Somalia in the early 2000s, which brought about searing poverty, economic exclusion and crossborder attritions; Nigeria and Cote D'Ivoire are other countries with a high incidence of piracy and terrorism on the continent. Though, International Maritime Bureau (IBM) recently reported that piracy, and other forms of maritime insecurity are subsiding, there are still troubling trends of piratic activities in the Gulf of Guinea. This paper using conversational method, which allows for deconstruction and reconstruction for system building and complementation, examines the factors responsible for the scourges in the coastal waters of Nigeria with specific reference to Niger Delta region. It argues that engagement of Government Oweizide Ekpemupolo, in the maritime security defense sector is not enough, as it recommends the need to heavily invest in

capacity building, provision of modern infrastructural security support and enthronement of good governance.

Keywords: Maritime insecurity, Sea piracy, Crude oil theft, Ocean-based terrorism, kidnapping

Introduction

Sea piracy, crude oil theft and ocean based terrorism are as old as maritime sector itself. However, the above superlatives are threats to maritime security, and have always or time without number presented problems for mariners as long as ships have gone to sea. "This can be substantiated following the olden days incidence of Julius Caesar, the then dictator of the Roman Empire, who was captured on his way across the Aegean Sea and held for ransom by Cilician pirates" (Ogbobode, 2023). More recently, but still in the historical past, is "the story of Barbary corsairs who operated from the North African region and captured thousands of ships, thereby wreaking devastating impact on the regional economy. By the latter part of the 19th century, piratical activities gradually slipped into near oblivion only to re-emerge in South-East Asia in the 20th century". Consequently, in the last few years, "the focus has shifted back to Africa as her waters have overtaken the choke points and straits of SouthEast Asia and have become some of the world's most dangerous piracy hotspots" (Ogbobode, 2023). Furthermore, hemorrhages of piratical activities in "the continent's maritime domains have, for the most part, concentrated on the Somali coasts and the Gulf of Aden in the Horn of Africa (East coast of Africa) and the Nigerian territorial waters in the Gulf of Guinea (West coast of Africa)" (Garba, 2022). So far, efforts, international interventions and concentration have been focused on piracy off Somali coasts. Hence, piracy in these parts accounts for a significant proportion of the total number of pirate attacks recorded annually in Africa, if not world over. This, notwithstanding, the piratical attacks in the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) has assumed worrisome proportions and need urgent intervention to avert. A good number of

people do not know the level of piratic activities in the Gulf of Guinea, and have refused to accept that such problems exist anywhere.

The refusal to accept that there are incidences of piratic and terroristic activities in the coast of West Africa, especially Nigeria's territorial waters is the reason for the crude oil smuggling/theft and oceanbased terrorism that have marred the peace and thwarted the living conditions of many Nigerians, who depend strongly on fishing and aquatic foods as source of living. It has equally truncated "a host of industries worth billions of naira, and deprived employment opportunity for over 500,000 skilled and unskilled workers" (Bueger, 2014). In fact, piracy and other criminal activities that are perpetuated off the coasts of Nigeria threaten the global flow of goods and services across the world's shipping routes. The menace is negatively impacting the cost of shipping, exploration and exploitation of mineral resources (oil and gas), tourism, and other maritime related activities such as port and trans-shipment services. Without fear of equivocation, it is an obvious fact that "the country's fortunes are dwindling as it is estimated that it loses $26.3 billion annually to illegal bunkering, piracy and poaching" (Akpan, 2013; Olusola 2013; Odemwingie and Nda-Isaiah, 2013; Okere, 2013).Despite all the measures undertaken by the government, crude oil theft continued to increase on the tremendous leap, scope and dimension. Since oil is the major catalyst of the Nigerian economy, "anything that affects oil production in Nigeria poses a direct threat to her national economy, political stability, territorial integrity and national security" (Odalonu, 2016: 1). More so, the insecurity in the Nigeria's maritime sector, which include but are not limited to piracy, oil theft and ocean-based terrorism

have ignited and exacerbated many inter-ethnic conflicts among the people, and created fear in the entire nation. It has also led to the circulation of variety of sophisticated illegal arms/weapons suspected to have been purchased from the illegal bunkering in Niger Delta region (NDR). These serve as "a major contributor to Nigeria's violent crime, armed robbery, piracy and kidnapping" (Onwuemenyi, 2012). Similarly, oil theft has been the major cause of violent and conflict in the Niger Delta. Most of the oil theft actors exchange the crude oil for heavy arms at the high sea, while others use the proceeds to import arms into the region, with the principal aim of using the arms to secure their illegal activities in the region (Katsouris and Sayne, 2013; Wilson, 2014) .

The arms are used for attacks and counter attacks from different gang groups and security agents, as this is the only way they can remain in the piratic and terroristic businesses. These awkward businesses have in no minimal way, hampered the waterways and bridged free movement of goods and services in the sub-region. It has equally brought about direct and cultural violence among the oil investors and their hard earned investments and waterways. This was corroborated by Wilson (2014) who avers that as pirates attack oil investors and their investments, the state security agents give counter attack to the pirates, thereby leading to the constant violence and attacks in the West African waterways. It is in view of all these maritime challenges that affect national security and unity that the paper calls for capacity building of the maritime sectors and sophistication of maritime security equipment in order to avert the negative hurdles often experienced in the Nigerian seaways. To do this effectively, there is need for the Nigeria leaders to reeducate their minds in keeping with the reality on ground, creating of job opportunities and

rebuilding of the rejected and detested refineries, as they will help to checkmate illegal oil bunkery activities in the nation. When this method of thinking or maritime ideologies is prioritized, the bottle necked situation or issues of ocean–based terrorism, oil theft and sea piracy in Nigeria will be addressed. Hence, research has shown that the superlatives above mostly occur or surface due to unemployment and government insensitivity to the yearning of the populace.

This paper is divided into four major sections. The first section handles the issue of maritime insecurity in Nigeria. Here, the concept of insecurity or what maritime insecurity is all about will be disclosed. Under this sphere, the very meaning of security will be established, as a guide to understanding in detail, what insecurity is and what it is not. In the second section, the root causes of insecurity or the 'why' behind piracy in the maritime sector will be enumerated, in view of abrogating or mitigating against its further occurrence. Thirdly, we will bring to bear the differences between maritime security and maritime safety. Having a clearer knowledge on the difference between the two will help the maritime defense sector to know when preventive and responsive measures are required in protecting and safeguarding the maritime domain against threats and untold attacks. The fourth section deals with the issue of implementation of appropriate legal and normative actions/ frameworks. This particular section x-rayed on how the normative and legal actions can be complemented and implemented, as a guiding principle or an ethical code and legislative sanction to secure the maritime environment. In all, we shall demonstrate using conversational method of philosophy on how the issues or ugly tides of sea piracy, oil theft and

ocean related terrorism in Nigeria can be addressed through complementation, good governance, poverty alleviation, creation of employment opportunities, engagement of modernized technological security equipment and provision of proportioned logistics to security agencies.

Maritime Insecurity in Nigeria

To understand the concept of insecurity or what maritime insecurity stands for, it is of great germane to x-tray, first and foremost, what security is all about. As it will be very difficult if not impossible to holistically delve and have a full knowledge of insecurity without the idea of what security depicts. Different scholars from different backgrounds have different meanings and definitions of security. According to Ewetan and Ese (2014), security is the existence of peace and the absence of anxiety for national development. In other words, security is absence of war or presence of order and unity for the growth and development of the society. Anything that is not in consonance with the above can practically result to insecurity and terrorism. It is in line with this that Big-Alabo and Ezugwu (2022) saw security as a "dynamic situation that helps in guarding against threats to its deep rooted values and interests". Any attempt or practice to avert threat (s) that is capable of affecting values of individual is referred to security. This paper, following the position of Derian (2002) refers to security as a condition of being unharmed, free from danger, internal and external attacks. This is not the case in the Nigeria maritime sector, where sea piracy, kidnapping, oil bunkery and other acts of violence is predominant. To support this claim, Husseini (2022) observed that "today, in Nigeria and the world at large, there is so much violence. Every day, we hear about killing, kidnapping, terrorist

attack and war. This attitude to life has in no minimal way dealt or reduced the productivity of the nation. It has stopped the intending investors from coming into the country to invest, and have also created tension around the nation. The economy which ought to be boosted has been redundant due to the incessant terror initiated by the pirates and kidnappers.

Having said this, therefore, maritime insecurity has to do with the threats or attacks experienced within the maritime sector or environment. Though, there are various security challenges in Nigeria, maritime insecurity can be said to be the most dreadful one, as it has to do with the source of wealth and the economy of the nation. Nevertheless, it is important to state hear that maritime insecurity is basically the hand work of those at the riverine areas who often feel that they are marginalised. No wonder why Okafor (2011) held that "terrorism in Nigeria can be linked to the self-determination campaign, for greater Niger Delta autonomy led by Isaac Adaka Boro, an Ijaw nationalist". It was in the course of this struggle for self-determination and realisation that the expatriate oil workers were abducted. "They equally blew up and damaged oil pipelines, and declared the Niger Delta, an independent republic" (Thom-Otuya, 2010). All these were to demonstrate to the world how marginalised the Niger Delta region was. Be that as it may, the outlined actions affected the maritime industry as the terrorist activities instilled fear in many workers around the maritime sector and in turn reduced the functional tempo of the maritime organisations. With this, it is obvious that kidnapping, piracy and obstructions in the waterways to a reasonable extent, are caused by government inability to provide for the populace

especially those at the riverine environment, where oil and other aquatic animal are located. To address these highlighted maritime issues, this paper explored conversational method, for the complementation of two or more opposing realities without identity loss. It is in the adherent of this method that leaders/government can attend to the problems of her citizens and understand clearly that ethnic chauvinism, discrimination, unemployment and bad governance, which it is often enmeshed in, are parents of crime and resolution. When this is known, the maritime insecurity which came basically as a result of economic maginalisation, hardship, unemployment bad governance and leadership failure will be averted. This will be elaborated in the next section

Root Causes of Maritime Insecurity

It is of great importance to unveil the reasons or factors responsible for maritime insecurity in Nigeria. Hence, having the knowledge of the causes of maritime insecurity will help in providing solution to the humongous threats and attacks in the maritime environment. The root causes of maritime insecurity include but are not limited to bad governance, poverty, unemployment, the present of oil as a profit-based economy and nonprosecution of the Maritime offenders. Each of the above enumerated factors is addressed below:

    a. **Bad Governance**: Maritime insecurity is increasingly tormenting and discouraging the vitality and viability of the maritime sector, due to government's ineptitude towards the maritime demands and requirements. Ezugwu (2023) corroborated this, when he observed that "government's inability or insensitivity to the needs and demands of the populace can be said to be the genesis of insecurity in Nigeria". Adeleja *et.al* (2018) reaffirmed the above

when they stated that leaders or government ineptitude towards the request of her citizenry has done more harm than good in the society. There are many corrupt leaders who made their ways to where they occupy today through vote buying and violence, and do not care if the country is progressing or in a serious deterioration and jeopardy. These set of leaders are morally derailed and practically after what can enrich their pockets irrespective of the detrimental nature of their actions (Ezugwu *et.al*., 2022). In all, "the issue of corruption, leadership and bad governance are obstacles to the national growth and development of the Nigerian economy"(Okpanachi, 2022). Furthermore, a lot have been gotten from the maritime sector but little or nothing is devoted to securing

the activities that are going on in the said sector. No sophisticated equipment and experts engaged in the maritime parlance to fight against piratic and terroristic activities and manage the affairs of the maritime sector for the economic growth of the nation. In all, Government inability to secure the maritime areas or territories is the reason for the criminal and piratic activities and vulnerability of the Niger Delta region. Ukeje and Wullson (2013) agree with the above submission as they asserted that "government unable to attend to maritime problems is the brain behind or the production sites or transit routes for sundry criminal activities particularly the trafficking of drugs and arms". To curb or eradicate the staring maritime threats in Nigeria, government is obliged to map out reasonable amount in acquiring strong security equipment in

support of the security agencies. This will go a long way in checkmating the outlined threats or attacks in the maritime related sectors.

b. **Poverty**: This has made a good number of people who were conscientious or maintain certain level of integrity to be involved in piracy and ocean-based terrorism. It is not a crime to be poor, but it pains to be poor as a result of marginalisation and exclusion. In other words, when one is being deprived of benefiting from certain endowments, what comes to play is violence, as a way to express unhappiness and grievances (Bhatia and Ghanem, 2017; Kavanah, 2011). With this, it is obvious that "poverty and poor economic conditions are motivating factors for moral decadence, social unrest, insecurity and terrorism" (Aloziuwa, 2014). Moreover, many who joined Boko Haram did so due to hunger and inability to attend to their various needs. The sea piracy, crude oil theft or bunkering which have become the order of the day surfaced as a result of poverty and economic marginalisation that have long being experienced by those in riverine areas. However, the only way out of this anomaly is for the government to create jobs where those who leave from hand to mount can be engaged. When this is achieved, a good number of people who indulge in terrorism based on poverty will definitely back out. If this becomes the case, the serenity that is gradually becoming a history will be restored for maritime management and environmental sustainability.

c. **Unemployment:** It is a sad experience to be unemployed even when one is employable, due to corruption and mismanagement

of the public funds by the ruling class. Many are involved in different atrocities and antisocial activities today as a result of unemployment and the fear of poverty. Unemployment is the very reason yohoo boys (defrauders), kidnapping, sea piracy, drug trafficking and banditry are on the increase. It is equally why moral values and norms have been eroded and neglected. Many youths who should be engaged in government works are now tricycle (keke) riders. No wonder why the price of tricycle is tripled and the environment seriously occupied that one can hardly move or drive without hold up here and there. In fact, "the reality of unemployment and poverty that comes with it makes the poor to indulge in violence and antisocial activities which threatens the security of the nation", (Egbefo and Salihu, 2014). As over 90% of the youths are unemployed, necessarily, more than 90% of insecurity is expected (Ezugwu, 2023). The maritime security challenges can be addressed, therefore, when government provides jobs for the masses; protect and assist the poor ones in actualisation
of their dreams.

d. **The Present of Oil as a Profit-based Economy:** A state whose survival is deeply dependent on oil is bound to have unemployment problem. This is because in such state or country, "oil production and revenue will be on the increase while traditional sectors such as agriculture (cocoa) and lumbering (wood) are jeopardised and abandoned" (Ukeje & Wullson, 2013). This is the case of Nigeria, especially in riverine areas. Many in those so called areas hardly farm or see agricultural production as

a way forward to alleviating poverty. They so much rely on oil and dividends (amnesty tokens) from the federal government. This, they do, forgetting that the amnesty tokens can never solve their entire problems as individuals, communities and region. This, notwithstanding, it is important to acknowledge also that many in the said areas, do not think about or involve in agriculture as a result of environmental degradation caused by incessant gas flaring, climate change, emission and non-biodegradable elements in their various lands. Be that as it may, over concentration in oil has in no minimal way contributed to the unemployment which in turn has led to sea piracy, illegal bunkering and ocean-based terrorist activities in the Nigeria maritime sectors.

Non-prosecution of the Maritime Offenders: Insecurity is the order of the day in the Nigeria maritime sector due to the fact that the perpetrators or sponsors are not being sanctioned accordingly. Ezugwu (2023) supported this view as he observed that inability of the government to duly arrest or punish or prosecute maritime offenders following the legal stipulations or injunctions of the Nigerian constitution is the reason for many anti-social activities in the maritime sector. The offender who has a godfather is forgiven irrespective of the offence (s) committed. We are in a nation where what determines the degree of punishment when an offence is committed is wholly dependent on connection and party involvement of the offender. If the offender belongs to the ruling party or knows someone who belongs to the said party, the offender instead of receiving punishment receives an

appointment, sometimes, in the same sector. This and many other reasons, bring about criminal and piratical activities that have truncated the expected results of the maritime industries.

Maritime Security and Maritime Safety: Preventive and Responsive Measures for Maritime Sustainability

In delving into the issue of maritime security, prominent scholars like Feldt, et al (2013) and Klein (2022) saw it as that that appears to be a large and sometimes hazy term. However, they argued that maritime security should be distinguished from maritime safety. As maritime security deals with the combination of preventive and responsive measures to protect the maritime domain against threats and international unlawful acts; maritime safety on the other hand, is the combination of preventive and responsive measures intended to protect the maritime domain against the accidental or natural disasters and damage to environment, risks or loss. More so, the security of maritime domain has been a major concern to coastal States. Maritime security threats have manifested in the use of force (by non-state actors) against the territorial integrity of a state. These security threats include: acts of terrorism against shipping operations, offshore installations, piracy and sea robbery. Others include: smuggling of migrants, narcotic drugs and arms, illegal fishing, pollution of marine environment (Bueger, 2014). With this, it is obvious that the huge expenditure on security has not translated into peace and harmony of the Nigerian citizenry. Therefore, there is an urgent need to re-examine the approach to peace and security in the country as this may promote social political development (Ejovi and Ebie, 2013). Hence, any environment enshrined with crime and insecurity is always accompanied with tensions and anxiety.

Furthermore, the elimination of these threats and insurgency that create fear and underdevelopment should be the paramount target of the governments in Nigeria. "This will give rise to human development and a habitable environment for us all" (Odalonu, 2016). From the foregoing, what is clear is that continuing our pattern of life especially when it has to do with our environment and biodiversity could further boost insecurity in the Niger Delta region and breeds unemployment for the entire nation. With this in mind, Nigerian government should partner with the international community to invest more and expand the legitimate oil sector. As this would provide more opportunities for the local community which could benefit from their regions rich oil resources without resorting to theft. Legitimizing and improving many of the illegal oil refineries by bringing them under the management of oil companies could also be a viable option. When all the suggestions made so far are properly taken into account, the sea piracy, crude oil theft and ocean- based terrorism, which we face today will be taken care of. Internalising the suggestions will equally restore the sanity and peace which have been lost, due to the ceaseless terroristic activities in the Nigerian waterways. More deliberation on how sanity can be restored will be made in the next section, where legal actions will be advised to be taken and ethical coded actions maintained as ways of eradicating sea piracy, oil theft and terrorism.

Implementing Appropriate Legal and Normative Actions/ Frameworks

It is obvious that there is gap in legislation and policy on maritime security. To fill in the gap, there is need to update existing legal instruments or create new and integrated legal regimes in line with

international best practices. In Nigeria, there is weak legal framework that discourages effective maritime security management. Apart from this, is the "ineptitude and corruption at the high levels of government which allow convoluted neo-patrimonial networks to easily emerge and coalesce around criminals with little official disruption to their activities" (Ukeje and Wullson, 2013). This can be substantiated following the way and manner the criminals and maritime offenders are being treated when they found guilty of any maritime related offence. This is not to say that those who had found wanting were not arrested or detained, but to say that the criminals who are meant to be sanctioned accordingly are being given minimal penalties. Their sanctions or penalties ought to be based on the level of the offence committed. It is due to the fact that they are being handled without any intensive punishment that the maritime challenges continued to thrive. This kind of attitude towards the offenders encourages those who are already involved to continue, and those who are longing to join, to do so, without fear, hence, the expected punishment is something bearable and trivial. Outside this, the maritime insecurity keeps increasing due to the ethical codes and moral values that have been detested and rejected in our society. As a result of hardship and unemployment in the nation, many youths have resorted to carrying out criminal activities to survive. In trying to surmount the pressure of poverty and bankruptcy, they involve themselves in a lot of things that are contrary to the norms and values of the society. Today, social vices such sea piracy, kidnapping, child trafficking, bunkering, terrorism have taken the place of morality, ingenuity, hard work, creativity, integrity, etc.

To address the highlighted vices above the paper calls for complementation of legislative and normative actions, as semi-dialogic frameworks that can help in sanctioning and building of systems that will not allow injustices in dealing with the opposed variables or traitors who often threaten maritime environment and lives of the inhabitants. When this happens, the societal moral values which are treated with levity and hardly remembered nowadays will be appreciated. It is only in this mode and mood of appreciation that those who are initially after what can help them actualise their dreams or at least, take care of their daily needs, irrespective of the cost, can be readjusted. If this becomes the case, the needed moral codes will be reinjected to rejuvenate the lost values in the maritime sector, and retrain the minds of government and leaders on the needs to create jobs and assist in making sure that the legal actions are taken when the need arises and moral values are codified in the minds of all. Further discussion on how the legislative and normative actions can be harmonised as frameworks to eradicate the maritime insecurity in Nigeria will be made in the next section using conversational philosophy.

Conversational Philosophy as a Strategy for Complementation and Aversion of Maritime Insecurity in Nigeria

This paper employs conversational thinking/philosophy to bear on the discourse on sea piracy, oil theft and ocean-based terrorism. Conversational method of philosophy otherwise known as conversational thinking or conversationalism was founded on an unexplored African notion of relationship or communion or mutual dependence or complementarity. By relationship, Chimakonam (2017) refers to "a willful, creative and critical epistemic experience which two agents known as *nwansa* (proponent) and *nwa-nju* (opponent) share with the

intention to create new concepts and open up new vistas for thought". This idea championed by Chimakonam was to see how two opposing variables can complement each other without losing their identities. This thinking is premised on the assumption that every conversational relationship comes to a meeting point of agreement, even though the parties involved in the conversational relationship do not disintegrate into each other. Be that as it may, conversational philosophy is a philosophy of inclusiveness and complementarity. When conversational philosophy/thinking is adopted the disparity between government and the governed or the have and have not, which in most cases triggers insecurity in the maritime sector will be addressed. Hence, both parties will be reeducated to understand that to be is to be with others and not to be alone. It is in view of this reality that the government will be sensitised to create jobs and furnish the maritime security agencies with the required security infrastructures and experts that can help in piloting the affairs of the maritime industry in Nigeria. Again, it is in that mood and relationship that the maritime issues, most of which occur due to government insensitivity and nonchalance attitude towards the welfare of her citizenry can be dealt with.

For the fact that conversational philosophy "prioritises relationships of complementarity and holds that progress of individuals in any social protection programme depends to a large extent on how healthy the relationships of variables involved are" (Chimakonam, 2019: 155), it is therefore, pertinent that both leaders and the led are attune to the doctrine of conversational thinking which gives room for complementation and interaction between *nwa nju* (opponent) and *nwa nsa* (proponent) and the rich and the poor in resolving the societal

problems. Conversational thinking has many principles but we are going to adopt only two for our discussion on the issues of sea piracy, oil theft and ocean-based terrorism namely; ontological thesis and principle of complementarity. By its ontological thesis, conversational thinking arranges variables in different categories to show that development is of three dimensions, social, political and economic which necessarily have to be in relationships with one another. Following its principle of complementarity, "conversational thinking devices means on how to manage the three dimensions of development in a way to usher in a complementary relationship amongst them as it does with the individuals involved" (Chimakonam 2019: 156). To ensure progress, conversational thinking holds that the relationship between the three dimensional elements of development are cardinal and must, as a matter of fact, complement one another at all times. It is in line with this that this paper advocates for harmonisation of legislative and normative actions, government and the governed or leaders and the led and the rich and the poor, in dealing with the maritime insecurity in Nigeria. When this is properly actualised, that is, when the factors and actors are complemented in keeping with their job duties, the maritime insecurity which has thwarted and checkmated various employment opportunities and caused economic quagmire in the nation will be put to rest.

The application of conversational philosophy in handling the maritime insecurity in Nigeria will go a long way in making the federal government or leaders who often feel that there is no need for inclusivity and complementarity to have a rethink. It will inculcate in them the spirit of togetherness which has a way of unification of praxis in understanding the common aphorism 'I am because you are, you are therefore I am'.

When this becomes the case, government will provide jobs and a good number of people who are involved in terroristic activities due to lack of job opportunities and recognition in the country will turn over a new leave, and canvass for peace and progress of the society. It is only in this mode of life that recognises the existence of different people and their different traditions and background for the benefit of humanity (Chimakonam 2017: 119), that the security challenges which we battle with today can be eradicated. More so, as conversational thinking provides enabling conditions for the attainment of sustainable- inclusive development going by the words of (Enyimba, 2019:12); it is a system of thinking that is capable of bringing together the required legislative and normative frameworks which are lacking in managing the affairs of the national maritime industry.

Conversational thinking, if prioritised, will serve as both responsive and preventive measures. Hence, its system formation is capable of assisting the government in providing sophisticated equipment and care in eradicating the ill-will activities   in the marine environment. In other words, the piratic activities which we suffer today can be addressed following the dictates or principles of conversational philosophy, which include but are not limited to ontological thesis and principle of complementarity. It is the inability of the government to apply the above principles in the leadership of the nation, or harmonise the various existing variables that often push many people to illegal oil bunkery or oil theft, ocean-based terrorism, smuggling and sea piracy that have defaced the maritime industry in Nigeria. To enthrone peace in the maritime industry, the above mentioned principles of conversational

philosophy/thinking ought to be applied by both leaders and followers in harnessing of variables and complementation of realities.

Conclusion

The maritime security challenges facing Nigeria and indeed Africa are rooted in bad governance. It is bad governance and unemployment that trigger sea piracy, illegal oil bunkery, kidnapping and crude oil theft. In spite of the fact that most of the states in the Gulf of Guinea are richly blessed with energy resources, they are still engulfed in poverty, unemployment and economic marginalization. However, to restore sanity in the Nigerian maritime sector, the paper recommends thus: the need to prosecute maritime offenders accordingly or based on the offence(s) they committed, without fear or favor. Secondly, is the need to adhere to the preventive and responsive measures in handling maritime threats and attacks. When these measures are followed, the maritime security agencies will be guided in keeping with the appropriate requirements in fighting sea pirates and other related maritime terroristic gangs. It is in keeping with this reality that we maintained in the abstract that employment or engagement of Government Oweizide Ekpemupolo is not enough. As there is need to also understand both preventive and responsive measures and acquire sophisticated security equipment in dealing with the issue of maritime problems in Nigeria. Thirdly, is the need for strengthening of the legal and normative frameworks to retain the legislative and societal norms and values for honorable and permissible actions. These can be achieved through the method of conversationalism, a conversational order that yearns for interrelationship and interdependency between and among realities.

Sticking to the conversational method of thinking will provide enabling environment for capacity building and help the Nigeria leaders to undergo a pedagogical training in understanding the need to attend to the problems of the populace. Hence, to be is to be with others and not to be alone.   The complementary relationship which conversationalism professes will create political and cultural linkages between Nigeria and other countries of the world. It will also boost and improve daily earning in crude oil and other related maritime transactions. When all these are achieved, modern infrastructural security support provided and good governance enthroned or seen as being essential to accomplishing sustainable maritime security and economic growth in Nigeria, the numerous criminal or piratic activities in the maritime areas will be curbed and possibly eradicated.

Acknowledgement

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Values and the National Integration Question in Nigeria

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Abstract

The integration of diverse ethnicities in Nigeria is a complex and critical endeavour that seeks to unify the nation's rich tapestry of cultures, languages, and histories. At the heart of this aspiration lies the role of values as foundational elements that transcend ethnic boundaries and foster a shared sense of identity. However, historical grievances and economic disparities stemming from resource allocation and political manipulation pose formidable challenges to ethnic integration. These obstacles hinder the formation of a cohesive national identity and fuel inter-ethnic conflicts, underscoring the importance of addressing deep-rooted issues for successful integration. This paper argues that there exists an intrinsic relationship between values and national integration in Nigeria and those values can serve as a unifying and cohesive factor

amid ethnic diversity and the nation's heterogeneity. The paper also argues that, whether manifested through shared religious ethics, cultural norms emphasizing communal bonds or ethical principles that promote justice and respect, values play a pivotal role in bridging gaps and creating connections. The paper concludes that the apparent lack of integration and cohesion in Nigeria's values are both imperative and indispensable to the contemporary Nigerian state that is bedevilled with Ethno-religious crisis and conflict; therefore, values stand as a central pillar in the integration of ethnicities in Nigeria, offering a pathway to unity amidst diversity.

Keywords: values, national integration, diversity, identity, Nigeria

Introduction

The integration of ethnicities in Nigeria is a complex and multifaceted issue that has been a subject of significant academic and societal discourse. Nigeria, often referred to as the "Giant of Africa," is home to over 250 distinct ethnic groups, each with its unique language, culture, and values. This diversity has long been both a source of strength and a challenge for the nation. Understanding the role of values in the integration of these diverse ethnicities is crucial for fostering national unity and social cohesion. The thought of values plays a central role in shaping individuals' beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes. In Nigeria, the values held by different ethnic groups can either facilitate or hinder integration efforts. For instance, the values of "respect for elders" (*U nan mba gaden civir*) and communal living are widely cherished across many Nigerian cultures especially in Tiv culture, that is to say that, Nigerian values are deeply rooted in the diverse cultures and ethnic groups that

make up the country. This is exemplified in the Yoruba culture's concept of "*omoluabi*," which emphasizes attributes such as honesty, respect, and responsibility (Falola 73). Additionally, the Igbo culture places a strong emphasis on communal living and the extended family system, where individuals are expected to support and care for their relatives (Njoku 45). These values of respect for authority and communal responsibility play a significant role in shaping social interactions and relationships in Nigerian society, therefore providing a common ground for fostering unity. Conversely, conflicting values, such as religious differences or historical grievances, can impede integration and exacerbate inter-ethnic tensions.

Furthermore, religion plays a vital role in Nigerian values, with Christianity and Islam being the dominant faiths. Many Nigerians uphold religious values that emphasize moral and ethical behavior. For instance, one prominent Christian concept that promotes the idea of treating others with kindness and love is the commandment of "Love your neighbor as yourself." This teaching is derived from the Bible. This value promotes unity and cooperation among diverse religious groups and contributes to a sense of national cohesion. According to Daudu (2019), security and common good must never be politicized for whatsoever reason. While Nigeria is culturally diverse, these shared values, both traditional and religious, are instrumental in fostering a sense of unity and integration among its people. Meanwhile, in modern Nigeria, there are ongoing efforts to promote national integration and unity, recognizing the importance of these values. Government policies and initiatives aim to bridge ethnic and religious divides and promote a sense of belonging among all Nigerians. While challenges persist, the recognition and

preservation of traditional values alongside the adaptation of new, unifying values contribute to the ongoing process of integration and national cohesion in the country.

However, religious values and practices often intersect with ethnic identities, therefore creating complex dynamics that can either promote religious tolerance and coexistence or lead to religious tensions and conflicts. It is pertinent to note here that the integration of ethnicities in Nigeria is a multifaceted issue influenced by a myriad of factors, including cultural values, historical legacies, government policies, and religious beliefs. Understanding how these factors intersect and impact the process of integration is essential for fostering national unity and social cohesion in Nigeria. It is on this basis that this topic continues to evolve and warrants ongoing research and discussion to promote a more inclusive and harmonious society in this diverse African nation. Therefore, the paper advocates for collective and central harmonization on the basis of mutual respect, equality and co-existence among the nation's diverse ethnic groups and constituents as well as individuals.

Similarly, there should be the fair and equal treatment of all Nigerians as well as deliberate development of a feeling of oneness among Nigerians towards the attainment of a successful democratization process and national stability, unity and integration.

Conceptual Framework for Values and National Integration

The conceptual framework of "values" and "national integration" is a critical lens through which we can understand the complex dynamics of unity within diverse societies. "Values" encompass the principles, beliefs, and moral codes that guide individuals and communities in their actions

and decision-making. These values are deeply rooted in cultures, religion, and history, and they play a pivotal role in shaping the attitudes and behaviours of a society. On the other hand, "national integration" refers to the process of fostering a sense of unity and cohesion among the various ethnics, religious, and cultural groups within the nation. It involves bridging divisions, promoting inclusivity, and building a shared national identity that transcends the diversity of the population.

The interplay between values and national integration is particularly relevant in the context of nations characterised by significance cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity, such as Nigeria. Unfortunately, Nigeria's national goals are unachievable due to lack of proper implementations (Daudu, 2021). The value held different groups within a nation can either act as unifying forces, bringing people together under a common set of principles, or as divisive factor, leading to inter-ethnic tensions and conflicts. Understanding the role of values national integration is essential for policymakers, scholars, and leaders, as it helps in crafting strategies and policies that promote social cohesion, tolerance, and peaceful co-existence. This conceptual framework provides a foundation for exploring the challenges, initiatives, and the critical role of leadership in shaping the values that underpin national integration. It is through this framework that we can analyse the impact of values on the social fabric of a nation and the ongoing efforts to build a more integrated and harmonious society.

In the context of various academic disciplines and everyday life, the concept of "value" holds diverse meanings and significance. Value can be broadly understood as the worth or importance assigned to something,

whether it is an object, idea, belief, or principle. This subjective assessment of worth guides human behavior, influencing choices and decisions made by individuals and societies alike. Philosophically, value is a foundational subject matter. Ethical philosophers delve into questions of value, seeking to determine what is inherently good or desirable and how moral judgments should be made. Philosophical discussions surrounding values often encompass theories like utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue ethics, each offering distinct perspectives on the nature of moral value and ethical decision-making.

Meanwhile values are fundamental to understanding culture and society. Cultural values shape the norms, customs, and behaviors of different social groups and communities. These values are transmitted through socialization processes, such as family, education, and media, and can vary significantly across societies (qtd in Adega & Torhemen, 2023).

Furthermore, values have a profound impact on politics and governance. Political ideologies often reflect underlying values, such as freedom, justice, and equality. Political debates and policymaking frequently revolve around competing values and the compromises required to achieve societal goals. Understanding the values that underlie political ideologies is crucial for grasping the dynamics of governance and decisionmaking.

Basically, the concept of "value" is a complex and multifaceted one, holding different meanings in various academic fields and contexts. Values guide ethical choices, shape economic behaviors, define cultural norms, and influence political ideologies. They represent the core

principles and beliefs that individuals and societies use to navigate complex moral, economic, social, and political landscapes.

National integration has to be understood and defined historically. National integration in simple terms is a process whereby political actors in distinct ethnic or linguistic setting of a nation shift or transfer their loyalties expectations and political activities towards a new centre. O'Connel & Beckett (1985) however, corroborate this definition much more soundly by clarifying that national integration involves collective inter- related actions to promote certain mutual interests, usually ranging over national matters of welfare, order and defence or security (6). According to them, an integrated nation consequently, is characterized by a high level of cooperation between the various groups and sub-groups for the benefit of all the members (O'Connel & Beckett, 1985, 7). It involves the extent of the sharedness of the value symbols of a nation (such as, flag and coat of arms), models of communication (e.g. National language) and common experience among the members of the nation. It also, covers all measures, agreements and developments which aim at achieving unity and cooperation among various groups of the nation.

Meanwhile, according to Haas (1961), national integration is the process where elites or key stakeholders with national outlook are persuaded to shift their expectations, activities, and loyalties towards the nation's interests, unity, and development (7). Asaju & Egberi (2002) see national integration as creating awareness of common identity among the citizens in spite of their differences in religious beliefs, castes, language, and origin.National integration is an attempt put in place by the government and all concern individual and groups with the core aim of

promoting a sense of unity, togetherness and peaceful co-existence among the citizens of a particular country (Asaju & Egben, 2002).

Liddle, on the other hand viewed national integration, otherwise termed nation- building, national unity, national cohesion, national loyalty, or the national question "involves consensus on the limits of the political community and on the nature of the political regime (qtd in Adega & Torhemen, 2023)." This simply means the forging of agreement among the members of a state on the extent of unity they wish to have as well as the type of political structure and institutions they desire. It is also a "process of unifying a society which tends to make it a harmonious city, based on an order its members regard as equitably harmonious" (qtd in Adega & Torhemen, 2023).

Historical Context of National Integration in Nigeria

The historical context of national integration in Nigeria is a complex narrative that encompasses the pre-independence era, postindependence challenges, and the significant diversity among the country's major ethnic groups. These historical factors have played a pivotal role in shaping Nigeria's ongoing struggle for national cohesion. During the preindependence era, Nigeria was a British colony consisting of various territories, each with its own cultural, ethnic, and religious identities as well as values. The British colonial administration had a divide-and-rule policy, which contributed to the deep-rooted ethnic divisions in the country and of course creating much problems for their cultural imbalance in terms of values systems. In the North, there was a predominantly Muslim population, while the South was religiously diverse, with a significant Christian population. These divisions were further exacerbated by the different colonial policies and systems of

administration applied in the North and South. This pre-independence period sowed the seeds of regional and ethnic rivalries that would persist after Nigeria gained independence in 1960 (Smith, 92).

The post-independence era in Nigeria was marked by significant challenges related to national integration. The newly independent nation faced a range of issues, including ethnic tensions, political instability, and economic disparities. The First Republic (1963-1966) was characterized by regional competition and power struggles among the major ethnic groups, particularly the Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa-Fulani. These struggles culminated in the Biafran Civil War from 1967 to 1970, which resulted from the secessionist aspirations of the Igbo people in the Southeast. The war had devastating consequences, both in terms of loss of life and the exacerbation of ethnic divisions (Falola, 2016).

Nigeria's ethnic diversity is a defining characteristic of the nation. The four major ethnic groups, the Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa-Fulani and Tiv are often identified as the largest and most influential. The Yoruba, primarily located in the Southwest, have a rich cultural heritage and a history of self-governance. The Igbo, located in the Southeast, have a strong sense of identity and are known for their entrepreneurial spirit. The Hausa-Fulani, residing mainly in the North, have a history of centralized emirate systems and adherence to Islam. Asserting to this effect want affirms that the Tiv of central Nigeria are known for their strength in farming as well as a rich cultural heritage and values (Wang, 2004). In addition to these four major groups, Nigeria is home to over 250 distinct ethnicities, each with its own languages, traditions, and customs just like their value systems. This diversity, while enriching the nation's cultural tapestry, also presents a challenge for national integration.

It is pertinent to state here that the historical context of national integration in Nigeria is deeply intertwined with the pre-independence era, post-independence challenges, and the country's remarkable ethnic diversity. The legacy of colonialism, ethnic rivalries, and the Biafran Civil War have all played a significant role in shaping Nigeria's path toward national cohesion even though the Biafran agitation is still ongoing. The diversity among the major ethnic groups and the multitude of smaller ethnicities presents both an opportunity for cultural richness and a challenge for maintaining a unified nation. Nigeria's ongoing efforts to address these historical factors and promote national integration are crucial for the country's continued development and stability.

Role of Values in National Integration

The role of values in national integration is significant as they shape the behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs of individuals in a society. Values are said to be the enduring principles that guide people's actions and decisions. In the context of national integration, values play a crucial role in promoting unity and cohesion among a diverse population.

Cultural and religious diversities are prominent features of Nigerian society. The country is home to various ethnic groups and religious affiliations, including Christianity and Islam and also the African traditionalist. These cultural and religious differences can either foster tolerance and respect for diversity or lead to division and conflict. Cultural values, such as respect for elders and communal living, can serve as unifying factors. Additionally, religious values that promote love, compassion, and ethical behavior can contribute to a sense of common purpose (Adejuyigbe, 2012)..

Social values are also essential in national integration. These values

include the principles of equity, justice, and fairness. In a diverse society like Nigeria, it is crucial to uphold social values that ensure equal opportunities and protection for all citizens, irrespective of their cultural or religious background. The recognition of these values helps in reducing social inequalities and promoting social harmony.

Social values play a crucial role in national integration, a very good example can be seen among the Tiv people of central Nigeria. The Tiv, one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria, have a rich cultural heritage and a distinct social structure and values. Central to their social values is the principle of communal living and mutual support, that is to say that life in African (Tiv) communalism is based on the philosophy of live-and let-live. This principle is based on the concept of 'clan vital' and applies to concrete community. Community as expressed in the socio-political philosophy of *ya na angbian* which literally means "eat give to your brother" this is an important characteristic feature of the Tiv world-view. As reiterated in such maxims as *kon mon ngu lun ikyo ga* (single tree cannot make a forest); *ka tem imongu mbagbera ve fe iwa ye* (it is only by sitting together that the people of Mbagbera come to know the art of black-smiting) (Atel qtd in Torhemen, 2018). It therefore means that the Tiv people have a strong sense of community and solidarity, and these values are instrumental in fostering unity and integration within their society (Orkar, 2010).

In Tiv society for example, social values emphasize the importance of respecting elders and traditional authorities. This respect for authority figures is a key aspect of their social fabric, contributing to social cohesion and harmony. The Tiv people place high value on consensus

building and conflict resolution through communal discussions and traditional methods, further promoting peaceful coexistence (Ayatse, 2015).

The Tiv social values are closely tied to their cultural practices, which include communal farming, traditional festivals, and (*kwav*) agegrade systems. These cultural practices help maintain social order and unity among the Tiv people, as they foster a sense of belonging and shared identity. In this way, social values serve as a vital component of national integration within the Tiv community in central Nigeria.

In Nigeria, political values such as democracy, the rule of law, and good governance play a significant role in national integration. Nigeria's experience with democracy, despite its challenges, exemplifies the potential of this political value to promote inclusivity and unity. The country's transition from military rule to democratic governance in 1999 marked a turning point in its history, allowing diverse ethnic and religious groups to participate in the political process. While Nigeria's democracy has faced various issues, such as electoral irregularities, it remains a key instrument for national integration (Nwankwo, 2014).

The rule of law is crucial in Nigeria for ensuring that justice is administered fairly and equitably. The judiciary's role in upholding the rule of law and protecting the rights of all citizens is vital. While challenges exist, including corruption within the legal system, the rule of law is a fundamental value that contributes to social harmony and a sense of belonging among Nigeria's diverse population (Alemika, 2010).

Good governance principles, including transparency,

accountability, and efficient service delivery, are essential for promoting national integration in Nigeria. Effective governance fosters trust and confidence in the government, ensuring that resources are utilized for the common good. Nigeria's commitment to good governance principles is a critical component of its efforts to create a more inclusive and unified nation (Kura, 2015).

We can therefore affirm that political values, such as democracy, rule of law, and good governance, play a significant role in national integration. These values create a framework for inclusive political participation and representation, allowing diverse voices to be heard in the political process. The rule of law ensures that justice is administered fairly and impartially, which is crucial for building trust and confidence in the government.

Possibly, the role of values in national integration is multi-faceted. Cultural and religious diversity can either be a source of strength or division, depending on how values are interpreted and practiced. Social values promote social equity and harmony, while political values establish the framework for inclusive governance. Recognizing and upholding these values is essential for fostering national integration and cohesion in a diverse society like Nigeria.

Values and the Integration Problem in Nigeria

"The multi-challenges confronting Nigeria requires urgent attention. Nigeria has laws but lacks the will power to implement those laws. As such, both the leaders and the led must do the needful to save Nigeria from collapsing" (Daudu, 2020, 193)

The challenge of values in the context of national integration is a multifaceted issue that often intersects with ethno-religious conflicts. Ethno-religious conflicts frequently arise from differing cultural and religious values and beliefs, creating divisions within society. These conflicts can undermine the sense of national identity and cohesion (Smith, 2018). Corruption exacerbates these divisions by eroding trust among various ethnic and religious groups. Ethical values, as emphasized by Allen, play a pivotal role in mitigating these issues. Allen's (2010) study highlights the potential of a society's moral values to act as a binding force that transcends religious and ethnic differences. National integration, the process of fostering unity and solidarity among diverse populations within a nation, faces significant challenges related to values. One fundamental challenge lies in the diversity of cultural, religious, and ideological values within a nation. Different groups may have distinct sets of values that can create tensions and hinder the formation of a cohesive national identity. Balancing the need for unity with respect for diverse values requires thoughtful navigation to prevent the imposition of one set of values over others, fostering inclusivity instead of exclusion.

Another challenge arises from political and socioeconomic disparities that may lead to conflicting values associated with power, wealth, and privilege. When there are substantial economic inequalities, marginalized groups may feel excluded from the benefits of national integration, leading to resentment and a lack of commitment to shared values. Addressing these disparities and ensuring equitable distribution of resources is crucial for building a sense of shared purpose and preventing the erosion of national values.

Globalization adds another layer of complexity to the challenges of national integration. Increased exposure to diverse cultures and ideas through globalization can create a clash of values as societies grapple with traditional norms and external influences. The rapid flow of information and ideas can challenge existing value systems, leading to cultural tensions and identity crises. Striking a balance between preserving cultural heritage and adapting to global influences is a delicate task that requires a nuanced approach to national integration.

And lastly, the role of education in shaping values and fostering national integration cannot be overlooked. However, education systems may face challenges in imparting values that resonate with diverse populations. Differences in educational curricula, access to quality education, and varying levels of emphasis on values education can contribute to a fragmented national identity. A comprehensive approach to education that encourages critical thinking, cultural sensitivity, and an understanding of shared values is essential for overcoming these challenges and promoting a cohesive national fabric. Overall, the critical examination of values in national integration underscores the need for inclusive policies, economic equity, cultural understanding, and educational reforms to build a resilient and united nation.

Regionalism and tribalism further complicate national integration by perpetuating localized identities that are sometimes at odds with the broader national identity. Harris (2009) argues that "regionalism and tribalism are obstacles to national integration, as they often prioritize regional or tribal interests over national unity" (32). To address these challenges, various initiatives and efforts have been launched.

Government policies play a crucial role in promoting national integration, as Johnson (2019) contends. Well-crafted government policies can bridge divides and encourage a sense of national belonging).

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) also contribute significantly to fostering national integration. Anderson's (2014) research illustrates that NGOs often act as intermediaries between different groups, promoting dialogue, understanding, and collaboration. They serve as essential partners in the effort to bridge divides. Educational reforms are another vital aspect of this process. Smith underscores that curriculum changes that promote a shared national history and values are essential in creating a sense of unity among the youth (112).

Successful case studies, such as the one described by Bennett, demonstrate that when diverse groups come together for a common cause, it can lead to improved national integration. Bennett's (2015) case study highlights an instance where different communities worked collaboratively to address a common issue, resulting in enhanced cohesion and understanding among them. Despite these successful initiatives, ongoing challenges persist, as highlighted by Patel (2015). Deep-seated prejudices and historical grievances can be stubborn obstacles to lasting national unity.

Therefore, the challenge of values in national integration is complex and is often intertwined with ethno-religious conflicts, corruption, regionalism, and tribalism. Government policies, nongovernmental organizations, and educational reforms are essential components in efforts to promote national integration. Successful case studies provide valuable insights into how different groups can work

together to achieve cohesion. Nonetheless, ongoing challenges remain, particularly in addressing deep-rooted prejudices and historical grievances that continue to pose obstacles to lasting national unity.

The Initiatives and Efforts to Promote National Integration

Promoting national integration involves a range of initiatives and efforts, with government policies playing a significant role in shaping the national landscape. Government policies often provide the foundation for fostering unity. For instance, well-crafted policies can help bridge divides and encourage a sense of national belonging (Johnson, 2019). These policies may include measures that promote cultural exchange, celebrate diversity, and ensure equal opportunities for all citizens. In essence, they serve as a framework for building a cohesive and inclusive nation.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can also contribute substantially to the promotion of national integration. These organizations often serve as intermediaries between different groups and work to promote dialogue, understanding, and collaboration. They play a vital role in bridging divides and fostering a sense of unity among diverse communities (Anderson, 2014). NGOs frequently engage in communitybuilding activities, educational programs, and initiatives that encourage cross-cultural interactions, all of which contribute to a more cohesive society.

Educational reforms are a crucial element in the process of promoting national integration and values. Educational institutions have the power to shape the values and beliefs of future generations. Curriculum changes that emphasize a shared national history and values can be essential in creating a sense of unity among the youth (Smith, 2011). Inclusive and equitable education systems that promote cultural

awareness and understanding can help break down the barriers that separate different communities and promote a shared sense of national identity.

Meanwhile, initiatives to promote national integration, including government policies, the work of non-governmental organizations, and educational reforms, are integral to fostering unity in diverse societies. Government policies provide the structure for building a cohesive nation, while NGOs act as facilitators of dialogue and understanding. Educational reforms, particularly those that emphasize a shared national identity, contribute to the long-term process of nurturing unity among future generations.

Case Studies in Successful National Integration Initiative and Ongoing Challenges

Case studies of successful national integration initiatives provide valuable insights into how diverse communities can work together to achieve cohesion. Bennett's (2015)case study, for example, highlights an instance where different groups came together to address a common issue, resulting in enhanced cohesion and understanding among them. Such success stories are essential as they demonstrate that when individuals from various backgrounds collaborate towards a shared goal, they can transcend differences and build a stronger national identity.

However, despite successful initiatives, ongoing challenges persist. And that is the reason why Patel (2016) emphasizes that deepseated prejudices and historical grievances can be stubborn obstacles to lasting national unity. These challenges may stem from historical conflicts or deeply ingrained biases that continue to affect societal dynamics. Additionally, maintaining the momentum of successful

integration initiatives can be challenging, as they often require sustained effort to ensure that unity endures in the face of evolving circumstances and emerging issues.

Consequently, case studies of successful national integration initiatives offer valuable examples of how communities can overcome differences and build stronger national bonds. Nevertheless, the road to national integration is fraught with ongoing challenges, including historical grievances and deep-seated prejudices. Addressing these challenges requires a long-term commitment to fostering understanding, tolerance, and cooperation among diverse groups.

The Role of Leadership in Shaping Values and Integration

Leadership plays a critical role in shaping values and promoting national integration in various spheres, including political leadership, religious and traditional leaders, and civil society. Political leaders have a significant impact on the values and cohesion of a nation. They set the tone for the country's policies and often have the authority to enact changes that promote unity. As Johnson (2019) argues: "effective political leadership can be instrumental in fostering national integration through the formulation of inclusive policies and the promotion of values that encourage unity" (82).

Religious and traditional leaders also wield considerable influence in shaping values and promoting integration. These leaders are often seen as moral authorities within their communities, and their guidance can have a profound impact on social norms and values. They play a crucial role in bridging the gaps between different religious and ethnic groups and promoting tolerance. As Smith (2011) points out, religious and

traditional leaders can facilitate dialogue and understanding, acting as unifying figures within society.

Civil society, which encompasses non-governmental organizations, community groups, and individuals, also plays a pivotal role in shaping values and fostering integration. They often initiate grassroots movements and awareness campaigns that promote inclusivity and understanding. Anderson's (2014) research highlights the role of civil society in building bridges between different groups and promoting dialogue and collaboration.

Leadership, whether in the political, religious, or civil society domains, is central to shaping values and promoting national integration. Effective leaders can influence policies, bridge divides, and create a sense of unity among diverse communities. Their actions and guidance are essential in the ongoing effort to build a more cohesive and integrated society.

Suggestions for Enhancing National Integration and Values in Nigeria

To enhance national integration through values that promote tolerance and understanding, it is essential to emphasize the importance of education and awareness campaigns. Educational institutions should include curricula that not only teach core subjects but also focus on promoting values of tolerance, inclusivity, and understanding. As Smith (2017) suggests, educational reforms that incorporate lessons on diverse cultures, religions, and histories can help students develop a more inclusive worldview. Awareness campaigns at the community and national levels should aim to create a culture of respect for differences,

celebrating diversity, and fostering empathy. Such efforts can help reduce stereotypes and prejudices, fostering an atmosphere of tolerance.

Education remains an important aspect of human advancement, and investment in education is the best form of human capital development and the introduction of virtual learning and teaching during COVID-19 lockdown in Nigeria brought about the emergence of the new normal (Awogu-Maduagwu, Daudu, Osimen & Adetunji, 2023). The 21st century is festooned with advanced technological advancements. As such, AI knowledge and application is necessary to enhance education and computer literacy (Daudu, Osimen & Shuaibu, 2023). Nigeria needs to standardize its naming system and invariably its education system for proper placement and recognition in the world (Osimen, Daudu & AwoguMaduagwu, 2023).

It is also crucial to combat corruption and *Mailumo* (self-centeredness), the philosophy of *Kenkencity* (it must be me or else no one) and ethical lapses. Corruption erodes trust and exacerbates divisions within a society, hindering national integration. Government agencies must implement and enforce anti-corruption measures, ensuring transparency and accountability in public affairs. In fact ethical leadership in government is essential to combat corruption and foster national unity. Similarly, civil society organizations can play a significant role by monitoring and advocating against corruption, un-necessary agitations thereby promoting a culture of ethical values that strengthen national cohesion.

Promoting tolerance and understanding, strengthening education and awareness, and combating corruption are intertwined efforts that should be supported by strong leadership and government policies.

Leaders at all levels must set an example by prioritizing these values and supporting initiatives that promote them, basically leadership is key to driving change in society. By implementing and sustaining these suggestions, a nation can build a more inclusive, cohesive, and integrated society. Also, for democracy to strive in Nigeria, Nigerians must be democrat to the core by respecting democratic principles wholeheartedly, and not according to the Nigerian way of doing things (Daudu, 2020). Attitudinal crisis if properly tackled can guarantee and promote good governance in Africa and Nigeria in particular (Daudu, Osimen & Amodu, 2024). In the same vein, self-worth and self-reliant are required of Africans (Nigerians in particular) (Daudu, 2022) as well as patriotism and uncompromising justice as indispensable tools to solving Nigeria's national problems (Daudu, 2019). Little wonder Okpanachi (2022) argues that corruption, bad leadership and governance are obstacles to the national growth and development of Nigeria's economy.

Conclusion

The question of values and their role in national integration is a crucial issue in Nigeria, a country characterized by its rich cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity. As highlighted by numerous scholars, the challenge of fostering national integration amidst these diversities is both complex and pressing. Ethno-religious conflicts, corruption, regionalism, political and tribalism have all posed formidable obstacles to unity in Nigeria. However, it is clear that values can play a pivotal role in addressing these challenges and promoting national cohesion.

Efforts to promote national integration have been multifaceted, encompassing initiatives by government policies, non-governmental

organizations, and educational reforms. Government policies have the potential to shape the values and identities of citizens, fostering inclusivity and unity, ultimately well-crafted policies can bridge divides and encourage a sense of national belonging. Non-governmental organizations, often acting as intermediaries between different groups, have played a crucial role in promoting dialogue, understanding, and collaboration. Educational reforms that emphasize shared national history and values can instil a sense of unity among the younger generations in Nigeria.

Despite successful national integration initiatives, ongoing challenges remain, including historical grievances and deep-seated prejudices. Leadership, whether political, religious, or from civil society, plays a vital role in shaping values and promoting national integration. Therefore, a concerted effort is required to foster values of tolerance, understanding, and ethical conduct within society. By addressing these issues and implementing recommendations such as strengthening education, awareness, and anti-corruption measures, Nigeria can aspire to build a more inclusive, cohesive, and integrated nation.

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The Ethnicity Question in Nigeria: Matters Arising

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Abstract

It can hardly be contested that Africa is the most ethnically heterogeneous continent of the world and Nigeria provides a classic example of modern settlement challenge in Africa with the most variegated cultures, languages, religions, histories, interests, power play inter alia. This study therefore assesses the centrality of the ethnicity question within the larger context of national integration and development that the different ethnicities and people bring about. It does this by locating the problematic of ethnicity as one of the core questions that needs to be realistically addressed; if the efforts of nation building is to yield good fruits. The question is along the lines of how well there can be mutual understanding, trust, fairness/fair play and harmonious cooperation among the different groups that make up country. The paper uses the analytical and critical tools of philosophy to examine the nature, matrix and relevance of the ethnicity question in the contemporary equation where ethnic or tribal conjugation takes precedence over the drive towards national integration or nation building. This is a humble attempt to reconstruct the more or less academic discussions of the issue so as to move from rhetoric to reality; until this is done, in my considered view the nation will continue to experience so much of motion without movement.

Keywords: Ethnicity, State, Nation Building, Development, National Integration

Introduction

Ethnicity is one of the factors adduced for the inadvertent shaping or re-shaping of the history of African. It is true that a significant number of countries of the world are heterogeneous in ethnic composition, but Africa as a continent seems to be the most ethnically segmented continent of the world. The question of ethnicity therefore remains one of the persistent aspects of the changing social structure of the new and old nations of Africa. It is worthy of note that Nigeria provides a classic example of a modern state in Africa with much diverse and variegated ethnic elements as well as diverse ethnic- relations. Nigeria has about 250 ethnic grouping with disparate histories,language, customs, religions and myths of origin.

Sadly, the terms ethnic majorities and minorities have been adopted as important denominators to classify ethnic groups in Nigeria with implications for access and opportunities to available resources and developmental agenda for groups concerned. In Nigeria for instance, ethnicity has defied various provisions designed to eliminate its negative manipulation. Thus, ethnicity remains a salient problem in contemporary Nigeria with cries of marginalisation and the various nuances that connotes. It impedes socio-political and economic development, as ethnic conflicts can be more socially disastrous and nationally disintegrative. This paper sets out to examine the ethnicity question with a view of highlighting the nature and relevance of ethnicity as an important component as far as the developmental equation is concerned in Nigeria.

Ethnicity: Nature and Operation in Nigeria

It is actually disturbing to note that in contemporary Africa, there is no country that is not prone to chaos and anarchy as a result of bogey of ethnicity, and Nigeria is no exception. The concept of ethnicity is strongly tied to ethnic group that form the connection between society and culture. Ethnic group is used to designate the social group which sets itself apart from other groups on account of specific cultural trait, not only in a few details such as food, clothes but also in a complex of fundamental options (cosmogony, system of values and political organizations). Seen thus, ethnic group could be referred to as a nation.

In *Origin of the Nation State*, Correlia Navani states; a nation is commonly defined as a polity of homogenous people who share the same culture and the same language, and who are governed by some of their own number, who serve their interests J. S Mill remarked in 1849 that nationalism makes men indifferent to the rights and interest of any portion of human species save that which is called by the same name, and speaks the same language as them. Elaigwu(2011: 103-104) noted that nation refers to at least three categories of human groups. First, it may refer to a stable historically developed community of people within a territory, economic life, distinctive culture, and language in common. Second, it may refer to the people of a territory united under a single government; country or state. Third, a nation may refer to a people. The extract describes the organisation of ethnic groups in Nigeria. They have evolved over the centuries of diverse historical experience in different geographical regions, into a more recent and complex heterogeneity of nations with different languages and exclusive loyalties wrapped together

as Nigeria. Such is the situation of Nigeria where diverse politics are brought together to form the nation.

Nigeria is a country is made up of divergent ethnic groups, which are nations at their own levels. Each member of these various nations in the federal government represents the interests of its own group in the sharing of limited nations wealth. This boils down to ethnicity. "Cohen" (1959) refers to ethnicity as the strife between ethnic groups in the course of which people stress their own identity and their exclusiveness. "Ekhator", (2012: 43) describes ethnicityas a factor for belief in and loyalty to ones ethnic group as a symbol of identity, he further stressed that it is also a social phenomenon characterized by cultural prejudice, and social discrimination

In a similar vein, Devos (*cited* in Sanda 1976: 32) sees ethnicity as a form of separateness and instability in respect to question of dominance that easily leads to social conflict. What one gleans from such conceptions is the characterisation that is negative in terms of the emphasis on strife, conflict and instability. However, the concept has a positive aspect. Sanda (1976: 32) observes that it will seem misleading, to consider strife or conflict as the only manifestation of ethnicity; on the contrary conflict is only an aspect of ethnicity. For him, "ethnicity refers to the intensity of ethnic identity or the feelings of allegiance to ones ethnic groups". In this kind of understanding, feelings of identification and allegiance are highlighted. No wonder then Glazer and Moynihan (1975: 8) characterise the phenomenon of ethnicity as ethnic pride; that has the feelings of identification and allegiance that may lead to conflict and strife in the face of actors who draw attention to and manipulate their differences in the context of competition over access to local and natural resources. Hence,

Otite (1990: 60) "conceives ethnicity as the contextual discrimination by members of one group against the others on the basis of differentiated systems of socio-cultural symbols".

According to *Encarta World Dictionary* (2002), ethnicity is a universal human phenomenon which manifests itself in several forms and contexts and is variegated by the nexus of time and space. It encapsulates such terms that make possible the imagining of 'self' and 'other' within the praxis of cultural experience and difference. Yakubu (2000) states yet ethnicity is one ubiquitous category of human thought and transaction, which has for several centuries, largely determined and continues to determine the nature and substance of African development. Yakubu (2000) is of the view that ethnicity from time imemoral has continue to hamper african development.

Ethnicity, National Integration and Patriotism

In Nigeria, there are three major ethnic groups with other smaller ones; in fact, there is an overwhelming diversity of ethnicity in Nigeria diversity which prepared the way for ethnic problems. It is pertinent to note here that in spite of the glaring ethnic complexities, problems arising there from would remain at a controllable level if not for what one might consider acts of omission or commission resulting from the efforts to rule hitherto disparate groups from one political centre. In a word, the thesis is true that, the historical and socio-political differences in Nigeria were aggravated and made more formidable by the nature of colonial rule. Among the many factors, colonial rule initiated changes that compounded the ethnic question in Nigeria the constitutional reforms of the British administration. In 1914, Sir Friedrich Lugard carried out the amalgamation of Southern and Northern Nigeria. But while one could

speak of Nigeria from that date, the hard fact of the situation was that its unity existed only on paper. Administrative developments in both sections of the country continued to be distinct and independent.

Not only was the colonial structure culpable; in fact, the attitude of the immediate leaders of many African states left much to be desired. To this end, Ogbunwezeh (2005) has this to say "most of these states in Africa were created for imperial convenience. To that end, they were meant to serve a purpose after which their ontological legitimacy or *raison d' etre* would then expire. "At this expiration; the states, naturally not designed for self-propulsion; were condemned to tether on the brink, and finally implode upon the inglorious weight of their inherent contradictions. Colonialism designed and inspired the problems. But the decadence was then driven along by a horde of native pirates; trained in the fine art of piracy. These set of political actors were rogue personalities, weaned on selfishness". They were brilliant students of kleptocracy and political perversity. In about four decades they completely outclassed colonial perfidy and bested them in thievery. They did an inglorious job of mismanaging Africa, so much so that she is today the laughing stock of the world.

Furthermore, even in the present arrangement the tribal factor or ethnic colouration remains so significant to the extent that failure to appreciate it has cost the nation so much and this will warrant and justify an elaborate quotation from his work titled *Africa: The Ontology of Failed States*. Observes "that before the advent of colonialism, Africa was a large mass of land, populated by quasi-isolated tribal pockets, and ethnic nationalities. These constructs interacted with each other through trade,

intermarriage, and even wars. There were no states so to say. There were villages, kingdoms, empires and republican democracies. The Ashanti, the Kanem Bornu, The Ethiopian/Abyssinian, The Egyptian, The Benin, The Yoruba, etc were empires in their own rights. Ndigbo of Southern Nigeria had already fashioned a functional republican and egalitarian democracy in antiquity, while ancient Greece slumbered in primitivity".

These social embraces were characterized by singular political and culture centres within Africa sphere of influence. This gave rise to common identity, both lingual and cultural. They ran their societies on their own terms, save naturally, when conquered in wars. In spite of this, the cellular political unit of African life was the tribe. It was so basic, and yet so primordial. It transcends the clans, composed of families, to embrace a wider collection of clans. This presupposed common ancestral or cultural ties, dating to time immemorial. Most of these tribes pay allegiance to one heritage. It was a basis of social bonding. It was the influential factor in the political matrix of the African tribal community. This could be seen today, in the fact that politics in Africa, despite its affinities to Eurocentric-Judeo Christian vision of modernity, and to modern conceptions of democracy, still conjugates the tribal verb.

Politicians play the tribal card to advance their interests because they know that it is so primordial, and remains the major perceptual goggle, through which an African views reality. Democracy is real, when it patronizes his tribe, and the military junta becomes oppressive, when his tribe is short-changed. This runs through all African countries, without exception. This is what many fail to appreciate about the African situation. The tribe is the *Summumpuncti* of his political consideration. And every idea or ideal is canvassed from the tribal pedestal. To this end, when the

colonialists oscillated from blunder to arrant carelessness, in attempting to coax states out of these bunches of tribes, they naively failed to address the issue from the tribal angle.

Their metaphysic was exploitation, and not nation building. Whatever achieves that in the short run is patronized. And whatever runs contrary to it is eschewed.The colonial mission was never a charity concert designed to benefit Africa. No. It was an enterprise designed primarily to benefit the colonial power. Africa's benefit was never the propelling consideration. It comes last on the list. This was why the tribes were yanked together and conscripted without consultation, into unions they never bargained for; to bear each other like crosses, after the Whiteman must have had his fill of plundering their land.

Little accounts for the social restiveness and mutual platonic hatred ravaging many African states today, more than the resultant hangovers of colonial political play-offs. Almost all the Modern states in Africa today were built on political ontologies, oozing from this engineered political metaphysic. The people never dialogued their differences as a basis for federating. They never talked to each other about a political union. They woke up one morning, and saw themselves conscripted into geopolitical constructs they neither chose nor bargained for. For the natives, it was a bazaar of unfunny jokes, and for the colonial officers; a duty for country and queen.

Ethnic Chauvinism and Underdevelopment

Foundations once destroyed, what can the just do? The Scriptures asks rhetorically. Ogbunwezeh (2005) accentuates this point thus: Nigeria is principally a coalition of the unwilling. She is simply a coercion of the unwilling; a conscription of federated grievances; a boiling cauldron of mutually-assured platonic hatred, mutual suspicion, and collective bottled

loathing". To this end, nothing positive could ever be achieved on this platform of potentially explosive unease. No tribe believes in the goodwill of the other. Every tribe is of the worst opinion of the other. There is no good Igbo man as far as a Yoruba man is concerned and vice versa, even when that stereotypical generalization falls short of the laws of logic and thought, which should hold eminence and primacy in any rational postulation.

On this volatile base was erected a nation, which is most unfortunately expected to succeed. National success cannot be predicated upon a base of ontological instability. Hence the Nigerian dream was from conception, compromised and sabotaged to fail. All the attempts at salvaging an iota of sense from this boiling cauldron of dissensions, have failed woefully to avert the certain catastrophic disintegration, and disastrous implosion of this hegemonic geopolitical ogre, upon her inglorious weight.

Omorovie (2005:3) insists that ethnicity is a phenomenon that informs politics in Nigeria. In fact, public policy, education, electoral voting patterns and almost every aspect of life in Nigeria; ethnicity matters and is a factor in the Nigerian situation, for to overwrite it is to fail to understand the dynamics of contemporary Nigeria. Hence, the need to respond to the ethnicity factor creatively and channel it for positive growth and social health of the nation cannot be over emphasised. The desire to promote, protect, preserve and propagate ones ethnic identities, values is almost universal. Same author writes that in metropolitan cities like New York, we see this phenomenon clearly. Though people have travelled thousands of miles across the pacific and Atlantic to be in the United States; they always cherish a sense of identity with the locality, ethnicity and nationalities they come from. This is why various national

restaurants, groupings flourish. The desire to love ones ethnicity, locality, and nation is innate and is spontaneous. No one normally hates his own people even though he may criticise the evils of his people. It is possible that this love when not well harnessed and channelled could go beyond patriotism and lead to chauvinism, racism, bigotry, parochialism and ethnicism.

The social contract remains a crucial factor in understanding the claims and counter claims of ethnic dominance and marginalisation in Nigeria. The part played by the differences in views and characters of some nationalists in Nigeria's political scene is no less significant in the problem of ethnicity in Nigeria. Key figures as Sir Ahmodu Bello, Alhaji Tafawa Balewa, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo and their followers. These educated and leading nationalists were very decisive determinants of the tone and nature of inter group relations in Nigeria, from the days of early nationalism through independence up till the demise of the first republic. This was because these leaders had basic differences in origin, philosophies and general attitudes to issues.

Ethnicity as a bane of natural integration and patriotism has also been affected by the system of rewards pull. According to exponents of this view; Vickers and Kenneth (1973:8), it was a common desire to have the largest possible share in the benefits to be had through the Systems of Rewards which brought a degree of co-operation (or otherwise) between participants of rival cultural groups. Politicians felt that the distribution of electoral representation and of material resources and the use of political power rested on population figures the effect among the various ethnic groups therefore, was to produce as high as population figures as

possible.   Moreover, one notices that in the course of the competitions between individuals for jobs, political power and other benefits accruing from the system of rewards is the order of the day. This is being translated into competition for status among majority groups. The crucial question of who would share what and where is he/she from is the nagging problem of politics. It is particularly significant that it has melted into ethnic and regional conflicts. Here one very dangerous trend is the emergence of elite class and their manipulative tendencies in pursuance of parochial and selfish interests. Graf as quoted in Ujomu (2002) argues that the process of elite formation in Nigeria was contingent on their capacity to meet the demands of their various ethno-political constituencies. The situation compels the elite, and subjects them to cross pressure to divert or channel government resources to their ethnic and kinship groups. This situation arises because the elites need the support of these ethnic groups in order to remain in power. Such diversion and clientelism within the context of scarce national resources had to be accomplished at the expense of other elites' constituencies, thus, ensuring the permanence of conflicts over appropriation, resources and position within the country with telling consequences for the project of nation building and integration.

  No wonder then, Egwu (2000) states that the case of Nigeria illustrates quite vividly the collapse of the nation-state project. In Nigeria, the state has failed to manage effectively and imaginatively, the coexistence of multiple ethnicities in view of peaceful and progressive ends. The ruling elites have continued to employ ethnic and regional affiliations and mobilization in the struggle for state power. And Ujomu (2002) adds that one of the ways in which these leaders have engendered conflicts in the

society, is undermining the values of genuine national and ethical education.

From the foregoing, it seems clear that the development of ethnic problems progressed in different stages and was due to many factors. Basic underlying differences of cultural and historical nature provides the classical setting; British policies aggravated these differences and the personalities, philosophies of the key figures in the Nigerian political scene did not make the existing difference any less grave. Other important factors were the attitude of the politicians regarding the tempo of the nationalist activity and the competition amongst them for a paramount share in the system of rewards.

Together, these kept the embers of ethnic problems glowing, pervading all political issues and neutralising all efforts towards a social and political development. Kalu (2004) underscores same point poignantly thus: while the founding fathers of Nigeria established for themselves a congruent relationship between their own nation and the newly created state, the idea of *state* was imposed on the several nations within the geographical territory called Nigeria. And, although, the founding fathers of Nigeria's eventual political independence from Britain clearly articulated and even resented the idea of Nigerian unity, nonetheless these nationalists were enticed by the possibilities of winning independence and controlling the instrument of power offered by the western model of the state with its promises of economic growth and political stability based on the romantic expectation that "seeking first the political kingdom" would eventually result in the addition of everything else to the newly independent state including, perhaps, a united polity that

would transcend their primordial loyalties to legitimize the authority of the new leadership.

He argues further thus, the western state as an organized aggregate of relatively permanent institutions of governance, was neither entrenched as an institutionalized legal order in Nigeria nor was it respected as a framework for unifying the different aspirations of Nigeria's several nationalities. Rather, the state in most of Africa and particularly in the case of Nigeria became a material object hijacked for personal, class or group interests. Consequently, the current effort at democratic transitions and constitutional debate in Nigeria and much of it is both an effort to understand the concept of democracy and how it applies in Africa. Such understanding requires a clarification of the concept of state and government and their mutually reinforcing capacities for advancing the individual and collective interests of citizens in a particular state.

Answering the Ethnicity Question

The moral foundations of the Nigerian polity must provide rules for the harmonious and productive/beneficial blending of various conflicting interests of groups in the society, toward attaining the common good. Hence, there must be some visibly humane, just and mutually acceptable rules of co-operation, coexistence and interaction among the various groups within the Nigerian society. After all, there will always be healthy competitions and tensions as long as society remains and humans from various backgrounds live together (Ujomu, 2001).

For a just society to be entrenched, the need for ethnic justice is a proviso; as ethnic justice will demand the respect for the promotion of individual rights and also respect for collective rights as pertains to their

given social identity, ethnicity and corporate distinctiveness. Respect for human rights demands respect for people of all ethnicity; for ethnicity does not abrogate the rights of human beings as individuals. It rather enhances and consolidates those rights. In Awolowo's words as quoted in *The Ogoni Bill of Rights,* (article 20); "in a true federalism, each ethnic group, no matter how small is entitled to the same treatment as any other ethnic group, no matter how large". Kalu (2004) contends that in essence, then, the *state* as originally established in Europe was the center of social relations, which enforced allegiance to *national identity* over and above religious loyalty that competed for the attention of citizens. In this regard, Section 10 of Nigeria 1999 Constitution would be ideal in a political framework characterized by popular legitimacy and leadership accountability.

Thus, emphasizing national above religious or cultural identities, the organizational structure of the state would make it possible for the Nigerian state to act as a unifying factor for national integration and development. Such situations easily lend themselves to the establishment of national institutions such as the civil service and academic and industrial foundations for the development of the nation. For Europe, as it should be for Nigeria, such a state was not merely the means of keeping political order within the national society; it was a carrier of the scientific and industrial revolutions under-way in Europe as well as the engine of economic growth and social progress. Implicit in this idea of relationship between the state and the nations was the concept of civil society. In its framework the ethnic minorities could exist as social categories which could preserve their esoteric life-styles, their cuisines and their costumes.

But they could not function as groups and communities whom devised and lived by their own ideas and traditions of political rule and cultural organizations.

  Thus, if ethnic groups choose to be part of a states territorial boundaries, they could not then choose to live outside the sovereign states constitution, while enjoying the security rights provided by the state. Consequently and ideally, as the state performs its function as a platform for integration, it paves the way for all citizens -- majority and minority within the framework of government to participate in the process of nationbuilding without obstacles. In the process, the state will demand the highest quality of input from its citizens by institutionalizing the concept of *merit* as a criterion for employment. This would ensure that competent and qualified citizens are attracted and retained to serve the national interest. In the same context, the state through its constitution makes explicit provision for revenue allocation that ensures that all parts of the country are adequately integrated into the national policy agenda. Nigeria needs such policy priorities aimed at enhancing the collective goal to assuage the tensions in the ethnic minority regions as well as those that result from perceived marginalization by some segment of the Nigerian state.

          However, in Nigeria and for the sake of *Federal Balance*, government policies have tended to politicize national appointments rather than mitigate against ethnic consciousness. Successive governments have used this approach to intensify the negative aspects of ethnicity and embolden the perception of ethnic domination, exploitation and crass opportunism by the minority groups. Indeed, the various occupants of government positions, mostly from the northern region and

especially at the executive level have converted such status-conferring social standing from government employment into status-honour to the detriment of national unity. It is clear that ethnicity, without politics and the harnessing of scarce economic resources, is atavistic. In multiethnic states like Nigeria, ethnicity comes alive as the basis for a politicized search for redistribution of scarce resources, which are almost always contentious. Although European expansionism encouraged ethnic sentiments in states like Nigeria by nurturing peoples' differences rather than their similarities; ethnicity is neither immutable nor inherently conflictual. Ethnicity is like a two-side sword, it tends to be the basis for communal identity and security (primordialism); but, it is also a basis for exclusionary practices (instrumentalism), which sometimes result in conflict.

Summary and Conclusion

It is the case that we live in a world where difference matters, and difference as in the case of human existence has been conceptualised along lines of ethnic configurations, race, religious affiliation, gender lines. It becomes inevitable and inescapable affirmation of our human existence. Beyond the cosmetic approach in dealing with the question of ethnicity in Nigeria; until the problem of ethnic oppression or marginalisation is addressed in a manner that the nation can still lay claim of patriotism from all her citizens, then the nation-state called Nigeria will remain a scalar quantity with so much of magnitude without positive direction. Ezeanya (2009) writes thus: whenever a people lack a realistic nationalistic ideology and consciousness that bind them together as one entity, they very ordinarily fall back to other stronger ties. The United

States of America, large a country as it is and with widely varied ethnic and nationalist groups strongly believes in the greatness of their country whereby every person thinks of what to do for the country and not what the country would do for the person. They do so because the country is ready to go to any length in protecting their interests as citizens. The situation in Nigeria is there is lack of such realistic ideology and so it is common to find people comfortably falling back along ethnic lines rather than believe in the strange-bed-mates they are under as a country. Consequently, politicking, voting, appointments and announcements are coloured by ethnic bias as people are chosen not for any meaningful and beautiful manifestoes but for the place of origin, tribe and tongue.

In Ezeanya's thinking, the former anthem of Nigeria was more realistic than the present one as it contained a phrase that says "though tribe and tongue may differ in brotherhood we stand", but some mischievous but influential statesmen rejected it on the ground that they do not want to be reminded of their tribes and tongues; yet the tribes and tongues are cankerworm that chiefly destroys the country till date. They now prefer to say "arise o compatriots Nigeria's call obey". Nigerians ordinarily do not obey this call as to begin to love Nigeria because they do not find any security or future in the union. It is not an egalitarian state. People, however, love Nigeria only for the exploitation they would make of it and the "national cake" they hope to cut from the country's rich resources to the detriment of people from other ethnic or geographic affiliations. Even the people in government who swore to be protecting the national call often never obey this call!

According to Kalu (2004), the question is whether the government is capable of managing ethnic relations and the legitimate rules

(constitution) used to direct and guide such interactions and processes. Obviously, the Military autocrats imposed the 1999 Constitution on Nigerians and thus, even with its revisions, the constitution remains largely irrelevant to the masses and to the management of ethnic relations in the country. As already noted, ethnic group strategy is usually aimed at securing scarce economic resources from the central government, which by arrogating more power to itself encourages the use of ethnic identities by elites to manipulate demands on the state. Consequently, irrespective of the claims of the preamble in "We the people," there is nothing fundamentally democratic about the 1999 Nigerian Constitution. For example, the six-week time frame allocated to the Constitution Debate Coordinating Committee (CDCC) in 1998 to draft a new Constitution for Nigeria is evidence of the extent to which the Nigerian leadership misunderstands the enormity of the responsibility of the transition from military rule to civilian government for Nigeria and Nigerians. In contrast to General Abdulsalami's 1999 Constitution, a process-led constitution that is capable of serving as a framework for managing ethnic relations is characterized by dialogue, consultation, debates and open involvement of various civil service organizations, labour unions, student groups, intellectuals, market women and the general masses.

Against such back drop, Ogbunwezeh (2005) posits that failed states were the culmination of a process, which manipulated social, cultural and political variables. Under this scenario, the state is a festival of dysfunctions, which can never as it is, connect towards navigating an exit out of the social questions, engendered by the failure. Since this was a process, it could be untangled. First of all as in the case of Nigeria, we

should undertake a study into the circumstances that gave birth to this conscription of federations, called Nigeria; which has degenerated into a geopolity of federated grievances. This study must then be laced with a political will to ventilate our anger and aspirations, as a people in a broadly representative national dialogue. This will create an essential arena, for forging alliances and agreements on whether we want to paddle along this national canoe, as a unit, or not. This agreement is the fundamental key towards unravelling our failed State in other to rescue it from its aimless spin towards social implosion.

Every other issue, like the repressed anger and bottled dissensions of the ethnic nationalities, would be redirected into propelling energies of social renewal. Agreement has been the fundamental bond that creates coalitions of willing agents that can shoulder their collective destiny together, through thick and thin. Once an agreement or semblance of it is absent, the whole social structure is patronized with a lackadaisical dereliction from all participants in its concourse.Such a process can also benefit from the experiences in constitution-making of countries like Eritrea, Uganda, Ghana and South Africa where the involvement of the citizens at large produced truly sovereign and protective constitutions for their respective countries. Beyond the foregoing, securing popular legitimacy for the constitution requires that those charged with drafting a new constitution be perceivable as honest and capable individuals. Members of the constitution drafting committee must be (a) committed to constitutionalism, (b) have the resources to carry out their assignments, (c) establish viable mechanisms for taking the draft constitution to the people and (d) ensure that the process ends peacefully with the people voting for or against the adoption of the draft constitution. Such an

inclusive process will transfer ownership of the constitution to the people-
-the legitimate foundation upon which the government derives its power.
In such a situation, ethnic conflicts are not likely to completely atrophy,
but the popularly legitimized constitution will facilitate the provision of
acceptable routes to conflict resolutions through the democratic process
(Kalu, 2005).

In conclusion, this paper has shown that the problem of ethnicity
has had immense impact on the unity, security and progress of the
Nigerian nation. While ethnicity cannot be ruled out from the social and
historical reality of the Nigerian project which is an uneasy amalgamation
of cultures and groups lacking in unity and national consciousness.
Nigeria as a conglomeration of many ethnic groups had and continues to
experience manipulation by self serving leaders and elites to the detriment
and disadvantage of the larger populace. Thus, puts in danger the very
core resources the elites exploit and extort; the need for negotiation or
renegotiation is critical and pertinent.

The ethnicity question simply boils down to the extent to which
an average young man in Anyigba or in any other part of Nigeria really
perceives himself or herself as a Nigerian outside the requirement to
filling forms! The idea here is consistent with calls in several quarters for
the initiation of social and political process which will ensure the
renegotiation of the basis, and the principles that will underlie human
social existence in Nigeria. Its merit is in the position that the only
partnership that is or can be enduring, stable and viable is one in which
all participants are happy, satisfied and have a sense of belonging,
(*African Research Bulletin* 2000, as quoted in Ujomu, 2021). This is in

view of establishing an institutional platform with clear and acceptable constitutional rules which will largely determine the impact of ethnicity on the political economy of Nigeria since ethnicity is more of a political phenomenon than cultural in Nigeria.

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Establishing the Dignity of Disabled People through Theatre for Development: Karol Wojtyla's Theory as Praxis Godwin Onuche & Reuben Chimaobi Adama

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Abstract

The World Disability Report has confirmed that approximately 25 million Nigerians are experiencing various forms of disabilities. Notably, within the African continent, out of an estimated 84 million People With Disabilities (PWDs), 29% of them can be found in Nigeria. Unfortunately, individuals with disabilities often face marginalization and neglect due to challenges they experience, both physical and mental. In Nigeria, there remains lack of widespread awareness about the importance of respecting the dignity of every human being, especially those living with disabilities. The study adopts qualitative research methodology using interviews as research instrument. Given this context, this paper aims at revealing the potential of Theatre for Development (TfD) as a means to raising awareness about the struggles faced by individuals living with various disabilities. It builds upon Karol Wojtyla's perspective, which emphasizes the necessity of recognizing individuals beyond their physical limitations to restore their inherent dignity. The paper concludes that TfD can serve as a powerful tool for educating the public on fostering mutual respect among individuals, transcending their physical and mental challenges.

Keywords: Praxis, Dignity, Disabled, Theatre,TfD .

Introduction

When the term "Theatre" is mentioned, it typically evokes thoughts of "Entertainment" or a "venue for performances." However, good theatre extends far beyond mere entertainment or the physical structures in which it takes place, contrary to common misconceptions. It is only in recent times that the study of theatre arts has gained prominence in intellectual discussions. It's essential to recognize that the art of theatre shares a fundamental connection with all forms of learning, especially concerning humanity's capacity to inquire, marvel, and contemplate within the context of the societal milieu. This paper, in light of such reflections, endeavors to delve into the potential of theatre for development as a means to raise awareness about the challenges faced by individuals living with disabilities in Nigeria. For instance, the Equality Act (2010) and Disability Discrimination Act (1995) define a disabled person as someone with a physical or mental impairment that substantially and persistently hampers their ability to carry out daily activities (https://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance). Despite these adverse effects, many disabled individuals possess considerable potential to contribute to the nation's economic progress.

Disabled individuals frequently encounter a plethora of challenges, and yet it is crucial to recognize that they are as much creations of God as anyone else. Therefore, there is a pressing need to acknowledge that there is "Ability in Disability." It is evident that many people have yet to fully grasp the potential of disabled individuals and should extend them the respect accorded to all responsible human beings. Persons with disabilities are often subjected to various forms of humiliation due to their

physical and mental challenges. It's important to note that many physically challenged individuals are not responsible for their ailments or predicaments.

In light of these considerations, it is imperative that we exhibit compassion and empathy towards disabled individuals. Even those who show kindness and mercy to individuals with disabilities often do so from a charitable or religious perspective, believing that their acts will be rewarded in the afterlife. The crises and difficulties faced by people with disabilities have prompted both government and non-governmental organizations to enact laws aimed at safeguarding their interests. Unfortunately, there has been limited progress in this regard in Nigeria. For example, the enactment of the Disability Inclusion Right law stands as a crucial prerequisite for upholding the human rights and dignity of individuals with disabilities. This law is a fundamental part of the initiatives aimed at realizing the 2030 sustainable development goals. Aligned with the commitments outlined in the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development, which seeks to ensure that no one is left behind, the pledge to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities is not just an issue of justice or benevolence but an investment in a shared humanitarian future.

The absence of humanitarian services has presented an unprecedented and formidable challenge over the years to people living with disabilities. This challenge is one of the factors that drove the United Nations to establish the Disability Inclusion Strategy in June 2019. This strategy serves as the bedrock for achieving sustainable and transformative progress in disability inclusion across all areas of the

United Nations' work (https://www.un.org/observances). As evident from the preceding discussion, it is clear that individuals in many developing countries around the world contend with various forms of disabilities. Consequently, there is a compelling need to raise awareness and sensitize the general populace to be more conscious of and respectful toward the rights of disabled persons. These individuals possess inherent potential that should neither be trivialized nor ignored. Equally important is the message that disabled individuals should not view themselves as inferior or diminish their selfworth in the eyes of others. Just like any other human being on this planet, persons with disabilities are entitled to respect and dignity.

Treating disabled individuals with contempt or disrespect is a deviation from the norms of a compassionate and equitable society, and it should not be tolerated. The central proposal of this paper is to advocate for the sensitization of the masses through the pedagogy of the Theatre for Development Approach (TfD). This approach is seen as the key solution to fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of the challenges and potential of disabled persons, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and compassionate society.

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the philosophical principles of Karol Wojtyla, particularly his theory on the absolute respect for the human person. Wojtyla's postulations emphasize the inherent and unassailable dignity of the human person, a concept that cannot be violated or taken away. According to Wojtyla (1969), the term "person" extends to all human beings, encompassing those who may not possess certain cognitive or volitional capacities. This includes individuals such as the human

embryo, those with severe disabilities, the elderly with disabilities, and even those in a "persistent" or "permanent vegetative state". Wojtyla's philosophy underscores the importance of not ignoring or treating individuals with disdain based on their abilities or disabilities. This perspective aligns with the ideas of John Dewey and the Modern Humanist Movement, who advocated for the sanctity and instrumental value of the human person. These principles, encapsulated in the Humanist Manifesto of 1993, have had a global impact and influenced the works of many thinkers, including Wojtyla.

Wojtyla's view is that human dignity is not something that is earned or derived from external sources, talents, or actions. Rather, every human being possesses inherent dignity simply because of their existence. A person's worth is not contingent on any external factors; it is fundamentally rooted in the fact that they exist. This perspective underscores the profound and universal value of every human being, regardless of their circumstances or abilities. It serves as a powerful call to respect and uphold the dignity of every individual, affirming the importance of their existence. Karol Wojtyla's philosophical perspective is clear and powerful in emphasizing the fundamental importance of the being and nature of the human person. According to his postulations, it is not the activities or abilities of individuals that are of primary significance but rather the intrinsic being and nature of each person. In this view, human dignity is not contingent upon a person's actions, thinking, or cognitive capacities, but it is rooted in their very existence.

Wojtyla asserts that a person's worth is not determined by their

thinking abilities or aptitude for intellectual pursuits; instead, it is defined by their essential being, which is characterized by rationality. As a result, all individuals who possess human nature are considered persons and should be recognized and respected accordingly. The current study benefits from Wojtyla's philosophy by emphasizing the need for unwavering respect for every human person, including those with disabilities. It underscores the principle that human beings have inherent dignity simply because they exist. This perspective is essential in advocating for the rights and respect of disabled individuals, as it emphasizes the intrinsic worth of all individuals, irrespective of their abilities or disabilities. In Wojtyla's framework, it is not what a person can or cannot do that matters most; it is their essential being as a rational human being that warrants respect and recognition.

The Trajectory of Theatre for Development in the Middle-Belt Region of Nigeria

James Alachi played a prominent role in introducing Theatre Arts into the NCE (Nigeria Certificate in Education) programs at the College of Education in Katsina-Ala, Benue State. Incidentally, this college was the first to offer an NCE Theatre Arts program in Nigeria in 1980. One of the core focus areas of the program was Community Theatre, which is synonymous with TfD. This demonstrates the pioneering efforts and impact of individuals and institutions in fostering the growth and development of Theatre for Development in Nigeria, particularly in the Benue Valley region. Alachi further highlights the important figures who have contributed to the development and leadership of TfD programs in Nigeria. Steve Abah and Jenks Okwori assumed leadership roles in advancing the program following the work initiated by Micheal Etherton.

Notably, one region where TfD has thrived as both an academic discipline and a development tool is the Benue Valley. The experiences of TfD in Benue and Kogi States were significantly shaped by the 1977 Wasan Manoma project.

Tar Ahura emerges as another significant figure who made notable contributions to Theatre for Development (TfD) in Nigeria. He transitioned from the Ministry of Education in Makurdi, Benue State, to join the academic staff at the College of Education in Katsina-Ala. Together with fellow staff members in Katsina-Ala, including Jonathan Okpanachi and I. Mude, Tar Ahura played a pivotal role in advancing TfD practices in the North geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Their collaborative efforts and dedication were instrumental in successfully guiding the program at the Katsina-Ala College of Education. These individuals, through their involvement and leadership, contributed to the growth and impact of TfD in the region. James Alachi's commitment to the advancement of Theatre for Development (TfD) extended to his role in developing the B.A. Theatre Arts program at Benue State University in Makurdi. Importantly, he integrated TfD as a core component of the program's activities. Over time, TfD has not only thrived as an academic program at the university but has also been collaboratively used by both faculty and students in the Department, as well as by international agencies such as the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and Partnership for Transforming Health Systems (PATHS), among others, as a tool for development.

It's worth noting that with the creation of Kogi State, the College of Education in Ankpa was established by the state government. The

Department at the new college essentially adopted the academic programs and TfD activities from the College of Education in Katsina-Ala. Staff members, who relocated to Ankpa, under the leadership of Jonathan Okpanachi, continued their TfD activities. Notable among the team that transitioned from the College of Education in Ankpa to Kogi State University to continue with TfD activities were A.D. Menegbe and W.S. Onogwu. Currently, both the College of Education in Ankpa and the Kogi State University TfD teams have organized workshops in over 23 communities across Kogi State, making significant contributions to community development and awareness.

Pedagogy of Theatre for Development

The practice of Theatre for Development (TfD) as a means of development communication and progress emerged in Africa following the attainment of political independence in many nations on the continent. The pedagogy of TfD revolves around crafting messages that genuinely reflect the reality of the people as perceived by the people themselves. This often entails an in-depth analysis of issues that lead to changes in attitudes, achieved through self-examination and situation analysis conducted by the people themselves, rather than being influenced by external persuasions or orders.

It is concerning and heartrending that some individuals living with disabilities have yet to fully grasp or analyze their own situations, which is crucial for them to recognize their inherent potentials. As Doki & Boh (2019: 42) asserts, "through Theatre for Development, people gain the capacity to share, enhance, and analyze their understanding of life and their circumstances. Subsequently, they can plan, take action, monitor progress, and evaluate issues affecting them". Drawing from Doki's

perspective, it becomes apparent that TfD is one of the strategies that can be effectively employed to raise awareness and consciousness about people living with disabilities. Furthermore, TfD can be harnessed to empower individuals with disabilities to better analyze and understand their lives and conditions, fostering a sense of courage to confront life's challenges without seeing themselves as disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals. This approach holds the potential to promote self-confidence, determination, and resilience among individuals with disabilities.

It is crucial to recognize that a significant influence on the pedagogy of Theatre for Development (TfD) was Paulo Freire, a Brazilian cultural and educational theorist and practitioner known for his emphasis on raising the consciousness and awareness of people. In his work, Doki reflects on Freire's perspective, noting that Freire (1970) believed that people, particularly those who have been oppressed and marginalized, acquire knowledge through their life experiences. However, they are often manipulated by oppressors to believe that their knowledge is insignificant and that they themselves are ignorant. This observation resonates with the situation faced by many people living with disabilities, who are indeed often oppressed and marginalized, particularly those who lack access to education. Disabled individuals are frequently excluded from the provision of social facilities in public spaces, such as public schools that are often built without consideration for the physically challenged. This highlights the pressing need for individuals with disabilities to gain knowledge about themselves, understand their capabilities, and advocate for greater recognition and acceptance. TfD, with its emphasis on

obtaining knowledge through personal experiences, becomes a valuable tool in this regard.

Freire's (1970) educational philosophy also underscores the importance of education in enabling people to trust their own perceptions, particularly concerning critical issues. This trust should be fostered through dialogue that is centered on the people themselves. In the context of a society driven by capitalism, the questions naturally arise: How many disabled individuals in Nigerian society have access to education? Is their well-being considered in the construction of public schools and facilities? This situation further exacerbates the challenges faced by disabled individuals in many developing countries like Nigeria. Addressing these issues becomes a crucial aspect of promoting inclusivity, equality, and human dignity for all members of society, including those living with disabilities.

Theatre for Development (TfD) is inherently people-oriented, as it encourages individuals to become aware of their own realities and to create knowledge that serves their own interests. This aligns with Paulo Freire's concept of the "Theatre of the Oppressed," a form of popular theater created and performed by the people themselves, for the people. This kind of theatre can be a powerful tool to draw more attention to individuals with disabilities, promoting greater awareness of people's actions and attitudes toward them. This heightened awareness has the potential to alleviate the challenges faced by disabled individuals. If the strategy of Community Theatre for Development is adopted and effectively executed, it can lead to a reconsideration of inhumane treatment and attitudes towards those living with disabilities.

Lawal(2015) underscores the essence of community theatre, also known as Theatre for Development, as a practice where theatre is used to serve the disadvantaged, whether they are in rural or urban areas. Its purpose is to facilitate discussions and the development of strategies for addressing their socio-economic conditions. In the context of this discussion, the disadvantaged group includes people living with disabilities in Nigerian society, who often face neglect and indifference. Given these circumstances, this paper advocates for the use of Theatre for Development as an approach to raise consciousness among the public, ultimately addressing the critical issues that affect disabled individuals in Nigerian society. By engaging the community through theatre, it is possible to foster greater empathy, understanding, and support for those with disabilities, thereby working towards a more inclusive and compassionate society.

Indeed, it is crucial for disadvantaged individuals, including those with disabilities, to develop consciousness of oppression and to resist various forms of marginalization in their daily lives. Augusto Boal's concept of the "Theatre of the Oppressed" (1993) is specifically designed to help people learn how to resist oppression and take action in their daily existence. It is therefore the right time to consider Theatre for Development (TfD) as a powerful strategy for promoting self-expression, consciousnessraising, awareness, personal development, and collective empowerment.

As Doki (2019) points out, Boal introduced a set of methods and guidelines to stimulate discussion and audience participation in theatre a practice he referred to as "Forum Theatre." In this approach, theatre is not

seen merely as a spectacle but as a vehicle for expression that encourages critical thinking by analyzing and discussing social issues. The treatment and dehumanization of people living with disabilities are significant social problems in Nigeria that require immediate attention. Theatre for Development is proposed as a platform through which individuals can learn to explore collective solutions to social challenges. It offers them opportunities to express their views, learn effective ways of communicating difficult emotions and situations, and experiment with different behaviors and social situations. This approach enables individuals, including those living with disabilities, to gain a voice and actively participate in discussions and actions aimed at improving their circumstances and challenging societal injustices. It empowers them to advocate for change and promotes a more inclusive and compassionate society.

Overview on the Plight of Disabilities

It is undeniably true that people living with disabilities in Nigeria often face stigmatization and are frequently overlooked in the country's social, economic, and political affairs. Many of Nigeria's social institutions have failed to implement comprehensive programs designed to enhance the quality of life for individuals with disabilities. Joseph Abiodun Balogun aptly describes the plight of these individuals as "visible but invisible people," a statement that reflects the empathy for the marginalized and the recognition of their seemingly overlooked and excluded status in Nigeria's societal framework.

Balogun's observation highlights the fact that these individuals are often treated as though they are mere living mortals without due recognition and dignity. Even in situations where some recognition is

extended to them along with minimal assistance, the providers of such assistance might expect excessive gratitude, as if disabled people are not entitled, by their own right, to a better quality of life. This situation is indeed disheartening and calls for corrective measures. Therefore, there is an urgent need for greater information and awareness campaigns to sensitize the masses to the fact that we are all human beings with equal rights and should be accorded equal respect. Promoting a more inclusive and compassionate society, where individuals with disabilities are treated with dignity and granted the same rights and opportunities as others, is a shared responsibility that requires concerted efforts from all members of society. It is a fundamental principle of human rights and social justice.

Living with a disability can be an exceptionally challenging experience, especially in developing countries like Nigeria. Employment opportunities often prove elusive for individuals with disabilities, and they encounter numerous barriers to securing work. As reported by Onajobi (2023), the story of Enoch Chilombo, an orphan from Malawi with mobility impairment, sheds light on the difficulties faced by individuals with disabilities. Chilombo's life was marked by early tragedy, as he lost his parents at a young age, leaving him to rely on the support of extended family members. Despite his disability, he was determined to overcome obstacles and make the most of his life. Chilombo pursued education with the hope of gaining employment to support himself after graduating. He successfully obtained a Bachelor's degree in music, a testament to his dedication and resilience. However, despite his qualifications and determination, Chilombo faced significant challenges in securing employment.

Many employers hesitated to hire him due to his disability, presuming that he would be unable to perform specific tasks. This discriminatory treatment and stigmatization persisted, leaving Chilombo feeling isolated and frustrated. He experienced this discrimination because he was not given the opportunity to showcase his potential, despite his disability. Chilombo's story serves as a powerful reminder of the barriers faced by individuals with disabilities in accessing education and employment opportunities. It underscores the importance of creating a more inclusive and equitable society that recognizes and harnesses the talents and capabilities of all its members, regardless of their physical or mental challenges.

The experiences of individuals like Chilombo and AkpaJemilu shed light on the pervasive issue of discrimination against people with disabilities in many African countries, including Nigeria. It is disheartening to see that employers often overlook the abilities and potential of disabled individuals and instead focus on their physical appearance. This prejudice and bias, often rooted in societal stereotypes, hinder the employment prospects of disabled persons. However, Chilombo's and Akpa's stories also emphasize the undeniable fact that there is indeed "ability in disability." People with disabilities possess unique skills, talents, and capabilities that can contribute significantly to the workforce and society at large. This underscores the pressing need for awareness campaigns aimed at changing societal attitudes and perceptions, with Theatre for Development (TfD) being a valuable tool for this purpose.

AkpaJemilu's personal experience in the education system underscores the lack of accessibility and consideration for physically

challenged individuals in many aspects of life, including architecture and infrastructure. His journey, marked by challenges and discrimination, highlights the importance of addressing these issues at all levels of education, from primary to tertiary institutions.Akpa's (2023) perspective on respect is also valuable. He emphasizes the significance of disabled individuals taking the initiative to showcase their potential and communicate their aspirations to others. Building self-confidence is crucial for countering disrespect and discrimination. Akpa's recognition that disability can encompass both physical and inner or mental aspects underscores the complexity of these challenges and the importance of fostering resilience and determination among disabled individuals.

In summation, Chilombo's and Akpa's (2023) stories serve as a compelling call to action for greater inclusivity, respect, and equal opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Raising awareness, changing attitudes, and advocating for accessibility and fairness in all areas of life are essential steps in creating a more equitable and compassionate society. Akpa's perspective on the issue of stereotyping and prejudice against individuals with disabilities is both insightful and important. Stereotyping is a common and harmful practice that often leads people to make snap judgments based on a person's physical appearance or disability, rather than evaluating their competence and abilities. Akpa's experience, where he mentioned his ability to handle a microphone as a Master of Ceremony (M.C), but is seldom given the opportunity to showcase his talent, is a clear example of how stereotyping can limit opportunities for disabled individuals. These preconceived notions and biases can result in missed chances for disabled individuals to contribute

their skills and talents to various fields, including public speaking and event hosting.

Akpa's (2023) message is clear and significant: people should refrain from judging individuals with disabilities based solely on their physical appearance. Instead, they should take the time to evaluate their competence, skills, and potential. Recognizing the diverse capabilities of disabled individuals and providing them with opportunities to demonstrate their talents is essential for creating a more inclusive and equitable society. It is a call for the elimination of stereotypes and the promotion of equal opportunities for all, regardless of their physical or mental challenges. Akpa's (2023) advice to the Nigerian government regarding the issue of accessibility is both pragmatic and compassionate. He rightly points out that accessibility should be a general concern for the government because the potential for disability is universal. Anyone, regardless of their current physical condition, can find themselves with a disability due to unforeseen circumstances, such as accidents, which are unfortunately common on Nigerian roads.

Akpa's (2023) message serves as a reminder that while no one wishes for accidents or disabilities, they can happen to anyone at any time. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the government and non-governmental organizations to proactively address these concerns by implementing accessibility measures and facilities. By doing so, they can ensure that individuals living with disabilities have equal opportunities, independence, and the ability to participate fully in society. Creating accessible environments not only benefits individuals with disabilities but also enhances the overall inclusivity and quality of life for everyone. It is a call for foresight and social responsibility to make the nation more

accommodating and supportive of all its citizens, regardless of their physical abilities.

Summary and Conclusion

This study promotes the concept of respect for disabled individuals through the pedagogy of Theatre for Development (TfD). By using this approach, the study aims to raise awareness and understanding among those who may be unaware of the importance of respecting and recognizing the dignity of disabled persons. The central message is that people living with disabilities are, first and foremost, human beings who possess inherent worth simply by existing. This study makes a strong and poignant conclusion: that discrimination against individuals with disabilities is not only unjust but also constitutes a violation of the principles of nature and humanity. Such discrimination is deemed a crime and should be eliminated from a rational and compassionate society. The study underscores the importance of creating a more inclusive and respectful environment for all individuals, regardless of their physical or mental abilities, as a fundamental ethical and moral imperative. As such, there is need to grow more awareness and respect for disabled people through theatre for development using Wojtyla's principles.

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Infertility as Predictor of Marital Disharmony among Married People in Igala-land

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between infertility and marital disharmony among married persons in Igala land in Kogi state. A cursory look at many Igala childless home revealed that they are riddled with marital crises. Thus, this work is a descriptive survey. The population of the study is 1020 childless male and female Igala married persons. Purposive sampling and a sample of 108 was used for the study. The krijche and morgan sample specification was used for the sampling. Mean and standard deviation were used for answering the research question, the hypothesis of the study was subjected to the independent t-test at 0.05. Finding of the study revealed significant relationship between infertility and marital disharmony. The work recommended that couples should be patient with one another as children are God's gift. Couples should also embrace the use of IVF as an alternative means to child bearing.

Keywords: Infertility, Marital disharmony, Predictor, Married people, Igalaland

Introduction

Igala tribe is a socio-cultural group among the settlers within the confluence of the two Nigerian rivers of Niger and Benue. James (2018)

affirmed that the tribe belongs to the Kwa sub-group of languages with enormous characteristics of Bantu sub-group of the same Niger-congo. The Igala speaking people is situated in today's Kogi state in the middle-Belt region of Nigeria, and is in fact the largest ethnic group in the state (Usman, 2013). The 1991 population census of Nigeria projected the Igala population to approximately two (2) million people. The Igala ethnic nationality is about the 8th largest ethnic group of the over 250 ethnic nationalities in Nigeria, (FRN, 2006). Igala is the name of the people as well as their language. "Abo-Igala" meaning, People of Igala with common ancestral origin.

The Igala speaking people attach considerable recognition to marriage and its practices, similarly, Aiyetan & Kolapo (2005) posit that in most culture, tradition and religion, mature men and women are considered to be incomplete without a spouse, except those on religious obligations that have decided to completely abstain from any sexual relationship, such as the reverend fathers and sisters and chief priests of some traditional deities and goddesses. Thus (James, 2018) admonishes that it is culturally important for every Igala sons and daughters to get married to the opposite sex who are not related by blood. This practice is considered to be a lifelong commitment to each other signified by contracts and sanctioned by couples, their parents and the society.

Marrying in Igala tradition and customs is an honour and custom fulfilment to the celebrants, the family circle and the society. This orientation is captured in the opinion of Hurton and Hunt (1964) & James (2017) they informed that, "Marriage is an approved social pattern whereby two or more persons of opposite sex establish a family. Marriage to the Igala person therefore, it is tied to their cultural, religious and

purposeful commitment. Traditionally, marriage in the Igala speaking tribe is based on gender relation that prescribed the leadership of the husband over the wife. It is sacred, voluntary and permanent, enacted to be of mutual agreement.

In the Igala context, marriage is seen basically as a process of procreation and as such a successful marriage guarantee peaceful and joyful atmosphere in the home which is most suitable for bringing up healthy and happy children. In general terms, the cardinal focus of every married person with the Igala tribe inclusive is to give birth to young ones who will take after them. Okon, (2010), therefore, affirms that it is a stable relationship in which a man and woman are socially permitted without loss of standing in community to have children. This justifies that in every marriage, the cardinal point is for procreation, and that completes the joy and harmony in the matrimonial home. This assertion proof that, marriage is meant to be enjoyed and not endured. It is endured, when marriage is plagued with uncertainties, infertility and marital crises. It becomes a mirage, when the relationship is beclouded with uncertainty. The desire to give birth to children in conjunction to this belief is universal. Succinctly, in Africa, and the Igala speaking area, there exists the belief that given birth to children is the demonstration of the consummation of marriage. Thus, procreation of children is deemed important in the Igala speaking area because, it is expected that, the children keeps the family lineage running, most especially male children. Thus, Miller (2011) says most people rates childless couples are significantly less fulfilled than men and women with children. To the Igala person, possession of children is status symbol or personified. This function is normative as other intention to marriage is secondary. This is in fulfilment to Gods command in the holy

books, (the Bible, the Quran and traditional beliefs), in Genesis chapter 1 vs 28, God says "be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it". The Quran admonishes that Allah created men and women so that so that they can provide company and to love one another, procreate children and live in peace and tranquillity to the commandments of Allah and the tradition of his Messenger, prophet Muhammed. (SAW). (Quran, 30 vs 21).In a situation of infertility in marriage, sharia permitted polygamous marriage. Succinctly, women are naturally averse to polygamy, thus, prompting marital disharmony. In the biblical concept from the Old Testament (Holy Bible, Genesis Chapter; 2 vs 24), equally clarifies that marriage involves spiritual, emotional and physical closeness, hence a common biblical saying that "a man shall leave his parents and shall cleave unto his wife and become one flesh" to multiply the world as started by Adam and Eve. Similarly, (Holy Bible, Genesis, Chapter; 2vs 18-22), asserts that, the family which is a product of marriage provide the basis for the building of the society.

This commandment runs short of expectation, as some are unable to fulfil this obligation as some could not get married, or married without children as a result of inability to impregnate a woman or the woman's inability to conceive a baby over a twelve months' period despite regular unprotected sexual intercourse after marriage. However, whatsoever contradicts this aim is tantamount to anarchy and disharmony in the marital domain. A major contributory factor to the matrimonial unrest is the unmet fertility found in either of the couple.

Infertility and Marital Disharmony

Those that are married for over one or two years without pregnancy or a fruit of marriage are considered to be infertile for one reason or the other.

Thus, infertility is the inability to achieve pregnancy after a year of regular sexual relations or the inability to carry a pregnancy to a live birth. Christopher, (2020), put that the effect of infertility was driven primarily by feelings of moral outrage, anger, disapproval and disgust towards the childless couples. Infertile individual experienced greater dissatisfaction among themselves and their marriages. This situation is sometimes attributed to women even when the man is to be blamed. And this usually results to a major conflict in most marriages. Should one of the couple become fed up with the situation and decide to have children outside the marital home, it frequently results in marital disharmony.

A common condition of female infertility is an inability to get pregnant and have a successful pregnancy. This is typically designed after a woman has tried to get pregnant through an unprotected sex for twelve months without success. Like other tribes, the Igala speaking people have related factors that are linked to woman's risks of female infertility. These include general health conditions, genetic or inherited traits, life style choices, age, evil attack; spiritual husband (Oko-Ikpakshi), long term infections and misdemeanor of abortion are all contributing factors to infertility among women. Likewise, the males are not left out of been link to infertility. Men who cannot impregnate a woman are considered to be infertile. This condition are considered to emanate from genetic aberration such as low sperm count (oligospermia), inability to produce sperm (azoospermia), long term infection, evil attack and spiritual wife (oyaIkpakashi) among others. This assertion is buttressed by the opinion of Eizegerg, Park, Hollenberk, Lipshultz, schatzkin and Pletcher, (2011), who were of the pinion that infertility for men is most often caused by low or no sperm count and blockage of tubes that transport sperm and infertility in women

on the other hand is caused by a range of other factors such as problem with ovulation, blockage of fallopian tubes and physical damage of the uterus.Generally, this situation has become a major challenge in marital homes with a prevalence percentage in an average of six (6) persons of one hundred (100)among the Igala speaking people (Field survey, 2022). Whatever form of infertility, either primary (not given birth at all) or secondary (once given birth or conceived) is detrimental to matrimony of the married couples most especially the woman (Sohrabuad, 2005). In the Igala speaking tribe, the prevalence of infertility is 6% with primary infertility at 2% and secondary at 4%. (Field survey, 2022)

Infertility causes emotional distress for couples especially to the women who suffer the major social stigma of societal perceptions in most of the cases than the men. To corroborate this assertion Fidao, 2004 & Obiyo, (2016) affirmed that the infertile woman exhibits significantly higher psychopathology in the form of tension, hostility, anxiety, and depression, self-blame and suicidal ideation. Among the Igala tribes and other African tribes, women who cannot get pregnant are verbally or physically abused in their own homes, deprived of their inheritance, sent back to their parents, ostracized, looked down upon by society, or even have their marriage dissolved or terminated if they are unable to conceive (Vanbalem, Cain, 1986, Ahmed, 1987).

Infertility is perceived to create room for infidelity as both couple no longer trust each other especially the man who prefers to have a concubine or take another wife rather than looking for solution or the woman who wish to proof the husband wrong by having extra-sexual relation with another man who she is not legally married to. Similarly, the interest and interference of family members sometimes contribute to this disharmony.

In the Igala speaking area, childless couples are disengaged from taking part or engaging in some traditional and ancestral ceremonies. Example of such is the Ibegu festival. A complementary situation is that of

(James, 2017) who posits that in some communities in the southern Nigeria, pregnancy and child-birth are pre-requisite for entry into the stage of mature woman-hood and childless women are referred to as "man". In similar ways in Ghana's ways of life and how children are valued makes it more difficult for a childless couple to cope with infertility. Couples who are infertile are stigmatized and disallowed to take leading roles in the society and other ancestral ceremonies (Ademola, 2002).

Over the years marriage instability has affected the growth and development of many Igala and Nigerian homes. The absence of love and trust, anti-social vices, socio-cultural and sex related conditions occasioned by infertility have contributed in no small measure to marital instability among married couples. Onucheyo, (2007) & Miachi, (2012) lend their opinion to this as they observed that this has manifested in the increasing rate of divorce and separation in the society which are social phenomenon either created by the husband or the wife or both. Onyia & Aniche, (2002) and Fidao, (2004), stated the causes of marital instability to include, childlessness, unsatisfactory sexual relation, rumour and family fractionalization. Linus, (2012) equally asserts that desperation on the part of female folks leads to marital instability.

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no empirical study has been carried out on infertility and marital disharmony among married people of Igala extraction. This study revealed that infertility resulting to marital disharmony was more prevalent among divorced married person in Igala speaking tribe compared to other causes of divorce or separation

(Field survey, 2022), though largely under-reported due to the private nature of the phenomenon. Some of the studies on infertility tend to establish a psychotic cause for the inability to conceive, thus, this study attempted to identify some of the psycho-social consequence of infertility among the Igala speaking people of Kogi State.

Concerns

The fundamental purpose of marriage is to give birth to children and ensure the continuous existence of the society. This is in obedience to the commandment of God both in the Bible, the Quran and the traditional religion. This is not just limited to the three dominant religions alone as all other religious affiliation equally sanctioned the procreation for the continued existence of the society. Thus, couples who are married are expected to give birth to children after a year or two of marriage. This feat has become impossible for some married couple who are fertility unmet either by nature or by abnormality.

The society is witnessing couples who have not given birth or have given birth once and could not give birth after one year of marriage. This has led to constant running from pillar to post, from clinics to prayer houses and herbal homes by those that are married but yet to have the fruit of marriage, while some get solutions to their problems, to others, the situation remains the same. Thus, this situation has given rise to social and psychological problems on both couples. This has resulted in the couple having family squabbles resulting to court cases, domestic violence and subsequently separation or divorce. Thus, this study investigates the extent to which infertility has caused disharmony among couples and its consequences to the couple and the society.

Research Question and Hypothesis

To what extent does infertility causes marital disharmony among couples?

There is no significant difference in the opinion of respondents on the extent to which infertility causes marital disharmony among couples.

Methodology

This work is a descriptive survey. It is purposive sampling methods that seek information by visiting hospitals and clinics (public and privates), courts, prayer houses and the church. The population of the study is comprised of men and women within the age bracket of 18-50 who are unable to get child among the Igala speaking tribe of Kogi State. The target population is one thousand and twenty married and divorced men and women, (1020) the sample of the study is one hundred and eight respondents (108) using the sample specification chart of krejchie and Morgan (1970). A structured closed questionnaire, close interviews and observations was conducted on the respondents. The instrument was validated by medical experts, and religious clergy and psychologists. The analysis of the study was done using the independent t-test at an alpha of 0.05 to find the association between infertility and marital disharmony. The reliability coefficient of the instrument is 0.87 and standard value of 0.90 respectively.

Analysis

Table 1: The extent to which infertility causes marital disharmony among married couples

S/N	Item Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	SD

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	SD
1	Couples that find it difficult to have a child after one year of marriage enjoy peace in their home.	34 31.5%	00 0%	14 13.0%	60 45.5%	3.8704	33346
2	Couple that cannot have a child in their marital relationship becomes object of ridicule to neighbours	39 36.1%	69 63.9%	00 0%	00 0%	3.3611	.48256
3	Couples that cannot bear a child enjoy marriage stability.	14 13.0%	60 45.5%	34 31.5%	00 0%	3.8704	.33746
4	Childless couple always enjoy sex in their homes	00 0%	00 0%	94 87.0%	14 13.0%	1.8704	.33746

S/N	Item Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	SD
5	Couples that cannot bear a child always quarrel and seek for divorce	00 0%	66 61.1%	42 38.9%	00 0%	2.6111	.48977
6	Childless couple always live happily	00 0%	00 0%	67 62.0%	41 38.0%	1.3796	.48756
7	Couples that cannot bear a child always attempt or have extra marital engagement	14 13.0%	00 0%	52 48.1%	42 39.9%	1.8704	.94812
8	Men that do not bear a child from the wife always consider additional wives	14 13.0%	00 0%	52 48.1%	42 39.9%	1.8704	.94812
9	Couples that do not have a child attracts external interference from friends and relatives.	00 0%	00 0%	28 25.9%	80 74.1%	1.2593	.44027

10	Childless couples always sees one another as suspect and responsible for the problem.	00	00	39	28	2.5000	1.24180
		0%	0%	36.1%	25.9%		

Response rate as presented in table one showed that the respondent totalling 74 representing 58% agreed to an assertion that couple who find it difficult to bear a child after one or more of unprotected sex enjoy absolute peace in their homes. This response has the means of 3.8704 and standard deviation of .33346. In another development, the second item which posited that couple that cannot bear a child in a legal marital relationship becomes an object of ridicule to neighbours, with all respondents totaling 108 representing 100% in agreement with the means of 3.3611 and a standard deviation of .48256. Item number three posited that couples that cannot bear a child enjoys marital stability, in this direction 74 respondents representing 58% disagreed with the mean of 3.8704 and standard deviation of .33704. An item on the table posit that childless couple enjoy sex relationship in their homes, to this respondents totaling 108 representing 100% disagreed with the mean response of 1.087104 and standard deviation of .33746. 66 respondents 0ut of 108 representing 61% agreed that couple who find it difficult to bear a child always attempt extra marital engagement with a mean response of 1.8704 and standard deviation of .94802 respectively. Couples that do not have a child attracts external interference from friends and relatives, this opinion generated agreed response of 108 out of the 108 respondents with the mean response of 1.2593 and standard deviation of .44027. While the assertion that Childless couples always sees one another as suspect and responsible for the problem generated 67 respondents representing 62.0% with the mean of2.500 and standard deviation 1.24180 respectively. From

the forgoing responses shown on the table, it is save to conclude that infertility among married couple in the Igala speaking tribe generates crises that affect marital stability.

Test of Null Hypothesis

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between the opinion of male and females on infertility and marital instability among married couple in Igala speaking tribe.

Table 2

T-test statistics to find significant difference on the opinion of male and females on infertility and marital instability among married couples in Igala speaking tribe.

Effect of Infertility and marital stability among married Igala couples	Gender	N	Mean	St/d	Std/err	Df	t-cal	t-cri
	Male	208	28.489	1.324	.1892	416	.636	1.96
	Female	208	28.322	1.395	.1816			

Result of the independent t-test revealed that there is no significant difference in the opinion of respondents on the effect of infertility on marital instability among married couples in Igala land. Reason being that the P-calculated value of 1.165 is higher than the 0.05 alpha, while the tcalculated value of .636 is lower than the t-critical value of 1.96. Hence the hypothesis is retained.

Findings

· Childless couple encounter marital disharmony.
· Marital disharmony leads to psychological and social unrest among such couples.

Interview Report

· Joy is elusive in the home of couple that could not bear a child.

· Families without a child become an object of ridicule in the society.

· Childless couples are prone to divorce at the least provocation.

· Childless couple can lead to prostitution and polygamy.

· The home of childless couple is always beset with suspicion of infidelity.

Result from Observation

· About 75% of childless couple don't last in marriage; consequently 25% manage the situation in spite of the pain.

· Most childless couple attribute the blame on the women

· They are exposed to social stigma

· Relatives of childless couple mainly contribute to their unstable homes, which often lead to fractionalization of the home.

· Childless couples are constant visitors to health centres, religious centres and trado-medical homes for solutions

Discussions

The findings revealed significant relationship between the opinion of male and female on infertility and marital disharmony among the Igala married person in Kogi State, Nigeria. The study showed that infertility is a major contributor to marital instability. One of the essences of marriage is procreation which provides a basis for the family as the building block of every society. If a man is unable to impregnate the wife, such woman will not want to stay and if the woman is unable to conceive a pregnancy, the man will not want to endure the situation. The result implies that infertility breeds lots of problem in the marital home which invariably leads to marital disharmony. This finding lay credence to the opinion of

Okhakhume (2016), which shows that people with poor marital satisfaction experiences disharmony.

Afolabi (2011) equally alighted with this finding to a great extent, that there is significant relationship between infertility and marital disharmony. Findings from the interview conducted share similar opinion as generated from the structured questionnaire of the study. Thus, Onucheyo (2007) & Miachi (2012) lend their opinion to this as they observed that this has manifested in the increasing rate of divorce and separation in the society which are social phenomenon either created by the husband or the wife or both. Similarly, Onyia & Aniche (2002) and Fidao (2004), put the causes of marital instability to include childlessness, unsatisfactory sexual relation, rumour and family fractionalization. Linus (2012) equally asserts that desperation on the part of female folks leads to marital instability.

Conclusion

Most previous studies predominantly focused on medical context and others on psycho-social and sexual perspectives, while this work focused on the social consequences of infertility on the stability of marital homes. Both quantitative and qualitative methodologies were explored for the work. The pain associated with infertility is a concern throughout the world particularly the Igala speaking people. The result of the work implies that infertility among couple will likely lead to increase marital disharmony. The reason for this finding indicates that when there is no satisfaction in marriage, such homes are likely to be characterized by crises. The implications of social, cultural and biblical factors attached to children make childlessness couples go through intense pains, loss of faith, anger, frustration and disharmony.

Recommendations

This work recommended that:

i. Couples should exercise patience with one another as children are free gifts of God.

ii. Couples should embrace the use of IVF as an alternative means to child bearing.

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