African Journal of Politics and Administrative Studies, Vol. 11, 1; December, 2018
Department of Political Science, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki
P a g e | 78

The Philosophy And Politics Of National Identity Management In Nigeria: A Case For Nation-Building

Mba Idika Kalu[1], Nwogbaga David[2] & Nnaji, Fidelis[4]

Abstract

The establishment of the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) by Act No. 23 of 2007 to replace the defunct Directorate of National Civil Registration (DNCR) was aimed at reforming the identity sector in Nigeria and to provide a unified or centralized National Identity Database and secured means to irrefutably assert the identity of Nigerians which we saw as a veritable or rather key to nation building in Nigeria. But as of June 2016, only about 9.5million Nigerians had been captured into the National Identity Database (NIDB) and as of May 2016, only about above 1million National "e-ID" card had been produced and about 300,000 National e-ID cards collected. This propelled our search light on the challenges and prospects of NIMC in the light of modernization prism. Relying quantitatively on secondary data, this study reflected on the roles, challenges and prospects of NIMC in nation building and recommended integrated information system to realize a functional national identity for effective nation building.

Key Words: Philosophy; Politics; Management; National Identity; Nation Building

Introduction

In this age of unprecedented Information Communication Technology (ICT), it is saddening that Nigeria over the years does not have a reliable National Identity Database (NIDB) and a secured means to irrefutably and electronically confirm the identity of Nigerian citizens and aliens. According to the pioneer Director General (DG) of NIMC Barr Chris Onyemenam,'' Over 100 Nigerians have no official identity while lamenting that 75% of identity documents that available are fake and self-issued'' (Oluwasegun, 2015). And in a heterogeneous society or state like Nigeria that have about three hundred and nine (309) ethnic nationalities. The fact that these nationalities were brought together to form the Nigerian state without their consent by the British Colonialists have remained a major problem in the quest for nation building in Nigeria (Obi, 2005)

With the raising threats of Boko Haram in the North East, Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOD) in the South East, Oduduwa People's Congress (OPC) and Allepo Militants in South West, Niger Delta Avengers (NDA), Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) in South Southetc nation building in Nigeria is daily threatened by the activities of some of this dissident groups above with their divisive and pervasive "sermons". And to worsen the problem, there is no reliable National Identity Database (NIDB) to easily track the identities of this messengers of death and when the victims of their nefarious activities are scheduled to be compensated by the government, such funds or palliatives are in most cases diverted by politicians owing to lack of NIDB to easily identify real victims or real culprits. This has resulted in most cases to misapplication/delayed of justice where sometimes the innocent are wrongly punished and the culprit sent Scot free thus, widening the gulf of nation building in Nigeria as most ethnicities prefers clinging to their ethnic identities than the Nigerian Project or Nigerian citizen especially when they do not have ''proof'' in form of national identity card or other

means to electronically assert their identity. Hence, means of asserting identity and identity theft in Nigeria has remains a great threat to nation building.

No wonder, the President Olusegun Obasanjo administration of 1999-2007 at the tail end of his administration, on 25th May, 2007 signed the National Identity Management Commission Act 2007, Act No. 23 into law. '' An Act to provide for the establishment of National Identity Database (NIDB) and the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) charged with the responsibilities for the maintenance of the NIDB, the registration of individuals covered by the Act and the issuance of General Multipurpose Identity Card (GMPC) (National Identity Management Commission Act, 2007).

Statement of Problem

There is nothing more challenging to nation building than identity theft or fraud with its resultant economic, socio-cultural and political effects. It is worthy of note that an average Nigerian parades multiple and unreliable identity cards and documents and about 75% of identity document used by most Nigerians are self-issued and most at times counterfeits, while about 100,000 million Nigerians do not have a valid means of identification. Observably, there is no a centralized National Identity Database (NIDB) for verification and authentication services to truly confirm the identity of Nigerians or whether people are really what their documents said they are.

Going by global best practices, many International Communication Technology (ICT) professionals have always reiterated that Federal Government should create an integrated national database which will among other things feature all information about all its citizenry. A unique database from where both public and private organizations can easily access and draw information, with needed data to checkmate issues bordering on security such as criminality, terrorism ,militancy etc are extremely important especially in nation building. It is worrisome to note that all the various agencies of government and private sectors such as the defunct Directorate of National Civic Registration (DNCR), Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the National population Commission (NPC),Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC), National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), University Students Identity Card, Bank Verification Number (BVN), Subscribers Identification Module (SIM) Registration, Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB), West African Examination Council (WAEC)etc saddled or involved with these ''responsibilities'' create different ''databases'' in the course of achieving their goals. Hence, the Nigerian citizen is subjected almost at every time of need tothe same biometric and demographic rigours by these MDAs. These would have been unnecessary if only a central database existed as same data such as date of birth, place of birth, LGA and state of origin, occupation etc. are repeatedly sourced from Nigerians during the course of their lifetime and dealing with both private and government agencies. This leads to what most people described as ''biometric/demographic fatigue''.

The stress that citizens are exposed to especially during national programmes including avoidable queuing in the sun and sometimes in the rain just to ensure that they are captured would have been avoided with effective National Identity Management System (NIMS). Funnily, the bane of most of this programme is that not all citizens are captured but only interested ones who care to enlist. Even the so-called data generated are most at times nowhere to be found, un-updatable and unreliable thereby causing a colossal waste of national resources.

Piqued by the lack of depth in the consumer credit market and the absence of a uniformed system of identification which would particularly assist the Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) in the discharge of their responsibilities, the Federal Government in 2005 set up a committee to, amongst other things advise it on appropriate steps to take to harmonize identification schemes in Nigeria. A prominent feature of the historical development of the identity sector in Nigeria is the multiplicity of identity cards scheme. Most schemes are necessarily focused on the collection of personal information so that an identity card would be issued. This was largely due to the mistaken belief that an identity card is a conclusive proof of one's identity (The National Identity Management System (NIMS) Strategy and Technology Document, 2010).

Hence, the absence of credible NIMS poses serious challenge to nation building in Nigeria as when Nigerian citizens cannot irrefutably assert their identity. When the need arises, they are forced to cling to their ethnic or other primordial appeals. It should be noted that the committee Government set up in 2005 had proposed a policy for the reform of the ''identity sector'' in Nigeria which aimed at avoiding wastage/duplication of efforts, ''re-use'' of existing investment where possible. In Nigeria , the best effort so far has produced an enhanced secure system of Identity Card printing and issuance of the National Identity Card project executed in 2001-2006 under the defunct Department of National Civic Registration (DNCR) which focused mainly on ID card printing and issuance and less on management of identities. The problem was that Nigerians have come see Identity Management System as mere ''card issuance'' which is an entrenched impression NIMC has been trying hard to dispel.

It was this identity threat to Nigeria's nation building that the effort of the National Policy and Institutional Framework for Identity Management System for Nigeria lead to the establishment of NIMC in 2007 by FG as the only recognized regulatory and institutional mechanism for implementing government's reform initiatives in the identity sector anchored on the five (5) components of the NIMS Project under National Identity Management Commission (NIMC).

(1) Establishment of secured and reliable National Identity Database (NIDB)
(2) Registration of and issuance of National Identity Number (NIN) i.e. with this 11 digit number citizens data are securely re-posited in the NIDB and can be recalled electronically and updated as at when due or need arises. It should be noted that the NIN is issued once in a lifetime, it is the enrollee or citizen's data that might be updated never the NIN.
(3) Issuance of General Multipurpose Smart Card i.e. with chip that can be read electronically by Card Acceptance Device (CAD) and other electronic media etc
(4) Deployment of Authentication and Verification Infrastructure i.e. to protect you from identity theft or fraud by providing both online and offline simple, reliable and sustainable and universally acceptable means to confirm ones true identity at all times.
(5) Harmonization of data collected by MDAs i.e. all biometrics data collecting agencies like INEC,NHIS,NIS, Bank-BVN, NCC SIM Registration, NPC etc should align with NIMC Infrastructure to among other things optimize the use of government resources and avoid the wastage induced by duplication of function which NIMC is statutorily empowered to perform.

But unfortunately not much has been ''heard'' of about the agency (NIMC) from 2007 that it was founded to address this abnormalities in the Nigerian Identity Sector till date. And it was

against this background that this work seeks answers as to the role, challenges and prospect of NIMC in nation building as the role of identity management cannot be over emphasized in nation building.

Literature Review

The issue of identity management of individuals, organizations and other public institutions especially in the era of unprecedented ICT remains a core function of government. Issues involved in creating, using, changing and ending an identity cuts across technical, legal, procedural and policy dimensions. This has been made even more complex and demanding with the advent of the information age and the capabilities for manipulation and stealing of information, thus raising issues of security and nation building(National Policy and Institutional Framework for an Identity Management System in Nigeria).

Nation building without a desirable single national central system of identifying all citizens which NIMC are mandated to achieve is very difficult to achieve. In any case, there is need for both government and the private sector to have their respective roles to play in the development of National Identity Management System (NIMS) as it will go long way in enhancing or engendering nation building. However, nation building like most concepts in social sciences do not enjoy a universally acceptable definition. According to Carl Friedrich (1966) nation building is '' a matter of building group cohesion and group loyalty for purposes of international representation and domestic planning, whatever might be the building stones of the past''. Going by Carl's definition above, building group cohesion and loyalty might work in the international representation. But we think the emphasis should be withdrawing group's cohesion and loyalty from the groups to the common Nigerian Project or to the collective entity or the state. People should be made to prefer using Nigerian in places where they would had likely use ethnic lineage. But in a situation where they cannot easily assert their identity irrefutably through the National Identity Number (NIN) or the General Multipurpose Card (GMPC)(National Identity Card) ethnicity or other divisive appeals becomes the ''appealing'' ways to assert their identity. Even those in the law enforcement agencies or others in need of such information will ask the person to speak his/her local dialect as a ''proof'' of identity. Hence, it is not ''unusual'' to see government agencies or law enforcement agencies using the speaking of a native dialect as a ''proof'' of identity because there is no readily available or accessible and reliable National Database to rely on.

To Almond and Powel, (1966) as quoted by Obi (2005) nation building, is a process whereby people transfer their commitment and loyalty from smaller tribes, villages or petty principalities to the larger central political system. At least Almond and Powel's definition contrast that of Friedrich Carl as he emphasized cohesion to the larger central political system than the group or ethnic lineage. But these cannot be achieved when the citizens of a country cannot easily prove, assert or confirm their identity irrefutably upon query by those authorized to do so or when the need arises.

Nation building is constructing or structuring a national identity using the power of the state (Karl et al, 1966). This Karl's definition above emphasizes the importance of national identity in nation building, and the Nigerian government has intended to do so by establishing

National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) in 2007 created by Act No. 23 to among other things:-

   (1) Provide for the establishment of a National Identity Database and National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) charged with the responsibility for the management and maintenance of the National Database
   (2) The registration of individuals covered under the Act
   (3) The issuance of National Identity Number (NIN)
   (4) The issuance of General Multipurpose Identity Card
   (5) Deployment of verification and authentication infrastructure
   (6) Harmonization and Repository of data collected by MDAs etc

However, it was only in September 2011 that the Federal Government (FG) approved ₦30.066 Billion for the implementation of a Unified National Identity Management System, Federal Executive Council (FEC) approved the sum for the implementation between 2011-2013 during its weekly FEC meeting which was chaired by President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan said the project entails the development of a comprehensive biometric database for all Nigerian adults. The then Minister of Information Labaran Maku disclosed this to journalists at the post FEC briefing at the State House Abuja.'' That new integrated data system will capture all Nigerians from ages of 18 and above (though NIMC captures 16 and above) will bring down the cost of data processing and storage by the different agencies in the country. He disclosed that e-national identity database would assist Nigeria tackle some security issues as well as solve many statistics challenges in various sectors of the economy. He reiterated that the project will be managed by the NIMC and will be executed in conjunction with different agencies of government which currently keep their own separate identity data (Vanguard, 2011).

Hence, the pilot scheme for the issuance of the National Identity Number (NIN) is equivalent to US or UK Social Security Number (SSN). The pioneer DG of NIMC Barr Chris Onyemenam said that the pilot exercise has been extended to each state and now to the 774 Local Government Areas (LGA), saying that nationwide enrolment would commence before the end of June, 2012 (Vanguard, 2013).

But as of October 2015, NIMC have only managed to capture about 7million Nigerians into the National Identity Database out of the 13million estimated for the pilot phase. It was stated that the commission's facilities has capacity to register 300million citizens(Leadership, 2015). Also the DG of NIMC as at June 2016, Engr. Aliyu Aziz put the total enrolment figure at about 9.5million captured into the NIDB when the Special Assistant to the president on Foreign Affairs and Diaspora, Abike Dabiri-Erewa paid him a courtesy visit. He also said the commission was harmonizing the existing databases so that could have one single database all over the country (News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) ,2016). Also the NIMC has produced over 1million e-national identity cards, out of which it has issued about 300,000, the DG of the commission Engr. Aliyu Aziz who made the disclosure in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja, Thursday 26th May, 2016 said over 750,000 cards were yet to be collected. He said in spite of the commission's constraints, including limited funding and production capacity, it has made remarkable progress in its assignment (Ezekiel, 2016).

Credible and secured effective verification National Identity Database is a veritable tool for nation building hence, FG should invest more resources in its identity sector through NIMC especially as about 9.5million Nigerians captured out of a population of about 140million 2006

census figure estimated to about 182million in 2015 says the least that nothing tangible has been achieved in terms of coverage since the establishment of NIMC in 2007.

For most countries today, the debate is no longer on the need to have a system of uniquely identifying individuals and businesses but on the selection of appropriate technology to authenticate the identity of its citizens. In particular such a system would provide for active participation of various stakeholders in the process of establishing, communicating, and assuring an identity. It is true that the competing policy interests range from protecting citizen's freedoms, privacy and other prerogatives. There is also the need to ensure institutional efficiency, law, order and security.

At present that Nigeria now have a central or National Identity Database, what mechanisms have been put in place to checkmated identity fraud or multiple identity or identity multiplication a lapses pervading most biometric collecting agencies? The NIMC enrolment consists of the recording of an individual's demographic data and capture of the ten (10) fingers print, head-to-shoulder International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) standard facial picture, and digital signature which are used to cross-check existing data in the National Identity Database to confirm there is no previous entry of the same data with the Automated Biometric Identity System (ABIS) infrastructure which allows real-time registration of persons, enabling instant identification and tracking of multiple registrations or entry, the commission will as well in the future add the iris feature to make double entry impossible should any case the finger print is manipulated.

Also the new national e-ID card issuance that follows successful issuance of the National Identity Number (NIN) is chip-based or Smart card activated with a security PIN after a successful match of one of the fingers supplied during registration. This implies that it can never be collected through proxy which is clear departure from the old national identity card project between 2001-2006 which used 2-D bar code technology and the sheer volume of paper work involved in this made the creation of accessible database impossible. What this meant was that the documentation processes of DNCR could not retrieve the data it had collected and accumulated neither can it be easily updated. As a result, the identity cards it issued were mere tokens because they could only refer to themselves. In other words, the various agencies of government and the private sector, from security agencies to banks and airports as well as other travel agencies, which regularly used this cards could not ascertain that persons carrying them were really who the card said they were because there was *no Verification and Authentication Infrastructure* that the NIMC are to deploy which will go a long way in building public trust, security and accelerated nation building in Nigeria as nation building aims at the unification of the people within the state so that it remains politically stable and viable in the long run.

Theoretical Framework
In order to buttress the need for Nigeria to embrace the NIN as an enhanced secured central National Identity Database in pursuit of the NIMC Act 2007 No. 23 especially as it will also enhance nation building which will in turn accelerate political and socio-economic development through public trust, the modernization theory has been adopted as the theoretical framework. The modernization theory stresses not only the process of change from a pre-modern or traditional to modern society, but also the responses to that change. It looks at the internal dynamics while referring to social and cultural structures and the adaptation of new technologies.

Modernization theory maintains that traditional societies will develop as they adopt more modern practices. Developments such as new data technology and the need to update traditional methods in transport, communication and production, is argued make modernization necessary or at least preferable to the status quo.

The National Identity Management System (NIMS) under NIMC focuses greater attention on identity management as globally obtainable or global best practices rather than the mostly unreliable identification schemes and card issuance by most MDAs and private sectors. That is why NIMC are interested whether the name(s), date of birth etc. used by the citizen's for instance writing their WAEC or SSCE , obtaining voters card, driving license, international passport etc. are the same, if changes are noticed, why? NIMC is also interested that citizen's should no longer be subjected to unnecessary or avoidable form filling or queue fatigue as such information could be sourced online or offline querying the NIDB using the NIN from a secured access in the spirit of modernization as obtainable in this ICT age and reduce duplication of functions, maximized resource use and prevent wastage/duplication of function in government MDAs and save time. It is worthy to note that nation building without a reliable identity management scheme is prone to intractable crisis. Proponents of modernization includes W.W. Rostow, Everret E. Hagan, David McClelland, Bert F. Hoselitz etc.

Historical Evolution of National Identity Card in Nigeria
The idea of national identity card project was first conceived in 1967 under the then Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon with the view to identifying ''the Igbos'' who had refused to heed the call to return to the East during the civil war. But the idea was not popular and nothing was heard of it until 1976 when it was revived. It was subsequently launched on September 1st 1979 by then the Obasanjo military administration (Adey, 2000). However, the Directorate of National Civil Registration DNCR was established in 1978 backed by decree 51 of 1979 under the Internal Affairs Ministry to register people aged 18 years and above and issue a simple laminated national identity cards, the cost was then put at $16million with a view to making the identity card project a reality.

It is appalling that from 1979 to 2000, the national identity card project has continued to be awarded and re-awarded by successive governments in Nigeria. From 1979-2001 it only the Buhari/Idiagbon regime 1983-1985 that did not show any interest in the project. President Shehu Shagari revoked the contract and re-advertised it again in 1981 but still awarded it to Avant Incorporation of USA in 1982 in conjunction with a Nigerian Contractor at the sum of #56million. After two years with nothing on ground owing to the delay in payments and fluctuation in currency rates, the contract sum had risen from the initial #56million to #90million. Unfortunately, the military struck on 31st of December, 1983 to '' truncate'' the project. The General Ibrahim Babangida regime thought it unwise to cancel the national identity card project after about #90million had been spent on the project by President Shehu Shagari coupled with the fact that computers needed for the project had been acquired but were only lying in a warehouse waiting to be shipped from France for installation. The new Contractor Afro-Continental was given nine (9) months to complete the project. Nothing again happened in regards to its fulfillment till Chief Shonekan-led Interim National Government re-awarded the contract in 1993, but never started its execution as General Sani Abachi swept out his Interim National Government in a palace coup d'etat. General Sani Abacha's Internal Affairs Minister

Ambassador Babangida Kingibe former running mate to MKO Abiola the acclaimed winner of the June 12 controversial general election of 1993, announced that the national identity card project to be phased out.

Again, in 1998, the General Abdulsalami Abubakar's regime called for tender that would kick-start the national identity card project from scratch despite previous government invested millions into the project. A Consortium, led by Chams Limited Nigeria was awarded the $38.4million contract. In 2001, President Olusegun Obasanjo who also mid-wifed the project in 1979 re-awarded the same contract to a French company SAGEM for #38billion/$214million. Along the line, three Ministers- late former Minister of Internal Affairs Sunday Afolabi, his successor Mohammed Shata, former Labour Minister Hussain Akwanga and others were implicated in a $2million bribery scandal.

SAGEM was to produce about 60million identity cards for Nigerians but produced about half of the contract sum. The contract supervised by Federal Ministry of Interior through the then Department for National Civil Registration (DNCR); By SAGEM records, SAGEM Registered and processed 52,640,908 made up as follows:

Total Female   -18,062,443(separately stored)
Total Male   -19,307,165(separately stored)
Total Rejects   -8,098,248
Total Cards Issued   -37,369,608

(SAGEM S.A France-Closure of 2001 Agreement and Handover of the Nigerian National Identity Card Programme- the Issues- Chris 'E Onyemenam DG/CEO NIMC- www.nimc.gov.ng).

It is worthy to note that the SAGEM project of 2001-2006 was the only fair trial in the national identity card project execution despite its award and re-award (1978-1998) by several Nigerian governments or regimes.

No wonder most critics have described the national identity card project in Nigeria as a black hole that consumes everything thrown at it without trace(Nicholas,2015) while others have seen it as '' The cat with nine lives'' owing to the controversies surrounding its history and survival. Though the establishment of NIMC in 2007 was a paradigm shift from the defunct DNCR where the emphasis was on identity card without centralized accessible National Identity Database, nor Verification and Authentication Infrastructure etc; NIMC was mandated to fill that gap. However, since NIMC's creation in 2007 by virtue of Act No. 23 of 2007 which mandated NIMC to among other things.

-Set up the NIMC as the primary driver of the identity sector Reform;
-Takeover the assets and liabilities of the former DNCR (sec 32);
-Implant a National Identity Management System and Infrastructure (which includes harmonization, Unique ID numbers (NIN), and issuance of GMPC etc .However, since its creation in 2007 it was only in 2011 that President Jonathan released #30.066billion to kickstart the project. The money was proposed for a period of three years 2011-2013, but according to the former DG of the commission Chris Onyemenam only #17.2billion of the total sum have been released to the commission as of 2015 (Leadership, 2015).

Challenges of National Identity Management Commission (NIMC)
That NIMC since its establishment in 2007 has only captured 9.5million Nigerians into the National Identity Database (NIDB) as of June, 2016 and produced only over 1million cards, with 300,000 collected as of May, 2016 (Ezekiel, 2016) points to the facts that the commission is challenged especially when compared to Bank- Biometric Verification Number (BVN) that hit 20million in September 2015 enrolment barely 18months of its launch on February 14th, 2014. Below are some of the challenges facing NIMC:

(1) **Cynicism carried over from the past**- The history of national identity card project in Nigeria have been described by most critics as a black hole that consumes everything thrown at it or a compromised slot machine that consumes but never regurgitates owing to scandals bedeviling its contract award since 1978 to 2006 under the defunct Directorate of National Civil Registration (DNCR). Hence, this enigma is heavy burden on NIMC to convince Nigerians especially private investors to have keen interest or support on the project though NIMC places greater emphasis on the National Identity Number (NIN) issued instantly upon successful registration while most Nigerians are only interested in National Identity card as such use same as basis to judge or appraise their performance.

(2) **Unstable power supply**- The high cost of running enrolment centres throughout the Federation or more than 400 enrolment centres is becoming a problem because stable power supply is needed to run them. And this is challenging to the commission just like other government/ private sectors who depend on electricity for their maximum operation.

(3) **Lack of sustainable funding from the government**- Since NIMC in 2007, it was only in 2011 that the FG approved #30.066billion for the implementation of a Unified National Identity Management System between 2011-2013 but according to the former DG of the commission Barr Chris Onyemenam only #17.2billion of the total sum have been released to the commission as of May, 2015, these fund will make more meaning when compared to what FG released to INEC for 2011 General Elections only. According to the Chief Press Secretary to the former INEC chairman MrKayodeIdowu #122.9billion was spent by INEC on 2011 general election,#66.3billion on Recurrent expenditure and #56.6billion on capital expenditure totaling #122.9billion (Vanguard, 2013). The INEC Registration lasted between January-February 2011 which saw the successful registration of about 73.5million voters. In 2012, FG approved another #2.6billion for the first batch of 40million PVC production and in 2013 approved another #2.1billion for the second batch of 33.5million PVCs. INEC expenditures above show how underfunded NIMC are as the enrolment into the National identity Database is 16 years and above for now which makes their coverage wider than INEC.

(4) **Dearth of Requisite Human Resources**- NIMC is supposed to have at least functional enrolment centres in all the 774 local government areas in Nigeria and the 36 states of the Federation plus the FCT but according to the former DG Barr Chris Onyemenam NIMC have functional enrolment centres in about 400 LGAs plus some Special Centres. Hence, when the exercise will be fully activated in all the LGAs, more personnel will likely be needed.

(5) **Dealing with Vested Interests**-Most biometric capturing MDAs like INEC, NCC, NIS, CBN-BVN, FRSC etc have almost continued to see NIMC as competitor rather than partners. And some vested interested who knew the identity fraud NIMC will be exposing when fully deployed seems to be frustrating the NIMS project using any weapon at their disposal including the media to cast dark shadow on the commission. Some have even likened the NIN to the Biblical ''Mark of the beast" 666.

(6) **Centralizing the Identity Authority**- President Buhari during the enrolment for his National Identity Number (NIN) just like Goodluck Jonathan stressed the need to harmonise biometrics collected other agencies to save cost and maximize government revenue by harmonizing other MDAs biometrics with NIMC as the only federal agency empowered to manage such data. NIMC former DGChris Onyemenamon September 2015 said,'' The president's directive is currently making things happen and very soon, in a period of one to two months, or three months maximum, this harmonization will be done for most of the existing MDAs with legacy databases and we will announce the first success story. He reiterated that NIMC has reached an advanced stage in terms of harmonization with the CBN, National Pension Commission, INEC, Federal Ministry of Agriculture and FRSC. He said that level of collaboration reached has given the NIMC reason to be hopeful that within a few months, it will be announcing success in these areas (Leadership Newspapers, 2015) that is yet to be announced.

Prospects of National Identity Management Commission (NIMC)

In this age of ICT the need for a reliable and secured identity management sector is a core to effective nation building, political and socio-economic development of any state. NIMS project when fully implemented under NIMC will link biometrics and unique identity numbers of Nigerians to bank accounts, voter's register, immigration, law enforcement agencies etc such that the wastage induced from duplication of biometrics of Nigerian will be removed.

It will also reduce fraud, identity theft, restore public trust and confidence, fight terrorism and other crime improve GDP, create identity and enhanced nation building. Most Nigerian have lost counts how many time their biometrics have been taken by the government or its authorized agents, making some critics refer Nigeria as the most ''biometricised'' country in the World (Simon,2015). All these stress will be a thing of the past once NIMS under NIMC is fully implemented as the NIN will become a one-stop shop for the biometrics of Nigerians. This implies if you go for instance to obtain driving license , you will no longer be subjected to another biometrics as they will only use your NIN to query the National Identity Database and get your necessary data to offer you the driver's license.

It will also reduce wastage in government MDAs and private sector in the collection of biometrics. For example, FG spent about #122.9billion on voters registration in 2011, Nigeria Communication Commission (NCC) spent about #6.1billion for the registration of Subscribers Identification Module (SIM) between 2010 and 2013 to register over 60million active GSM lines. All these biometrics are already in the repository of the National Identity Database through the NIN assigned to successful enrollee by NIMC. All that others (MDAs/private sectors) in need of biometrics need to do is to query the secured National Identity Database to get or access the required biometrics.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the philosophy behind the quest for national identity in Nigeria has been appreciated by every regime as an effective strategy for nation building; but interest politics has been the major cog in the wheel of progress. The interest politics has reflected in high level of cynicism among the people, centralization of the identity management authority, misinterpretation of the national identity objectives, and unnecessary changes in the nomenclature of the national identity management institutions. All these have coupled to make it difficult for the Nigerian State to realize a functional national identity to the detriment of national building. In order to realize effective national identity, integrated national identity system is recommended; this implies retrieving identity information of individuals from relevant public and private institutions like hospitals, population commissions, electoral commissions, banks, and immigration office etc to regularly augment the data-base of the nation's citizens. This is expected to reduce the funds usually wasted in the separate registration of citizens with little or no success.

References

Adey, O. (2000). *The National ID Card: History and Problems*. https://groups.google/forum/m/#!topic/soc.culture.nigeria/BliFSB1Cecs

Ezekiel, E. (2016). *NIMC produces 1m National Identity Cards, Issues 300,000- DG*. www.financialwatchngr.com

Joseph, R. A. (1991). *Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria. The Rise and Fall of the Second Republic*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books

Karl, W. D. & William, J. F. (eds) (1966). *Nation Building in Comparative Contexts*. New York: Atherton

Leadership Newspaper (22 September, 2015). *MDAs, NIMC to Conclude Biometric Harmonisation in 3 Months. www.leadership.ng*

Leadership Newspaper 7 October, 2015, '*'NIMC Enrols 7m Nigerians, Says DG*. www.leadership.ng

Leadership Newspaper (4 May, 2015). *NIMC DG Denies Embezzling #30bn*. www.leadership.ng/news/432917/nimc-dg-denies-embezzling-n30bn

National Identity Management Commission Act, 2007

The National Identity Management System Strategy and Technology Document, 2010

National Policy and Institutional Framework for an identity Management System in Nigeria

News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), June 21, 2016,*''National ID Card: Date Fixed for Diaspora Registration as 9.5m Registers*. http://theeagleonline.com.ng

Nicholas, I. (2015) '*'Over #121Billion Wasted, Nigeria's Troubled National ID Card Project in Fresh Controversy*. www.premiumtimes.com

Obi, E.A & Obikeze, O. S. (2006). Contemporary social issues in Nigeria. Onitsha: Bookpoint Ltd.

Oluwasengun, M. (2015). *Over 100 million Nigerians without official identity card- NIMC. www.govtechnology.com.ng*

SAGEM S.A France-Closure of 2001 Agreement and Handover of the Nigerian National Identity Card Programme- the Issues- Chris 'E Onyemenam DG/CEO NIMC- www.nimc.gov.ng

Simon, K. (2015). *May Nigerians not Die of Biometric Overdose. https://www.thecable.ng*

Vanguard Newspaper , 6 March, 2013 '*'NIMC: Nigeria Ready to Capture Citizen's Accurate identity Data''. www.vanguardngr.com*

Vanguard Newspaper, 29 September, 2011 '*' FEC Okays #30.66bn New National Identity card''.www.vanguardngr.com*

Vanguard Newspaper, 8 May, 2013, '*'2011 Elections Cost Nigeria N122.9bn- INEC''.*

www.vanguardngr.com