

# **THE ETHNIC QUESTION AND THE CHALLENGE OF DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE**

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## **Abstract**

The meeting point, agreement and acceptance of African scholars on the issue of ethnicity remain one of the central challenges of development scholars. The centrality of this ethnicity phenomenon is that democracy and development constitute the major threat of its existence. Hence, any policy or convention or cultural behavior that contributes to its existence, unwittingly over burdens the nation polity to the extent that the society experiences many form of inter ethnic “class”. The study argues that intervention should focus on the role of policy makers, implementers and social policy in effecting necessary attitudinal and behavioral change. This study suggests ways of managing ethnicity and provides knowledge of the factors that heighten vulnerability of ethnicity. It also suggests how social policies and implementation within the diversity of our society can be explored towards national development. Finally, it suggests how to provoke meaningful dialogue among scholars towards ideological and policy consensus to meet the immediate challenges of enthroning peace, unity in diversity and development.

**Key words:** Ethnicity, Vulnerability, Peace, Unity in Diversity, Development.

## **Introduction**

In many parts of the world today, struggles between different cultural and racial groups are being played out, some leading to intense beefiness and blood shed. This, as a result, has led to bloody wars in the different areas of the sub-Sahara Africa, for instance Israeli and Lebanon, Bosnia Herzegovina, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Ivory Coast, Somali and Sudan (Owen, 1992). At the same time, streams of refugees and immigrants move restlessly across different regions of the world, either trying to escape from such conflict or running away from poverty in search of a better life. Usually they reach a new country only to find out that they are rejected by the host ethnic people who, some generations past, were themselves immigrants (Owen 1992).

The United States is culturally the most diverse society in the world. It is a society of immigrants. The original population, the American Indians, make up less than 1 percent of the United States population as a whole. Yet Britain and Europe are rapidly becoming almost as culturally mixed as the United States. It was the Europeans, who were the first immigrants to North America, and who until recently dominated immigration into what became the United States and Canada. Today, there is increased immigration, legal and illegal, into Western

Europe, with the antecedents of conflicts and clashes as well as the benefits and opportunities (Leach,1967 ).

In the writing of Todaro (1981:72), development is the process of improving the quality of all human lives in a society. It is therefore said to be the process whereby people create and recreate themselves and their life circumstances to realize high levels of civilization in accordance with their own choices and values (Ake, 1996:29). It is a process by which man's personality is enhanced. It is that enhanced personality, creativity or organization which is the morning force behind the socio-economic transformation of any societ (Federal Ministry of National Planning, 1980).

Whatever the speculations about assumed development status of Nigeria, the point remains that evidence of our underdevelopment stares us in the face. It is multiplex. There is general infrastructural decay.

This same issue of ethnicity has resulted to amongst other problems, wobbling democracy, high level of illiteracy rate, high moral decadence, high rate of unemployment, death of modern medical facilities, lack of motorable roads, deplorable state of communication facilities, increasing rate of population growth, lack of mechanized agriculture which leads to low agricultural production. Some scholars blame it on the national and regional leadership (Makinwa, 1981), others blame it on corruption (Okigbo, 1987: 16; Aluko, 1988: 11; Olaopa, 1996:18).

This study is intended to examine the extent to which ethnicity has affected development in Port Harcourt. The specific objectives are:

- To assess the perception of Nigerians on ethnicity.
- To examine ethnic factors in the development efforts of Rivers State.
- To identify the areas in which ethnicity has negatively or positively affected National development in Rivers State.
- To outline strategies in which ethnicity could be positively used for national development in general and Rivers State in particular.

### **The Concept of Ethnicity in Nigeria**

A country harboring many ethnic groups as Nigeria is bound to have some level of ethnicity. According to Okemiri (2000), ethnicity is defined to mean "... the consciousness of somebody, relative to the norms and the values of his or her culture, of which other peoples socio-cultural background may be deemed to be inferior". Ilechukwu noted that ethnicity is likened to a hydra-headed monster which breeds social chaos, and has had a pervasive influence on every aspect of Nigerian life and which calls for a multifaceted attack from all and sundry to combat it.

Offiong (2001:30) submitted that ethnicity is a situation whereby people of a given territory shared a common belief, religion, culture, language, dressing, historical background, which may be different from others. If we accept the expressions of ethnic, religious and cultural preferences are a natural phenomenon and consistent with expression of individual liberty, then we realize that attempts to suppress such preferences are futile and cannot lead to peaceful coexistence. Instead, we need to better understand the positive roles that ethnicity and other characteristics with which individuals strongly identify with can play in the organization of societies.

### **The Emergence of Ethnicity in Nigeria**

According to Cohen (1969:4), the strife among ethnic groups comes in their bid to assert their identity and exclusiveness. The emphasis could be on the uniqueness of their language or cultural heritage. This could also support the argument by some African scholars that ethnicity existed in pre-colonial Africa in the form of ethnic boundary disputes and intertribal wars.

Nonetheless it is still contended that colonialism served to crystallize and perpetuate ethnic cleavages by an institution of divide and rule strategy by the colonial masters who dreaded the consequences of a united opposition to colonialism by Africa (Ake, 1993:32; Urok 1998:98) Besides Hugh Clifford, Nigeria colonial governor was quoted in Coleman (1958:194) as explaining to the members of the National Council for British West Africa that this “Gamming together of territories of distinct people to form colonial territories was a deliberate policy of the colonizers”. He was also quoted as implying that the people of (e.g. Egbaland) or of any of the great Northern Emirates have the right to the claim of nationhood and that it was the task of Government of Nigeria to build and fortify these national institutions. Thus, we can tell from the foregoing that though the colonizers acknowledged the reality of the nationhood - based on distinctiveness – of the tribes they forcefully welded together, it could not stop them from their exploitative tendencies.

Colonial masters fuelled the embers of ethnic conflict especially with the imposition of Hausa/Fulani Emirs on non-Hausa/Fulani ethnic minority groups. And for daring to question the authority of the imposters, the leaders of the non-Hausa/Fulani groups were severely punished. Obieha (1999) opines that memories of those periods could easily have provoked the Zangokataf - Hausa conflict of 1992.

Apart from its exploitative and oppressive tendencies, colonialism also gave birth to new bourgeoisie classes after independence. An important point to note is that at first, the nationalists were not merely interested in taking over power from the colonial masters but also in creating opportunities for plundering the economy to ensure that they reap from the situation, to reward and sustain the loyalty of their glories and their kindred/ethnic groups.

### **Government Intervention in Management of ethnicity**

Based on the 1976 constitution, section 14 sub-section 3, the composition of the government of the federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the Federal Character of Nigeria and the need to promote National Unity, and also to command National loyalty thereby ensuring that there will be no predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that government or in any of the agencies (Rourke, 1997).

This provision, which is retained in the 1999 constitution, is both a reflection over and recognition of the prominent position ethnicity has occupied in the country’s wheel of progress. The provision lacked implementation formula in the sense that it did not state who was to certify (whether) when this principle has been dully reflected in any institution and the operating condition therein.

Based on such issues of measurement and determination Ogunjemite (1987) states as follows:

The provision of federal character may have been only an innocent invention to aid the cause of 'unity in diversity'. However, because of its vagueness it seems ... so likely to default into a sanction meant to distort the higher aspirations for oneness and nationhood that are expressed rather unreservedly elsewhere in the constitution ,

A Keen study of this problem has led Arthur Nzeribe to conclude that: The present Federal system has consistently robbed Peter to pay Paul. It has practiced distribution in isolation from derivation, the result has been deprivation and injustice, which has fuelled discord and conflict (quoted in Nkwankwo 1986)

The problems of determination and measurement of the principle of Federal Character are published on educationally disadvantaged areas. Based on the principle, which aims at balancing the influence and position of the various ethnic groups in the country certain areas in the Northern region are regarded as educationally disadvantaged. People from the "so called disadvantaged areas" enjoy special privileges in "competitive" education. The objective of this principle is to make it possible for the Northerners to meet up with other ethnic groups who are presumed to be educationally advantaged.

The problem is in determining the degree of educational difference existing between the educationally disadvantaged and advantaged ethnic groups, and when it is expected that this gap will be filled. It is pertinent to ask if it is only in the educational sector that there exist disadvantaged areas.

In consideration of this and many other issues Ndukwe observed that: When we talk of real federal presence, one's mind runs to such areas as breaching the north-south infrastructure dichotomy. We refer to those institutional and study stations, we think of the position in which all military installations are all in the Northern states. Our mind runs to the inadequate number of school leavers hunting for jobs. There is the hue and cry about educational imbalance. But there are other imbalances. (Ndukwe, 1981)

From the above argument one may conclude that the provisions for the reflection of the Federal Character have not helped in combating the problem of ethnicity and in under development in the country. It has rather compounded the problem of development on the basis of this vagueness, inexplicit and complexity which leaves it determination and measurement at the mercy of whomever or whichever group that occupies the center.

At independence, the African state was granted significant power over the economy and the allocation of resources. As a result of this status at the post- independence development model in most African countries, the state came to represent the most important single organization in the national economy. In most countries in the continent, the state is the largest employer, investor, and supplier of goods and services (Ihonvbere and Ekekwe, 1988; Agbese, 1992). The group that captures the state has control of an enormous amount of resources and thus, can reward its supporters, provide for group members, and proceed to install barriers to entry into political and economic markets (Mbaku, 1997) In a situation where ethnic groups see the occupation of the centre as a means to furthering ethnic interest,

such provisions without modalities for interpretation and applications of true federalism and federal character, would consistently keep the flame of ethnicity burning (Dare, 1999)

The unresolved problem of ethnicity in the Federal Government of Nigeria has also developed national and administrative institutions in the Nigeria constitution such as federalism, federal character, National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme, zoning system, Boundary Adjustment Commissions etc. Government officials and policy implementers frequently abuse the policies and destroy the major essence of those policies they were meant to implement. As a result, they not only fail to address the very problems for which they were designed to solve but also tend to generate ill feelings among and between ethnic groups. The traditional or informal structures of managing ethnic conflicts are not necessarily identified with specialized political institutions and offices. Often third parties like elders, village heads, persons with transparent character and integrity, community and religious leaders play dominant roles in regulating conflicts (Otite, 1999; Olumba 2002). It is therefore not surprising that management of conflict has yielded little or no results but rather reinforced the need for a comprehensive ethnic management approach, which is capable of enhancing the nation's ability to speed up her rate of development.

### **Study Population.**

The study is based in Port-Harcourt, in Rivers State of South South Nigeria. The study population includes all adults (indigenes and settlers) who have lived in Port Harcourt for a very long time, well versed and experienced in the history of Nigeria and as it concerns ethnic conflict. Since this study adopts a qualitative approach, purposive non-probability sampling technique is applied in identifying and selecting respondents for the study. The purpose and criteria for selection of respondents is the ability to recount and offer useful information about Nigeria and the nature of ethnic conflict. In other words, members of the identified study population who lack sound knowledge of the history of ethnic conflicts in Nigeria were not selected for the study.

### **Instrument of Data Collection**

Data collection helps and forms the basis of the validity of study findings. The study instruments used in the study for the purpose of collecting information were the focus group discussion (FGD) approach which was raised via arrangement with the leadership of some ethnic based communities including Igbos, Hausa, Yoruba, and Efik.

### **Data Analysis**

The study objectives and questions guided the analysis and interpretation of data. The interviews and FGD conducted in the various ethnic languages were translated to English and used to support or invalidate information from other sources.

### **Focus Group Discussions Held with Four Ethnic Groups in Port-Harcourt (Rivers State). They Include; Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba and Efiks.**

In a question meant to elicit the various ethnic groups that reside in Rivers state (Port-Harcourt); it was discovered that, Rivers State with a population of about three million people occupies an area of 21,850sq.km. with two third of it in the Niger Delta geographical terrain. The dominant ethnic groups are Abua, Andoni, Ekpeye, Enganni, Ibani, Igbani, Kalabari, Ndoni, Okirika, Ijaw, Ikwere, Etche, Ogoni, and Ogba/Egbema. These various nationalities

have lived together before the creation of Rivers state and are currently distributed in twenty three (23) L. G. A's and divided into three (3) senatorial zones. These include, Rivers West, Rivers East and Rivers South-East. Ijaw and Ikwerre are the most spoken languages although pigin English is widely spoken.

### **Analysis and Interpretation of Data**

Question 1 was meant to elicit information on the various ethnic groups that reside in Rivers State, Port Harcourt. About fifteen ethnic groups were identified, but we managed to get responses from just four of the ethnic groups as being most visible in the landscape. These include the Igbos, Hausa\Fulani, Yoruba's and the Efik - though not to the exclusion of others, especially the indigenous population. From the above facts, one thing is clear; like Lagos, Port Harcourt has immense potential of becoming another melting port of an emerging cohesive Nigerian civilization. This is so given its fast pace of cosmopolitan nature.

Question 2 seeks to locate settlement patterns of the various ethnic groups outlined in question 1. The results of the finding tend to reveal on one hand, a tendency towards traditional occupational peculiarities that characterize some ethnic groups. For example, Efiks traditionally, by virtue of their riverine locality, tended more to the fishing occupation. Perhaps, this explains the need for them to settle along the beaches in Port Harcourt as revealed from above. They (Efiks) are mostly found around Bori Camp Barracks, Nzamuzo waterside, Mango Estate, Elechi Beach Waterside, Afikpo Waterside, Eleme Close 2, and Urualla Waterside.

For the Hausa/Fulani, their settlement in the Yam market and Rambo slaughter also tends towards the traditional nomadic cattle and yams businesses characteristic of the northern Nigeria. The Igbos, traditionally were palm oil merchants, given the abundance of oil palm in the region. Also, perhaps due to their mechanistic tradition, they tended to settle around the building materials axis. Apart from these peculiar occupational tendencies, there were also many "points of intersection" where there was a tendency towards an ethnic mixing. For example, Mile I area, plays host to Igbos and Yorubas, same goes for Mile 3. Again Bori Camp and Ikoku axes comprise mainly of Hausa/Fulanis coexisting with the Igbos and Efiks. For Iwofia axis, the Yoruba's are found living side by side with the Hausa/Fulani stock.

Question 3 cast more light on the occupational tendencies of the ethnic groups in question. Igbos according to the result, tend towards commerce. This perhaps, explains their predominance in the motor spare parts business. In addition, they are found in the electronics dealership, building materials and few white collar jobs.

Hausas, according to findings, dominate the abattoirs, as meat sellers and slaughterers. They also dominate certain farm produced businesses like yams, sugar canes, carrots, cabbage and beans selling that are in addition to few white collar jobs and careers in the military. Yorubas, according to the findings are mainly into the transport business (intra city), street food selling, auto mechanics/car servicing, welding and petty trading and so on.

Efiks, on their own, are identified as being mainly into commercial motorcycle operations popularly known as "Okada riding". Besides, they are also into petty trading, dealing in such businesses as hot drinks; they are also into hawking and with few in white collar jobs.

Caution must be exercised in using these classifications as they are fluid and not tight as there abound traces of one ethnic group in one business traditionally believed to be a

feature of another group. Example, nothing stops an Igbo trader from going into liquor sales. Just as noting stops a Hausa/Fulani man from running an electronics dealership business.

Question 4 seeks to discover the method employed by the ethnic groupings to survive ethnic frictions. The findings paint a picture of Rivers state nay Port Harcourt city as one characterized by friendliness, hospitability and harmonized living of the constituent ethnic groups.

It asserts that Port Harcourt city in particular and Rivers state in general has been devoid of ethnic strife and friction as have been the features of certain towns in other parts of Nigeria. It further asserts that the accommodating features of the peaceful city (Port Harcourt) make it difficult, if not impossible, for foreigners to differentiate the migrant population from the native population. In respect of this, Port Harcourt could be said to be an ethnic –crisis freed city where everyone irrespective of his/her ethnic group of origin carries on his/her business without fear of any ethnic upheaval.

Question 5 seeks to find out the impact of ethnicity on residents since they stated residing there. The findings acknowledged the reality of ethnicity. It traced the answer to the question to a definition of the problem of ethnicity. To this end, it defines an ethnic group as a set of people who consciously share certain features by way of religion, culture, language and are linked by a common interest and some forms of social participation. Members of such a group according to the definition share an ethnic identity or awareness of a distinctive origin and ways of life. Thus, the impact of ethnicity can be inferred by the level of consciousness on the part of members of an ethnic group of certain socially acquired ways of life that make them distinct from other groups.

To this end, the existence of state and ethnic cultural associations like the Ohaneze Ndigbo, Egbe Omo Oduduwa, Arewa People’s Congress and so on, in Port Harcourt and Rivers State at large is an indication of the high level of ethnic consciousness of the residents of Rivers State. These ethnic, state and clan associations basically serve to integrate and orient migrants from the group into the city and rekindle feelings of kinship even away from their natural land. They also serve to offer moral, financial and material support to members in need. Thus, to a very great extent, these ethnic consciousnesses have given rise to ethnic-based mutual benefits organizations (EMBOs).

Ethnicity as a sociological concept has been applied in many ways in reference to racism, nationalism, statism (son-of-the-soil), indigene and non-indigene syndrome. In that sense, ethnicity constitutes a monstrous social problem that has acted as fetters on the repulsive tendencies.

Question 6 explored the areas in which ethnicity has affected national development. From the findings, it was discovered that ethnicity has positively impacted on the development of certain sectors including agriculture especially on the fishing and farming sub sectors. It was also discovered that in the same vein it has positively affected commercial and industrial as well as oil and gas industries, seaport, railway system, transportation, forestry, tourism, and education, socio-economic and cultural activities and so on. Consequent upon the rapid growth of the various ethnic groups that settle in Port- Harcourt, the afore-mentioned sectors of the socio-economy have witnessed tremendous development.

The contributions of the various ethnic groups resident in Port- Harcourt, Rivers State to the overall development of the state cannot be overemphasized. Migrants are “developers” and for societies that appreciate the invaluable strength of input in the pooling of talents and

human resources derivable through the mix from migration, migration is encouraged; as an agent of social development and transformation.

Considering that Port Harcourt is not the only oil-rich city in Nigeria, perhaps, the ethnic mixtures through migration account for its giant strides, developmentally speaking. This, coupled with its reputation as a haven of peace, has made it a dream city for every potential migrant.

Question 7 found out whether ethnicity is a hindrance to development. According to the responses obtained from the respondents, the answer to the above question was "Yes". This according to them is because an ethnic group could be described as a group distinguished from others on the basis of socially acquired traits. It is a reference to a set of people who consciously share certain peculiar features such as language, religion, and culture and are linked by common interests as well as some form of social participation.

Ethnic groupings are groups that share a perception of themselves as being bonded together by historical, cultural and kinship links which set them apart from others. This tends to give ethnic groups a sentimental basis of existence, which tends to bind individuals into solidarity groups on some cultural basis. This explains why and how apartheid thrived for decades in South Africa, which was simply due to the perception of a group as being superior to another group that is rated as inferior. Beyond a biological concept of race, ethnicity comes to be anchored on cultural variables even religious differences. The behavioral manifestation(s) of the belief in one's group being superior to another could be of immense threat to the chances of participation of other stakeholders in a state enterprise.

Question 8 exposed the possibility of making our ethnic sentiments help in developing Nigeria. From the responses, it is obvious that ethnicity as an attitudinal disposition is a trait acquired through the process of socialization, from parents, peers and immediate relatives. Thus, the situation calls for the evolution of an adequate solution of the problem of ethnic conflict in Nigeria. This solution must stem from a logically coherent objective analysis and understanding of the emergence, persistence and the dynamics of ethnic conflict in its various forms both overt and covert.

There is no gainsaying the fact that man's fear of the unknown (strangers) is at the bottom of the problem. When confronted by people from outside his stock, man seeks refuge, in stereotypes, myths and prejudices as a way of filling the vacuum between what is known and that which is unknown.

From the foregoing, the study is positively disposed to advocate policies targeted at playing down on ignorance, presentation of objective fact about each and every ethnic groups without embellishments, as well as distortions. This could be achieved through extended grass root education aimed at transforming the strong ethnic chauvinistic tendencies to patriotism. Without prejudicing any ethnic group, emphasis of our national propaganda should emphasize our cultural differences as key to our potential greatness. Each culture should be encouraged to develop to its fullest potential with a view to making inputs to our overall socio-cultural and economic collective aspiration. To this end the media has a crucial role to play in this direction. Furthermore, the abolition of indigenism, statism and tribal consideration in our public life will go a long way to usher in a spirit of new Nigeria nationhood anchored on peaceful coexistence, solidarity and patriotism of the Nigeria state. These will dissonate the primordial attitudinal sentiments.

On a final note, the above will remain a mirage without a patriotic and visionary leadership who will practice what he/she preaches. A Leadership anchored on transparency,



honesty, equity and fairness to all the stake holders in the Nigeria enterprise will go a long way in helping us achieve this dream. It will inspire the confidence in the followership of follow in the footsteps of the leader who apart from being a role model will be an embodiment of the dreams and ideals of a truly united Nigeria.

From the foregoing, one can deduce that ethnic sentiments spring from man's innate tendency to display allegiance to a collectivity. But in the light of contemporary statehood as against the days of old when the tribe was the largest political unit, there is every need for a redirection of these sentiments to the higher ideals. That is the ideal of the Nigeria state, whose development is a prerequisite for the survival of the constituent ethnic groups. Until every Nigerian irrespective of tribe gets this message, the center (as Chinua Achebe would say) will refuse to hold.

### **Report / Findings**

On the strength of data gathered and analyzed, the study has investigated deeply on the ethnic composition of Rivers State, their settlement zoning pattern and their occupational dispositions. In study question five, six and seven, the study, through the respondents was able to dig into the reality of ethnicity, its negative and how ethnicity has affected the development of Port Harcourt city. It was discovered that though settlement has basically along ethnic cleavages it was strictly in an exclusive sense not comparable to what obtains in some Northern parts where we have strangers' region, Sabon Gari. This was possible because the study had an in-depth study, and was able to rediscover and examine the extent to which ethnicity has affected national development. In the same vein, the study was also able to identify the areas which ethnicity has positively affected national development.

In question eight the study, with the maximum co-operation of the respondents, was able to examine leadership problem at all levels with a view to highlighting its potentials for achieving even development by harnessing the abundant human and material resources through a visionary leadership; which could help redirect the natural sentiments to higher level of ideals.

However, it is hoped that the findings of the study have highlighted on the need for the provision of the enabling environment for governments, non-governmental organizations, agencies and communities involved in conflict management to ensure a more united, progressive, leadership towards achieving a sustainable national development through a decentralized leadership.

Finally, this study employed the focus group discussions method (FGD). The above consisted of between ten and fifteen members who assisted immensely in gathering their data with sufficient information about the study that has been carried out.

The study also assisted the group discussion in understanding the spontaneity of feelings and reasoning as well as find explanations for attitudes and behaviours of the various ethnic groups that are resident in Rivers State without losing sight of the tremendous impact they have created in the area. Thus, the hallmark of the study is that it has once again drawn to the limelight, the contentious issue of ethnicity, highlighting the possibility of exploiting ethnic sentiment to our collective advantage, to propel Rivers State and Nigeria to an unprecedented level of sustainable development.

## **Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation**

### **Summary**

The main aim of this study was to examine the extent to which ethnicity has affected the process of development in Port-Harcourt, Rivers State, vis-à-vis Nigeria. To achieve this, it purports to evaluate the impact of certain cultural beliefs and practices, socio-economic status, violent behaviors, and ethnicity on the development process in Nigeria.

As a multi-dimensional approach was devised, the interview and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were used and responding ethnic groups were purposively chosen for the study. This study was motivated by the conflict theoretical orientation, relevant literature on ethnicity, and the ethnicity question, residential segregation, government policy, and national unity, constituted the theoretical framework.

The study reveals that cultural beliefs and practices, socio-economic status, ethnicity problems, and violent behaviors' inter-relatively have negative implications on development.

### **Conclusion**

So far, the story has been one of peaceful co-existence and good neighbourliness in Rivers State. However, efforts need to be geared at ensuring that the peace is kept. To avoid the rupturing of this peace, as it has happened in some cities which pride themselves for peace only to flare up suddenly, all hands must be on deck.

Efforts must be made by all and sundry to ensure that the peace is sustained. A greater onus lies in the leadership to ensure that they in their words, action and deeds show exemplary qualities. They should exhibit a superlative sense of equity, fairness and justice to all irrespective of tribe. This is one way to earn the people's loyalty and transform the primordial instincts into patriotism.

### **Recommendation**

On the basis of the findings of the study work, certain recommendations are considered appropriate. These include:

- a. **Establishment of a social security scheme:** This will take care of certain basic economic and social needs. It will go a long way to minimize the tendency to resort to ethnic and claimed tendencies. Besides, it will be the foundation to the establishment of trust and confidence in the Nigerian state, which can cater for their basic needs; through a social security.
- b. **Implementations of legal orders in some areas:** Certain legal reforms are considered necessary. These include the abolition of the statism and or ethnic group in issues bothering on selection and recruitment. This must be backed by a transparent system based on meritocracy. This is to engender confidence in the people to strive and be the best they can anywhere in the country.
- c. **Land reforms:** This is with a view to resting the title of ownership of all land on the state, to ensuring that all and sundry are accorded equal access to land anywhere anybody chooses to reside in.

- d. **Inter tribal marriages:** This should be encouraged with a definite state policy that accords rewards to people who marry outside their ethnic groups. This is anchored on the belief that rewarded behaviours are most likely to re-occur.
- e. **Propaganda policy change:** A change in our propaganda policy must change with regards to inter-ethnic relations. Our new propaganda policy should reflect “accommodation” rather than being restrictive. It should afford every ethnic group a chance to express and actualize its full potential. It should also be tailored to engender respect for the “other’ in the realization that our diversity is the key to our strength as a nation.

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