One Hundred Years of Nationhood and the Challenges of Nation Building in Nigeria.

Ikyase Johnkennedy Tersoo[1], Egberi Anthony Ejue[2]
Department Of Political Science Federal Universsity Wukari, Nigeria
Department of Political Science Federal University Wukari, Nigeria

Abstract: *This paper seeks to examine one hundred years of Nigerian existence and the challenges of nation-building. Some literatures on the subject were reviewed while data analyses are from secondary sources. The elite theory was used to explain the issues therein. The paper reveals that since the amalgamation of Northern and southern protectorate in 1914 into a single entity by Lord Lugard, the country has been struggling on how to effectively build the nation with series of problems spanning from bad governance, socio-economic inequality, federal character dilemma, ethno-religious crises, corruptions, leadership, etc. These obstacles have over the years threatened our national integration principle which is based on building a strong and prosperous nation irrespective of our differences. The paper concludes that no task at genuine nationhood, integration and development is more urgent than rebuilding the bonds of intergroup spirit and cohesion that has been cruelly sundered in the past hundred years of amalgamation and nationhood. We must not continue to allow peoples lacking a sense of national purpose to champion our existence as a nation. The paper however, recommends that for us to live in harmony as one nation we must work tirelessly towards producing a nationalistic and a patriotic leader devoid of ethnic or religious affiliation. Efforts should be channel to foster intercultural dialogue and understanding so as to avoid conflict among intergroup which are ingredients of conflict prevention.*
Keywords: *Nationhood, Nation Building, Development, Amalgamation, Nigeria. Challenges, Prospects.*

I.   Introduction

Before the advent of the British colonialists, Nigeria as a socio-political entity was neither in existence nor contemplated; the territories that now make up Nigeria existed in fragments. We have the Benin Empire, the Lower Niger Kingdoms (popularly referred to as the Oil Rivers), the Fulani Empire of Zodge (later referred to as Sokoto), and the Kanem-Borno Empire. In addition, there were the Oduduwa Empire of the Yoruba, and the Aro-Chukwu Empire of the Ibo. Another was the Aboh Empire that sprang from the Benin Empire Alloh (2012).

However, there was no systematic contact between one empire and the other. There were isolated trade contacts among the people of the Lower Niger Kingdom and the Benin Kingdom. Different names were used for the territories now incorporated in Nigeria and the whole area was referred to as the Hausa Territories, the Niger Empire, the Niger Sudan and the Niger Coast Protectorates. In January 1894, Miss Flora Shaw, a journalist with the Times newspaper on colonial affairs, wrote an article and suggested the name 'Nigeria' for all the territories around the River Niger. In 1902, Miss Flora Shaw was married to Sir Frederick Lord Lugard who was at that time the High Commissioner for the protectorate of Northern Nigeria, who was also destined to become the Governor General of Nigeria Allo (2013). In other words, the naming of a nation was a woman's suggestion to her husband who was in a position of authority to implement it. The Nigerian state, created in 1914, as an act of British colonialism, by the amalgamation of two existing British colonial states, the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria and the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria was 100 years old on the 1st day of January 2014. This paper therefore examines the daunting challenges posed within one hundred years of our existence which grossly affect our nation-building. For ease and clarity of analysis, this paper is in five sections, namely, (i) introduction (ii) conceptual and theoretical discourse (iii) Contending Issues in Nigerian nation-building (iv) recommendations (v) conclusion.

---

[1] Ikyase Johnkennedy Tersoo is a lecturer with   Federal university wukari, Nigeria.
[2] Egberi Anthony Ejue is a lecturer with   Federal university wukari, Nigeria.

II. Conceptual and Theoretical Discourse

What is Nation-Building

There appears to be no universally agreed definition among scholars regarding the concept of nation-building. Whatever the controversy and the lack of uniformity might be, there are still some identifiable points of converge in the viewpoint of some scholars on nation-building. According to Elaigwu (2011) nation-building can be viewed in two main dimensions of identity. One closely linked to state-building which refers to the acceptance by members of the polity of a legitimacy of a central government with the central government as a symbol. Secondly nation-building involves the acceptance of other members of the civic body as equal fellow members of a corporate nation a recognition of the rights of other members to a share of common history, resources, values, and other aspects of the state. According to Walker (2011) nation building is the most common form of a process of collective identity formation with a view to legitimizing public power within a given territory. This is an essentially indigenous process which often not only projects a meaningful future but also draws on existing traditions, Institutions, and customs, redefining them as national characteristics in order to support the nation's claim to sovereignty and uniqueness. A successful nation-building process produces a cultural projection of the nation containing a certain set of assumptions, values and beliefs which can function as the legitimizing foundation of a state structure William (2010).

In the word of Smith (2012) Nation building is the conscious and focused application of our people's collective resources, energies, and knowledge to the task of liberating and developing the psychic and physical space that we identify as ours. It involves the development of behaviors, values, language, institutions, and physical structures that elucidate our history and culture, concretize and protect the present, and insure the future identity and independence of the nation. Nation building thus is the deliberate, keenly directed and focused, and energetic projection of national culture, and the collective identity. Much of the literature on nation-building involves when people transfer their commitment and loyalty from smaller tribes, villages or petty principalities to the larger central political systems Toffler (1990).

To concentrate on an empirical and analytical use of the term Nation-Building, our paper focuses basically on the three different – though interlinked – processes:

- Creation of an integrating ideology. A "nation" as one of the preconditions of Nation-Building requires some form of ideology that legitimizes and justifies a "national" self-interpretation of the respective community. As long as the members of society perceive themselves primarily as members of specific tribes or ethnic groups (e.g. Tiv, Jukum) or religious groups (e.g. christian, muslim) a common "nation" (e.g. Nigeria or Pakistan) is difficult to develop. A uniting, unifying and integration ideology does not necessarily replace previous ideologies and identities, but has to exist and to be strong enough to convince the members of the subgroups (or-sub-national entities) that they have also something in common, which is meaningful and important, and distinguishes them from other groups, that may actually belong to the same ethnic, religious or language group but are located in a different society or state. The unifying ideologies or identities can cluster around explicit "nationalist", but also around other concepts, like religion, language, "race", citizenship, etc.

- Creation of an integrated society. Besides a common identity and ideology, Nation-Building requires many practical preconditions, requires the integration of society on a practical level. It requires intensification of communication, of economic exchange, of traffic, public debate, in short: it requires that the different groups and subgroups do not just interact among themselves, but with other groups and subgroups on a "national" level. The several existing networks of communication and intercourse, in-tellectual and material, have to be integrated into a common network, to overcome re-gional, ethnic or other forms of isolation and self-centeredness. This implies an integration of infrastructure, starting with roads and other means of travel, includes the establishment of a common economy, and the functioning of the means of communication, like a functioning postal service, telecommunication (at least in modern times), and mass media which all reach the whole of society. Nation-Building will only succeed if these requirements do not only exist, but are also utilized to a significant degree, to create and sustain an intensification of exchange between the significant groups and elements of the society.

- Creation of a functioning state apparatus. Nation-Building is different from just inte-grating a society. It also means building a "Nation State". But this process of state building must correspond to the two processes mentioned above; it must fit the corresponding processes of identity building and societal integration. State building in this context has two interconnected aspects: it means that the respective society has constituted itself (or has been constituted by a dominant actor, including the state itself) as a political entity, or even as the key political entity. And the state is the main form, the main organization to express some form of political unity. Secondly, this implies many very practical and often organizational needs: the state has not just to be proclaimed, but it has to be functional. This means that it needs a functioning financial base (tax collection), it needs personnel which is loyal to it, and not primarily to some group or subgroup in society, it needs a monopoly of force (at least to some degree), a functioning legal

system of some kind, and it needs to be functioning not just in parts of the country (e.g. the capital city) but in its whole territory. And, last but not least, it needs acceptance by the population.

Nation building from which ever perspective we look it, is above alse a visionary, constructive creativity, self-determination and patriotic activity. As we can see, Nation-Building is a highly complex enterprise. It has very many preconditions to success, and it is made up of very many processes that interlink and can each succeed, fail, or stagnate. Its core from our perspective is the creating a joint society out of quite diverse and often unrelated or even antagonistic groups; of the evolvement or the setting up of a functioning state apparatus which corresponds to the respective society in question; and the creation and acceptance of an identity that fits both these processes, and of a legitimizing ideology.

For an in-depth explanation and understanding the challenges of of nation-building in Nigeria, we shall base our analysis on the elite theory. Elite theory has become a framework of discussion and understanding the society through efforts of scholars like Wilfred Pareto. Geatano Mosca and Robert Michels among others. Pareto's submission assumed a structural configuration of the society; he believes that, every society has the ruling minority those posses the qualities that afford it access to full social and political power Bottomore(1960). That every society is headed by those that are the best in such societies, he maintained that, elite from different occupation and strata of society and generally come from the same class; those who are wealth, intelligent and have all other skills to rule.

To him, each society consists of two broad classes. The high class, which again is divided into a governing elite and non-governing elite, and the second or, lower stratum, which is non elite. To Wright mills, each society has power elite that control the political system and maintains their dominant position through social schools and family social school and family relationship. Pareto argues that, the ruling elite rules by what he calls the combination of conning with force, however, despite this dominanc4e, he envisage a situation where the elite gets discovered by the ruled because of the unceasing movement of the rule and ruled from higher to lower levels and vice verse. He maintained that, people in the lower class however continue to struggle until the overthrow of the elite is achieved.

Pareto argued for the inevitability of the decay of the elite because of the natural low of death. i.e. the law of entropy, that when members of the top loose their capacity for logical reasoning which is the key to the top. They automatically give way to the emerging group. Pareto identified two human characteristics that will make elite i.e. the Residues of combination, the smartness of an individual and Residues of persistence aggression i.e. the use of force to achieve the position. This therefore means that, the ruling elite must be smart, convincing and where necessary. Use coercive force. Most a times they can also use myth to justify their dominance like the divinity of the leader etc.

Another elite scholar, Robert Michel developed the theory of the Iron law oligarchy. He argued that, in any organization, only small percentage of members would be active to produce the social leadership, with the majority dominant. This few he argues result to an oligarchy as they rest are dominant, lazy, apathetic and slavish making them incapable of self-rule. The leaders therefore are a saving grace and as such, needs total loyalty.

He identified the opportunistic attitude of the oligarchy as; those who have through their situation birth, education etc. the capacity to rule using oratory, persuasion and appeal to sentiments to enhance the cheating of the masses. He further stressed that, in this relationship, laws are passed and flow from top to down and are also subverted by the oligarchy. It is also a situation where not everybody is equal before the law and the policies that are made by a few only reflect their interest and they cling desperately to their new power and privileges and become almost irremovable. Mosca just like Michel believes in the first class oligarchy which Is always the less numerous, performs all political functions, monopolizes power and enjoys the advantage that power brings as against the demand of the lower class usually more numerous class Gassets – (1883-1955) also talked about the better people among the message that have the responsibility of ruling the generality of the messages. Here it lies the issue of class domination of political power and authority in Nigeria.

This theory is very vital in explaining the daunting challenges of nation building in Nigeria. This is because the Nigerian society is structured in such a way that only few people enjoy and benefit from the nation at the expense of the majority. The elite who occupy key leadership position in the state have negatively abused the nation building. This is evident when poverty unemployment, bad governance etc. has taken the centre stage in the country thereby hindering the state of building a prosperous nation.

Challenges of Nation-Building in Nigerian

Since the amalgamation of northern and southern protectorate in 1914 by Fredrick Lugard, a number of national issues have generated heated debates and crises, which have threatened the entire fabric of nation-building. These include:

(i) Bad governance,
(ii)   socio-economic inequalities,
(iii) Ethno-religious Conflicts,
(iv)   Federal Character Dilemma,
(v)   Corruption, and
(vii) Leadership crisis.

Bad Governance- Bad governance is the exact opposite of good governance. It is exercised through bad leadership. It is complete absence of good leadership and good governance. It means lack of respect for the fundamental human rights of citizens, lack of judicious use of natural resources, fraud and other corrupt practices; in short, it has no respect for principles of accountability and transparency. Just as good governance promotes the accumulation of financial, physical, social and political capital, bad governance inhibits or drains away that accumulation. For development to take place in any society there must be serious transformation in the quality of governance. For every governed country, corruption must be present throughout the system of government. Public infrastructure decay or are never built the resource at the state disposal are diverted to private ends.

In the context of bad governance, individuals seek governmental positions in order to collect rent and accumulate personal wealth through the conversion of public resources into private goods. There is no commitment to the public goods and no confidence in the future. There is no respect for law and no rule of law. This is the hopeless situation we found ourselves in due to bad leadership exercised through bad governance. The only way to generate truly sustainable development, according to Diamond (2004:226), is to bring about fundamental transformation in the nature and quality of governance. To him, governance permeate the entire environment of development, merging with attitudes, value to the expectation to the point where it is hard to know culture ends and institutions begin

The leaders that came to power after independents did not come with any ideology of their own. The colonial master too did not leave them with any. They come to power without any agenda of development for the people. They where only handle political independence without economic independence. This political independence they saw it as do or die affair. For one to control the power. This power, they use arbitraritry for their own selfish ends to the detriment of people they are suppose to be serving,. There is absence of political will, the people are empowered and there is complete breakdown of trust between the leaders and the people. The leaders have complete abandoned the people

It is not easy to eradicate poverty in any society no matter the amount of resources available in the country but as Marshall (2013: 714) observed there is no moral justification for extreme poverty side by side with great wealth". It is the opinion of any people that the problem with Nigeria is in the area of instability, policy implementation and corruption. All these can be solved through good purposive leadership excised through good governance which Nigeria is in dare need for all round development to take place.

The Challenge of Socio-Economic Inequalities - An important aspect of nation-building is the building of a common citizenship. But how can we have a common citizenship when the person in Ilorin has a radically different quality of life from the person in Yenagoa? Or when the woman in Gusau is more likely to die in childbirth than the woman in Gboko? Through the development of the economy and equal opportunities for all, or through the development of social welfare safety nets, mature nations try to establish a base-line of social and economic rights which all members of the national community must enjoy. Not to enjoy these socio-economic rights means that the people involved are marginalized from national life. That is why in many Western European countries; contemporary nation-building is about preventing 'social exclusion' or the exclusion of significant segments of the population from enjoying basic social and economic rights Jimoh, (2008).
In Nigeria, however, not only are many of our citizens denied basic rights such as the right to education and health, there is also serious variation in the enjoyment of these rights across the country. As a consequence, the citizen is not motivated to support the state and society, because he or she does not feel that the society is adequately concerned about their welfare. Secondly socio-economic inequalities across the country fuels fears and suspicious which keep our people divided.

Let me draw your attention to some of these socio-economic inequalities. If we take the level of immunization of children against dangerous childhood diseases, we note that while the South-East has 44.6% immunization coverage, the North-West has 3.7% and North-East 3.6%. If you take the education of the girl-child as indicator, you see a similar pattern of inequality with the South-East having an enrolment rate of 85%, South-West 89%, South-South 75%, North-East 20%, and North-West 25%. Only 25% of pregnant women in the North-West use maternity clinics, while 85% of the women in the South-East do. It is not surprising that 939% more women die in child-birth in the North-East, compared to the South-West. Education and poverty levels are also important dimensions of inequalities across Nigeria. If we take admissions into Nigerian

universities in the academic year 2000/1, we see that the North-West had only 5% of the admissions, while the South-East had 39%. As for poverty, the Governor of the Central Bank, Charles Soludo, recently pointed out that while 95% of the population of Jigawa State is classified as poor, only 20% of Bayelsa State is so classified. While 85% of Kwara State is classified as poor, only 32% of Osun is in the same boat Jimoh, (2008).

These inequalities pose two related challenges to nation-building. Firstly, high levels of socio-economic inequalities mean that different Nigerians live different lives in different parts of the country. Your chances of surviving child-birth, of surviving childhood, of receiving education and skills, all vary across the country. If different parts of Nigeria were separate countries, some parts will be middle income countries, while others will be poorer than the poorest countries in the world! A common nationhood cannot be achieved while citizens are living such parallel lives. Inequalities are a threat to a common citizenship. Secondly, even in those parts of the country that are relatively better off, the level of social provision and protection is still low by world standards Smith (2012). The 20% that are poor and unemployed in Bayelsa State are still excluded from common citizenship benefits. We therefore need a Social Contract between the people on the one hand, and the state and nation on the other. The state and nation must put meeting the needs of the disadvantaged as a key objective of public policy. Such an approach can make possible a common experience of life by Nigerians living in different parts of the country and elicit their commitment to the nation. Instead of resorting to the divisive politics of indigene against settler as a means of accessing resources, a generalized commitment to social citizenship will create a civic structure of rights that will unite people around shared rights and goals.

Poverty and nation-building are strange bedfellows, whether the poor are 20% or 85% of the population. A largely marginalized citizenry, increasingly crippled by poverty and the lack of basic needs, can hardly be expected to play its proper role in the development of the nation. Nations are built by healthy and skilled citizens Muhammed (2008). On grounds of both equity and efficiency, we need to promote the access of the bulk of the Nigerian population to basic education, health, and housing. Nigeria needs a social contract with its citizens as a basis for demanding their loyalty and support.

Ethno-Religious Conflicts-Nigeria is widely acclaimed as a society with vast ethnic, religious and cultural diversities; the Nigerian state has been be-devilled with bitter ethno-religious crises especially after independent. Even in this fourth Republic where democratic processes are initially thought to be more disposed to mediating the country's diversities peacefully; violent ethnic conflicts have been more rampant, thereby slowing down national progress and threatening national unity and stability.

Poverty is a dominant factor in the rising trend of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria. Poverty, which is manifested in both unemployment and deterioration of social infrastructure, provides the bedrock for ethnic conflicts. Many people are unemployed. Many functional factories are not working to full capacity, leading to retrenchment of workers and an increase in the unemployment figure. Those who escape retrenchment and are still working find it increasingly difficult to collect their salaries, as some employers sometimes owe their workers' salaries amounting to many months or a times years Muhammed (2008). Most families, therefore find it difficult to feed themselves or cater for other essential needs like shelter, clothing and healthcare. Due to this pathetic scenario, family norms and values have collapsed across the country, as most parents can no longer adequately control their children, kith and kin. This situation provides ample opportunity for ethno-religious conflicts because the jobless youths and hungry children become ready tools of selfish leaders in fomenting trouble and causing conflicts across the country. The promise of a meager amount of money with little enjoyment makes the youths ever willing to undertake such a venture. They are overwhelmed by the available goodies and booties without serious consideration for the consequences of their actions Gofwen (2004).

Furthermore, prolonged military rule manifested in the forceful suppression of the ethnic aspirations of many minority groups, while the monopolization of power by the majority groups stimulated violent conflicts afterwards Uju (2004). In addition, the shift of Presidential Power to the South led to some agitations, which were given religious coloration, and these agitations also elicited reactions from some elements in the South who continuously clamored for a favorable system of revenue distribution and resource control. Ethno-religious conflicts in this era have been further heightened by the citizen/indigene syndrome; Land ownership and the indigene/settler debacle have always generated security concern in the country, particularly in the Fourth Republic. Even within the same ethnic group, the problem of who owns the land, who is an indigene and who is a settler, are sources of violent disputes. For example, the Ife and Modakeke are Yoruba, while the Aguleri and Umuleri are Igbo, yet land disputes among these sub – ethnic groups have been intense and devastating in terms of large scale destruction of lives and property. In addition to intra – group conflicts, inter – ethnic conflicts have been on the rise in recent times, especially between the Urhobos and Itshekiris in Delta State, Tivs and Jukuns in Benue State, Ijaws and Ilajes in Ondo State, Jukuns and Kutebs in Taraba State and the Hausa – Fulani against Northern Minorities in most of the Northern States Olu (2006).

The wave of religious violence across the country, particularly in the North, is due to the politicization of religion by the selfish ruling elite who manipulate religious emotions of the masses for selfish personal and elitist objectives. But, Nigeria, as an heterogeneous and multi – religious society, must promote its secularity at all cost. Moreover, the less the government involves itself in religious matters, the better for national development, nation – building and peaceful co – existence.

The Federal Character Dilemma -Federal character and its application is another contentious issue in nation-building. Federal Character, which is a key provision in the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria as amende, has been a major source of tension in Nigerian Federalism. According to its enacting law:

The composition of the federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried in such 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 shall 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 its agencies.

Put simply, Federal Character is a euphemism for ethnic balancing. It is an instrumentality for ensuring unity in diversity by balancing official appointments between groups and within the officer corps of the armed forces. There is need to emphasize that the controversial idea of Federal Character, which has become an integral part of Nigeria's federal system, is not peculiar to Nigeria Ali (2003),. For example, the United States of America too applies it in the form of "Affirmative Action" and India too as "Quota System" in several areas. However, what has happened in practice in Nigeria since 1979 is that the conflicting interpretation and faulty implementation of the Federal Character principle elicited results that were almost completely opposed to the aims of promoting national unity and loyalty. Clearly, these problems contributed immensely to the contradictions and disharmonies that have since marred inter – governmental and inter – group relations in the country Oyedele (1999),.

Corruption-Corruption is a global phenomenon but it is more prevalent and destructive in the Third World countries. That corruption in Nigeria has become an endemic problem threatening the country's socio – economic and political development is common knowledge. While acknowledging the threat of corruption to the Nigerian State, Hon. Ghali Umar Na' Abba, former Speaker of Nigeria's House of Representatives declared in 2003 that"

While we cannot rule out the incidence of corruption and bribery in almost every facet of our society, it is particularly resident in the infrastructure areas in ministries or monopolistic parastals saddled with the task of making infrastructure available to the public – water, telecommunication, electricity (NEPA), roads and railways (NRC).

In that same year, a Central Bank of Nigeria Director stated that "the avalanche of frauds and unprofessional / unethical practices in the industry in recent years is eroding public confidence in the system Dukor (2006). In 2004, Transparency International (TI), the world – acclaimed anti – corruption watchdog, ranked Nigeria as the third most corrupt country in the world, after Haiti and Bangladesh. It also stated that billions of dollars are lost to bribery in public purchasing, particularly in the oil sector of the economy. Furthermore, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) declared that Nigeria has maintained a seventy percent rise in poverty inspite of an income of over two hundred billion dollars in oil revenues since 1970, and her per capital income has hardly improved ever since. Dukor (2006).

Corruption in Nigeria is, primarily, a political problem. The incidence of corruption in a nation is as a result of the lack of political will on the part of the political leadership and the inability of the state to maintain law and order. Thus, business corruption is a fall – out of the failure to tackle political corruption, which casts doubts upon the moral uprightness of the state as a whole and on the political will of the leadership to manage the affairs of the nation. It follows simple logic that where there is absence of political corruption is where the state operates under a high ethical order and upholds, protects and enforce the rule of law on itself and on its citizens. Under the rule of law and justice, the state machinery works for the good of all and there will be no stealing of public funds, inflation of contracts, forgeries, and mismanagement of money in banks, industries and government beaurocracies. In a nutshell, as it has played out in Nigeria, political corruption and business corruption are two sides of the same coin. In this regard, it is important to note that the seedy financial scandals exposed in the Fourth Republic involved several financial institutions. For example, former Inspector General of Police (IGP) Tafa Balogun's financial frauds involved the laundering of billions of Naira under different names in different banks. Similar method was also employed by government officials involved in "Ikoyigate", a reference to the shameful fraud involving the sale of government properties in Ikoyi, Lagos, and other financial scandals that rocked the Fourth Republic across the Local, State and Federal Government units, including the Presidency itself.

Electoral fraud is another dimension of the corruption syndrome in Nigeria. The massively rigged General Elections of 2003 and 2007 are undoubtedly the most fraudulent in the country's political history. By

the conduct, nature and outcome of the polls, the Nigerian state clearly demonstrated its expertise and will to be corrupt, the will to corrupt the polity and the business society, coupled with the lack of will to enforce the relevant legislations against electoral and financial crimes. The electoral fraud perpetuated by the state and some political parties in 2003 was acknowledged by many international observers. The European Union Election Monitoring Mission stated that the elections were marred by serious irregularities and fraud in many states. According to the United States-based International Republican Institute (IRI), the 19th April presidential and gubernatorial elections suffered in some parts of Nigeria as a result of numerous uncorrected administrative and procedural errors combined with many observed instances of obvious premeditated electoral manipulations". The Commonwealth Observer Group also observed that:

In parts of Enugu and Rivers State, proper electoral processes appear to have broken down and there was intimidation. In Rivers State in particular, our observers reported widespread and serious irregularities and vote rigging. The official results which emerged from Rivers State bore little relation to the evidence gathered by our observers on the ground.

These statements are indeed bullet holes in the corruption – riddled political history of Nigeria. The scenario is even more pathetic when one considers the debilitating impact of fraudulent elections and the resultant governments on national development and nation building. Corruption begets corruption. A corrupt and un – ethical politician who emerges from a corrupt election cannot govern well and this will be a challenge to nation building as we have seen in the country since the amalgamation.

Leadership Crisis-The various challenges of nation – building, some of which have been detailed upon earlier on in this paper, have been compounded by the leadership crisis. Though, the leadership challenge, like the Sword of Damocles, hangs above all nations, the issue has however assumed a crisis dimension of monumental consequences particularly in Less Developed Countries (LDCs) Elaigwu (2011). Nigeria is a nation born in hope and optimism but has lived in anxiety for most of its fifty year – history due to the country's failure to produce a nationally acceptable leadership that transcends ethnic, regional and religious boundaries, and that can unite its diverse peoples for mobilization towards national development. In the light of this, it is valid to support the argument that the basic problem with the Nigerian federation is the failure of leadership. All other factors of disunity, instability and under –development have been nurtured and given momentum by leadership failure. Criticisms against Nigerian leaders across Local, State and Federal government levels are many and justified. These include corruption, unpatriotic, selfishness, despotism, tribalism, and religious bigotry Alloh (2013).

Nigeria's political history since independence has shown clearly through her various conflicts, coups and counter – coups, as well as a civil war, that the Nigerian ruling elite (both civilian and military) are divided along many lines, particularly along tribal, ethnic, religious and regional lines. This has led to inter – elite rivalries, mutual suspicion and status conflicts among the ruling elite. Thus, government and politics in Nigeria has been characterized by deadly competitions and conflicts of hostile subcultures arising various danger signals that occasionally threatened the continued existence of the country. Under successive Nigerian leaderships, almost every issue has been politicized and interpreted to serve as a weapon of political domination or intimidation. As a consequence, various issues like elections, census, state creation, religion, political appointments, revenue sharing and lately, resource control have ignited serious socio – political crises. This tragic situation has compelled some observers to conclude that for Nigeria to resolve her leadership debacle she needs heroes in the form of men with extra – ordinary talents. But this raises further problems: who are these heroes? Where, how and when shall they be found? This, in my opinion, is the crux of the Nigerian dilemma.

III.   Conclusion/Recommendation

This paper has attempted to show the depressing challenges of nation-building after onehundread years. From the work it could be seen that since the amalgamation of northern and southern protectorates in1914 to form what is Nigeria today the nation has not made discernible progress towards nation-building

Attempt by successive government especially Gowon, Babangida, Shagari etc, to build the nation has failed. Hence the country still lack socio-economic development required to improve the living standard of the people. On the basis of the above therefore, we need to make the following recommendations;

First Nigerian democratic leaders should avoid the politics practiced with regard to subjective factors and primordial loyalty to one's place of birth, social connection and group affinity. Consequently, voting pattern has been ethnic-based. Democratization is always directed towards consolidation of ethnics. Campaigns are not issue-based and election victory is a function of level of intimidation, thuggery and rigging. Sub national consideration has displaced national interest and mediocrity took preference over merit and competence in the election of national leaders. The unfolding events in Nigeria evidently point to a departure from the guides to nation building.

Secondly, Nigerian leaders should shun politics of sectionalism; Politics in Nigeria has been described as sectional politics where denial of rights takes priority in the distribution of and access to national resources.

The segregated politics of the governments at all levels create primordial ethnic loyalties where groups jostle for the "national cake" in a way that could inhibit the continuity of the Nigerian State. Ajayi (1995) recaptures this assertion when he opines that "politics and political parties were ethno-centrically based. Sub national considerations overshadowed national interest. Primordial politics and the syndrome of the 'son of the soil' took preference over merit and competence in the choice of national leaders. All this are factors of nation destruction.

Moreso, our political leders should embrace each other the culture of intolerance that leads to denial of rights to participate in politics has made individual to think and believe that fighting for the national interests is a perversion and in contrast, fighting for individuals and groups is 'an acceptable norm' in Nigeria. Hence this lead to destruction of lives and property which is not healthy for nation building. Politics and political behaviour in the country are soaked in the 'miry clay of zero sum' where tenacity of office has become a rule rather than exception.

Onyeoziri (2002) emphasized the evil of denial of rights when he warned that: By subjecting the minority nationalities to the domination of the majority nationalities and also subjecting the entire Nigerian edifice to the domination of one of the regions, regionalism questioned the legitimacy of the Nigerian federation. The inherent inequality in the latter also fostered hostility and competition among the component units of the nation state. This in turn excited subunits nationalism against nationalism for the Nigerian nation-state. Each of these affects of the policy of regionalism: threat to system stability: alienation of citizen loyalty from the Nigerian state: undermining of the legitimacy of the political order. All these are indices of destroying a nation.

Furthermore Nigerian political leaders should strictly utilize the Electoral reforms hence it will completely eliminate political violence, sit-tight syndrome, corruption and ineptitude and improve political participation. Reform is also capable of bringing about good governance, as meritocracy rather than mediocrity determines who occupies what position. The inseparable synergy between politics and economy makes reform in electoral processes a matter of necessity. Political stability creates economic stability. To evolve robust economy therefore, it is desirable to have electoral reforms geared towards political stability.

References

[1]. Alabi, D. (2006) "Federalism and the Quest for National Development" (Lagos, Concept Publications.
[2]. Ali, W. (2003), "The Development of Federalism in Nigeria; A Historical Perspective" in Gana and Egwu (eds). Federalism in Africa: Framing the National Question New Jersey, Africa World Press.
[3]. Allo, E. (2013), A History of African Societies, U.K Cambridge university press Cambridge.
[4]. Alloh , T. (2012), Nigeria Early History, Ibadan university Press.
[5]. Bottomore, J. (1960), Elite and Society (2nd Edition). London; Routledge.
[6]. Diamond, J. (2004), Good Governance and Accountability. London Oxford University Press
[7]. Dobbins, J (2007). The Beginner's Guide to Nation-Building. Santa Monica,(Califonia. USA: RAND Corporation.
[8]. Dukor, M. (2006)"Corruption in Nigeria: The Moral Question of Statehood in Africa" in Hassan Saliu et al (eds.) Democracy and Development in Nigeria: Social Issues and External Relations (Lagos, Concept Publications).
[9]. Elaigwu, J.I (2011), "Topical Issues in Nigeria's Political Development, (Jos; AHA Publishing House,).
[10]. Gofwen, G. (2004), Religious Conflicts and Nation – Building in Northern Nigeria: The Throes of Two Decades Kaduna, Human Rights Monitor..
[11]. Jimoh, I.(2008),"National Resources for Sustainable Development: The Attendant Crisis and Control" in Hassan Saliu et al (eds.) Perspectives on Nation – Building and Development in Nigeria: Environmental and Economic Issues (Lagos, Concept Publications.
[12]. Marshall, G. (2013), Poverty and the Question of Good Governance. New Jersey, Africa World Press.
[13]. Mylonas, H (2012). The Politics of Nation-Building : Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities. New York: Cambridge University Press.
[14]. Michael, O, (1986), Certificate History Of Nigeria (Longman Group Limited, London and Lagos).
[15]. Muhammed, A. (2008), "Some Comments on Five Decades of Nigerian Federalism" in Hassan Saliu et al (eds). Perspectives on Nation – Building and Development in Nigeria: Political and Legal Issues, Lagos, Concept Publications.
[16]. Olu- Adeyemi L. (2006). Conflicts and travails of National integration in Nigeria's fourth republic. Accessed on 27/2/2014. www.dawodu.com/adeyemi3.htm
[17]. Oyedele, S. (1999), "Federalism in Nigeria" in Hassan Saliu (ed) Issues in Contemporary Political Economy of Nigeria Ilorin, Sally and Associates.
[18]. Saliu, H.(2008), "The New Wave of Violence in the Niger Delta and its Implications for Nigerian Foreign Policy" in Hassan Saliu et al (eds.) Perspectives on Nation – Building and Development in Nigeria: Environmental and Economic Issues (Lagos, Concept Publications.
[19]. Smith, A (2012). "State- and Nation-Building," in John Hall (ed.), States in History. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
[20]. Toffler A (1990), " Power Shift; Knowlegde, Wealth and Violence at the Edge of the 21st Century (Great Britain; Bantam Free Press).
[21]. Uju, J.o (2004), Political Twist in Religious Crisis in Nigeria; In onuaha and and okpoko (ed) Ethnic Nationalism and Democratic Consolidation; Perspective from Nigeria and United States of America. AP Express Publishers Enugu.
[22]. Walker, C. (2011), "Nation-Building or Nation-Destroying?". London Oxford University Press.
[23]. Willian, K(2010),. Nation building in comparative contexts (New paperback print. ed.). New Brunswick [N.J.]: Aldine Transaction.