

ANNEXING CULTURAL, HUMAN AND NATURAL RESOURCE DIVERSITY FOR NIGERIA'S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Cultural diversity has often been presented as one of the potent un-doings of the development enterprise in Nigeria, though such attributes as dissimilar culture; natural and human resources, ought to have been engaged as a veritable platform for attaining sustainable social transformation. However, differences in cultural and economic inclinations among various ethnic groups in the country have been explored by the political elite as useful tools for attaining political power and for self-perpetuation in government. The country has continued to witness agitation for resource control by ethnic nationalities in different parts of the country; fanning of embers of tribal polarization, stifling of the national development agenda, and to a considerable extent facilitating prevalent social in-cohesiveness across the country. It is against this background that this paper focuses on espousing the place of effective engagement of subsisting culture, natural and human resources in the process of attaining sustainable development in Nigeria.

Keywords: Cultural pluralism, sustainable development, cultural diversity, human resources, natural resources, national integration, ethnicity.

INTRODUCTION

On 1 January 2016, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - adopted by world leaders in September 2015 at an historic UN Summit - officially came into force. Over the next fifteen years, with these new Goals that universally apply to all countries, will mobilize efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind (United Nations Organization, 2016). The new goals call for action by all countries, poor, rich and middle-income to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. They recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and addresses a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection. The United Nations defines sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Across the globe, there is yet a clear-cut description, positive or negative, of the relationship between ‘diversity’ as a concept and ‘development’ as a process. What has been pertinent is that it is the use to which varying societies put their extant diversities into that will determine whether it would be beneficial or detrimental to their peculiar developmental agenda. Indeed, it has been universally agreed that power relations do impact intercultural relationship, and the problems that precursors of conflict are not in the culture itself, but the use to which we make of culture. While a ‘culture’ is described here as a set of distinguishing material and non-material features of a society or of a social group, the phrase ‘cultural diversity’ depicts an array of different ethnicities, societies or peoples with different backgrounds, religions and traditions, living and interacting together within a common social space. Culture, in addition, entails art and literature, lifestyles, ways of co-existing, values systems, traditions and beliefs and cultural diversity, of course, goes beyond a natural fact that we need to simply recognize and respect in our day-to-day existence. It is about plurality of knowledge, wisdom and resources, which all inter-relate to enhance and move our existence forward.

Over time and space, an argument for suppressing divergent cultural groups existing within the same nation, and encouraging assimilation rather is that cultural diversity hampers the process of development. While much of this argument today reflects the prevalent scenario emanating from sub-Saharan African especially, such could not be readily affirmed for other parts of the world where diversity has been serving as the bedrock of their developmental drive. For instance, Nigeria – a country that is rich in diversity, but struggling with sustainable economic growth and social development since inception nearly a century ago (1914). The country’s population of over 150 million people belong to about 250 different ethno-linguistic groups, with three major groups: The Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo, accounting for about 29, 21, and 18 per cent respectively of the total population (Falola and Heaton, 2008). The Hausa-Fulani, Muslims are in the North; the Yoruba, followers of both Christian and Islamic faiths are in the South-West and the Igbo, most of whom are Christians are in the South-East. Smaller groups have, therefore, tended to cluster around these three groups over the years, creating unstable and ethnically divisive polity.

Ordinarily, diverse societies should reap from benefits accruing through dynamism and creativity ingrained in interactions and interpositions of different cultural groups. The United States is a leading reference of country founded on diversity and tolerance, which enormous social and economic success has followed; so also Malaysia, with 62% of its people Malays and other indigenous groups, 30% Chinese and Indians, 8%, was the global 10th fastest growing economy during 1970-1990 years when it successfully implemented its affirmative action plan under the *Bumiputera* re-distributional policy (Adeniran, 2007).

In Nigeria, however, diversity has not been allowed to serve the path of our national development due to its nefarious utilization, especially among the political elites.

WHAT IS DIVERSITY?

Contextually, diversity reflects the variety of human societies within a defined geographical entity or at the larger global level. Meanwhile, in recent social science discourse, cultural plurality has been equated with ‘multiculturalism’ – that is, a state of convergence of multiple cultures within a social entity, for instance in organizations, neighborhoods, cities or countries. In this regard ‘multiculturalism’ enables and affirms regard for diversity. Basically, diversity entails a commitment to recognizing and appreciating the variety of features that make individuals different in an environment. Instances of such features have included: age; gender category, reasoning capability, economic background, education, ethnicity; geographical background; languages; physical appearance; political affiliation; natural resources; race; religious beliefs; sexual orientation *et cetera*. Cultural diversity is a phrase generally used in describing a society with people of different ethnic roots which manifest in their languages, mode of dressing, arts, as well as other traditional practices which are either similar or distinctively different from each group. It takes different forms in different settings; in some, such as South Africa and the U.S., it may be associated with racial differences; in others such as Nigeria, with religious or ethnic differences.

Although there has been a notable agreement among anthropologists that human race has its conceptual origin in Africa in about 2 million years ago, since then individuals have spread throughout the world; successfully adapting to essentially varying climatic conditions. Subsequently, various distinct societies that emerged across the globe have been different remarkably from each other, and many of these differences have persisted till today. Aside from the more pertinent cultural differences that exist among the people for instance, language, dressing, foods and traditions, there have equally been potent differences in the way societies organize themselves, in their peculiar conception of morality and in the ways they interact with their environment.

By analogy with biodiversity, which is thought to be essential to the long-term survival of life on earth, it has been argued that interpersonal relations may be vital for the long-term survival of humanity; and that the conservation of indigenous cultures may be as important to humankind as the conservation of species and ecosystems is to life as a whole. The General Conference of the *United Nations’ Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization* (UNESCO) in 2001, affirmed in Article 1 of the *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* that “...cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature” (UNESCO, 2001).

Meanwhile some have argued against this position by affirming that it is rather unethical to wittingly conserve “less developed” societies, because this will deny people, in particularly underdeveloped nations from transmuting from the subsisting state of poverty to development. To some other individuals, particularly those with strong religious beliefs, it is in the best interests of individuals, and of humanity in general that all people adhere to a specific model for society or specific aspects of such a model. As a concept, however, human interactions is, indeed, confusing to quantify, but a good measure is thought to be a count of the number of languages spoken in specific society, country, region or in the world at large.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND DEVELOPMENT

Cultural Diversity presupposes respect of fundamental freedoms, namely freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of opinion and expression, and freedom to participate in the cultural life of one's choice. In this light, culture, in its enhanced diversity possesses intrinsic value for the developmental enterprise, as well as, social cohesion and progress since the notion of 'freedom' has remained central to socio-economic growth across ages.

Individuals, within a cultural grouping, attain their sense of identity; self-esteem and existential values from the community in which they grow up and live. These aspects of an individual's character and knowledge are acquired through the expression of their community's culture, including: language, music, visual arts, artisanal and traditional practices, theatre, poetry and song. Culture is, thus, integral to individual and community stability, their sense of worth and their capacity to make sense of the world (International Network for Cultural Diversity, 2002). At another realm, culture and cultural products are routinely situated within the intent of hegemonic inclination of provisioning of leadership with respect to ideas, values, beliefs and traditions at local, regional and global levels.

Within the global "knowledge economy", culture has emerged as a significant end for local, regional and global struggle for leadership. The mass media, the arts and related cultural industries are powerful political phenomena because of their capacity to influence, reinforce or challenge the control of those who lead our organisations, communities and the world as a whole. Like "culture", there is no one definition of "development". Generally, however, "development" is deemed a complex process that seeks to overcome the adverse social, economic and human conditions prevalent in any given society. "Development" primarily aims at providing such countries or communities with the requisite skills, technology, access to information, cash and other resources, to enable them to be relatively self-sustaining.

Depending on their peculiar conditions, "developing" countries will define development and their developmental needs or priorities differently. But while we could grasp the process, it does not always serve the same interests across varying institutions and societies. For example, for multinational corporations, development may simply imply capabilities for minimal skills and resources which post-colonial communities require in order for them to continue to provide relatively skilled, but cheap labour to produce the goods that generate profits elsewhere. It might also imply the "development" of real and potential markets (with sufficient literacy, numeracy and earning power) to whom to export or sell their goods, in order to provide better returns for foreign shareholders. At another realm, development may have the rhetoric of serving "the people", but the forms that such development takes (including the political and economic forms and strategies), or the priorities undertaken, may simply reflect the short-term economic and social self-interests of such elites rather than the interests of the majority of citizens. At this point, real "development" is seen as an adequate utilization of intrinsic resources such as obtainable in prevalent diversities among a people in the process of national advancement. Such utilization would be largely home grown putting into cognizance extant institutional specificities within the social configuration.

Generally, the legacies that development seeks to deal with are quite enduring – lack of housing, poor education, inadequate health care, unemployment, *et cetera*. However, the development strategies initially employed to address these derived foundations from European/Western economic and social models. But after their first two International Decades for Development, UNESCO facilitated the establishment of a World Decade for Cultural Development from 1987. The context of this “cultural development” model emphasizes that:

.... Despite the progress achieved, the first two International Development Decades (in the sixties and seventies) revealed the limitations of a development concept based primarily on quantitative and material growth.

.... From 1970 onwards, critical reflection gave rise to the Intergovernmental Conferences on Cultural Policies...in all parts of the world, and finally led to the Mexico City Conference of 1982 to put forward with great conviction the idea that “culture constitutes a fundamental part of the life of each individual and of each community...and development...whose ultimate aims should be focused on humankind...must therefore have a cultural dimension.”

.... The two principal objectives of the World Decade for Cultural Development – greater emphasis on the cultural dimension in the development process and the stimulation of creative skills and cultural life in general – reflect an awareness of the need to respond to the major challenges which shape the horizon of the twenty-first century.

.... Development impacts directly and indirectly on the way of life of a community. Education, technology, new skills, increased earning power and access to information – all of these affect the individuals and the communities who are the beneficiaries of “development”.

As such, development may be perceived as a cultural procedure that may be hindered or facilitated by culture. Development impacts upon the culture of those intended to be “developed” and in turn their culture impacts on the development process. Development is seen to engender new ideas, and enhances access to information, and contact with other societies. The promise of a better quality of life, new aspirations, and invariably, a local or indigenous culture is influenced and evolves organically within the paradigm of the development ends and strategies.

Initial models and strategies of development were not as effective as they might have been because they were at odds with the cultural paradigms of those whose lives were to be improved. As well, these development models were themselves constructs and carriers of particular cultural values and beliefs (and could thus be viewed in some instances simply as neo-colonial strategies, that is, more sophisticated attempts at harnessing the cheap labour and raw materials of developing countries). Consequently, the progressive view emerged that development must be sensitive to, and must, as far as possible, be integrated into the cultures of the intending beneficiaries.

SOME SALIENT ISSUES EMERGING FROM NIGERIA'S CULTURAL PLURALITY

Throughout the nation's history, the issues of marginalization, identity politics and national integration have continued to reverberate both in popular and intellectual discourse on Nigeria's cultural plurality. Marginalization and neglect have remained the reasons for incessant agitations by ethnic groups and regions in Nigeria. These cries, usually from the ethnic minorities have graduated from mere rivalry to palpable hatred and then to conflagrations of destructive proportions (Adejoh, 2005). The Nigerian three-year civil war that ended in 1970 was a fall-out of alleged ethnic cleansing and marginalization by one of the country's ethnic nationalities. The current civilian dispensation has witnessed numerous ethno religious cum communal based contestations and strife, and sometimes culminating in agitations for self-determination and even secession. From the Igbos in the South East, through to the oil bearing minorities of Niger Delta, to the minorities of the middle belt, and across Nigeria, allegations of marginalization, discrimination and injustice have remained the principal refrain (Oronto & Doifie, 2003; Digifa, 2003). Coupled with these agitations by the minor ethnic nationalities is the general expression by many that the Nigerian state has been captured by a selected few who dominate and oppress the mass of the people by converting the state resources into private property. This feeling of marginalization has resulted in bitterness, frustration, corruption and disloyalty. Hence, there has been a general discontent among the populace, which has necessitated extant search for an all-inclusive platform for the re- invigoration of the social system.

Closely linked with the marginalization question is identity politics. Identity politics is the process of categorizing and de-categorizing people by means of (ethnic, religious and / or gender cleavages into groups on the bases of shared and presumed similarities and stereotypes rather than actual traits, attributes or characteristics; even when differences between people being pigeonholed into one group are striking. Such categorization and de-categorization has become the basis for a range of issues relating to issues of rights, opportunities, privileges and entitlements of Nigerian citizens (Alubo, 2003) and hence there are contestations and struggles to maintain the *status quo* by those favoured and for change by those left out in the cold. Despite the fact that the Nigerian constitution is quite explicit on the rights and privileges of all its citizens, a number of problems have arisen in the translation of its provisions to reality. Part of this complication is the categorization of Nigerian citizens into indigenes and settlers.

The Federal Character Commission has defined indigeneity in the local council and states as the basis for allocating public goods. It accepts people whose parents and/or grandparents were indigenes and/or people accepted as indigenes by the council. When one is an indigene of a local council in a state s/he is automatically an indigene of that State (Federal Character Commission ND: 16). Thus Nigerians, who have their ethnic genealogy elsewhere, even if they were born in a particular state or lived all their lives there, are regarded as "settlers" (Alubo, 2006; Ibrahim, 2006). A settler is regarded as a stranger, a sojourner who may have been born in a location but is regarded as a bird of passage who would ultimately go "home". Indigenes insist sojourners have a home where they periodically visit for celebration and where prominent members of the former are conveyed for burial. Herein lies an illustration of the nature of identity as both self- defined and other imposed. Most of the people defined and treated as settlers do not regard themselves as such. In the Nigerian experience, being an indigene or a settler is a permanent identity, as there is no provision for the latter to convert to the former. Some of these forms of

discrimination have been formalized through certificates of indigene (Alubo, 2004; Ibrahim, 2006; Human Rights Watch, 2006). These certificates have become prerequisite for admission to tertiary schools and employment, including into the federal civil service. The experiences point to a two tier citizenship structure, the first for indigenes and the second for settlers.

In daily encounters, identity and its politics are the bases of contestations for inclusions in opportunities and rights as are available to others. Many of these contestations result in violence. In such conflicts, holders of particular identities as defined by the attackers are singled out for liquidation, forced to relocate and their properties torched. The collective nature of the violence is perhaps serving to strengthen geo-political solidarity. The intractable crises in Jos, Bauchi and other locations in Nigeria in recent times are pointers to the negative side of identity politics. Conflicts arising from identity have led to so much bloodletting, destruction of property, displacements and disruption of peoples' livelihoods across Nigeria. In the twelve years of elected civilian government, it is estimated that over 20, 000 people have lost their lives and hundreds of thousands displaced in over 200 outbreaks of violence traceable to identity related disputes. This means that an average of 1667 people are killed every year, which makes identity conflicts one of the most important sources of intentional homicide in Nigeria though not recorded by the police. In many parts of Nigeria today, residents are worried more about identity based violence than other priority crimes and organize their daily lives – businesses, choice of residential neighborhoods, schools for their children, hospitals and even relaxation places they patronize – in response to fear of identity based violence (Cleen Foundation, 2009). National integration has also remained a mirage in Nigeria. In many communities in Nigeria, citizens rely on ethnic and religious development associations for the provision of safety nets. This is because of the declining performance of state institutions in welfare delivery. Hence, citizens' loyalty is first and foremost to local institutions and processes. The emergence of ethnic nationalist movements has been identified as a major hindrance to the actualization of national integration. Examples of these groups include: Yoruba Council of Elders (YCE), Oodua People's Congress (OPC), Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF), Arewa Peoples' Congress, *Afenifere*, the *Ohaneze Ndigbo*, Egbesu Boys, Bakassi Boys, Middle Belt Forum (MBF), Movement for the Survival of ogoni People (MOSOP), South South Peoples Conference, Union of Niger Delta (UND) among others. Meaning that in terms of social relationships and national identification, one could not speak of Nigeria in the same sense as one speaks of such of its components as Kano emirate, Benin or Oyo kingdom. Allegiance, loyalty and patriotism are most of the times first to the ethnic group. Hence to some observers, Nigeria consists of many 'nationalities'; it is not itself not a nation. Each of these 'nationalities' is unique in terms of size, composition, structures and processes. This only a side of a complex story as the traditional practices are highly valued and held with great admiration among people of an ethnic group.

Cultural plurality has been cited by many observers as a major factor inhibiting Nigeria's political advancement. The major actors in the public sphere have played up differences in ethnicity and religion to fan the embers of discord over the years in the nation's history. This is done in order to either perpetuate themselves in power and or protect their economic interests.

Ethnicity remains a major factor in Nigeria's political development with power almost exclusively in the hands of a few dominating a few (Blench & Dendo, 2003). Party formation and allegiance have been along ethnic lines in Nigeria. This was the trend in the first republic when the three predominant parties Northern People's Congress (NPC), Action Group (AG) and the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroon's (NCNC) stood for the three dominant ethnic nationalities – Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba and Ibo respectively. The trend was not different in the third republic when the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Unity

Party of Nigeria (UPN) and Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP) again stood for the three major ethnic nationalities; Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba and Ibo. The third republic was different then because the military on the recommendation of the Political Bureau did not register more than these two political parties; Social Democratic Party (SDP) & National Republican Convention (NRC) (Aluko and Ajani, 2009).

Between 1999 and 2003, the ruling party at the centre – Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), a party of the Hausa/Fulani, captured many states in Ibo land. The All Peoples Party (APP) is more or less a party of the Northern people as it did not capture any state in both Ibo and Yoruba land. The Alliance for Democracy (AD) ruled exclusively and predominantly in the Southwest and a party of the Yoruba people. However, there was a radical change in 2007 when five out of six south western states went to PDP for obvious reason that the then president was of Yoruba extraction. From all indications, parties in the ongoing democratic dispensation are still ethnically based thus allowing the pursuit of sectional agenda. The success of Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) in the South West in the recently concluded election underscores this fact.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND NATIONAL INTEGRATION

Nigeria is the third most ethnically and linguistically diverse country in the world, after New Guinea and Indonesia (http://www.ethnologue.com/family_index.asp). National integration in Nigerian context has been an attempt to forge “unity in diversity” Seeking to wish away socio-cultural differences and imposing uniformity in spite of complex cultural plurality. This has created more conflict and posed obstacles to unity, peaceful co-existence, progress and stable development. This act of wishing away the reality has manifested in the country’s policy directives. Hence, the country’s adoption of a single educational policy, economic and political systems, for instance, has not translated into progress in the nations’ quest for advancement in these areas.

To actualize the attainment of national integration successive governments in Nigeria have taken steps to weld the peoples of Nigeria into a united state with a common destiny in spite of their sharp religious, ethnic, linguistic and or cultural differences (Adejoh, 2005). For example, the establishment of the National Youth Service Commission (NYSC) in 1972, Federal Character Commission, Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Unity schools, adoption English language as the official language, the constitutional provision on citizens’ rights and so on. Despite all these efforts, the country cannot boast of impressive achievement on national integration.

HOW DO WE ANNEX CULTURAL DIVERSITY FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

Cultural diversity is important and valuable components in the development process. The dictum: “variety is a spice of life” provides a basis for this assertion. Cultural difference from the mainstream is not always a rejection of the mainstream way, and in fact, cultural difference can be a tool for success rather than failure in Nigeria. Cultures are not homogenous; they are heterogeneous and there are interpersonal diversities within culture.

However, for cultural diversity to be an opportunity and not a constraint, it must be strategically managed. This involves its being acknowledged and incorporated in national planning. For example, social policies that favour interpersonal relations and multiculturalism may sustain the creation of a positive collective identity among members of low-status groups. For example, many pundits have argued that in order for immigrant minorities to do well, they must adopt the culture and language of the new societies in which they find themselves. But researchers have shown that retaining cultural distinctiveness can provide important advantages (Lamont & Small, 2007). Portes and Schauffler (1994) found that children of immigrants who were bilingual performed better on mathematics tests and other measures of academic success than those who had learned English but not retained their language of migrant origin. Others have found that children in school respond positively to culturally relevant materials, and to approaches from multiple, as opposed to one, cultural perspective. Babatunde Fafunwa, a foremost educationist in Nigeria argued in the support of the use of mother tongue for instruction in the first six years of primary school education. He opined that children who are trained in such a manner have the propensity to do better than those trained with a second foreign language.

Nigeria's interpersonal relations can also be harnessed in the area of cultural tourism. Tourism as the world's largest industry is considered to be dynamic, evolving and a consumer driven entity. The scope of tourism is the concern of travel, lodging, foodservice and recreation. By implication therefore, tourism is the art, business and science of passenger transportation, accommodation and catering. Cultural tourism or culture tourism is very significant for people and their environment particularly when it is celebrated in such a way and manner that would ensure the preservation and promotion of the uniqueness of its heritage. This is because this development gives, especially the host communities the opportunity to improve upon their arts and cultural facilities that can attract tourists both locally and international who are always willing to spend so much money on such facilities to the advantage of the local communities as this boosts the latter's economy.

Recent findings by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) have confirmed that cultural tourism has become very popular in the world today to the extent that cultural tourists are spending quite a substantial amount of money than the normal standard tourists. Such huge spending has resulted to country and regional economic development. Excellent examples of this are Kenya, Tanzania, Cote d'Ivoire in Africa and the state of Florida, United States of America. It is however important for ministries and/or agencies responsible for arts, culture and tourism to promote such a venture through strategic planning, training and retraining as well as providing funding to individuals and groups that would undertake research work on the economic and social impact of cultural tourism.

Beside the many natural features of Nigeria, the cultural assets of the nation are of universal recognition. The richness and diversity of the Nigerian culture is a manifestation of the socio-cultural differences of the over 250 ethnic groups that inhabit the land. These coupled with the hospitality of the people make Nigeria one of the richly endowed potential destinations in the world. The local economy stands to be boosted as many cultural artifacts would be on sale and many employment opportunities would be created for the people. Wase Rock, Kura falls, ancient Jos museum in Plateau state, Argungu fishing festival in Kebbi state, Obudu cattle ranch, Tinapa shopping complex, the ancient city of Benin in Edo state, Osun festival in Osogbo, Igbo yam festivals, Yankari game reserve in Bauchi state, Eyo festival in Lagos are some of tourist attractions in Nigeria.

Cultural diversity can also serve as a source of exchange, innovation and creativity. A different way to think of diversity is to think of its impact on innovation and creativity. The level of self-determination of minority groups can be increased if their distinctive cultural heritage is acknowledged or celebrated. Also, success of various intervention programmes can also be ensured if minority groups are given greater roles in the public sphere while asserting their importance as members of the cultural and political polity.

In development circles, scholars have argued for the placing of a greater value on local knowledge, including the understandings and practices of indigenous and other marginalized groups (Scott, 1999). Forms of government that require the contributions of a wide range of citizens are often granted greater legitimacy, and are more effective and better able to mobilize populations in the pursuit of collective goal. In her study of efforts to reduce HIV infection in Uganda and Botswana, Swidler (2007) found that governments and NGOs were effective only when they mobilize the systems of meanings and the social solidarities of the local community. In Uganda, prominent clan structures, even if less democratic than local governments in Botswana, provided more effective vehicles for reaching local communities than organizations operated by national or transnational voluntary organizations.

TWO OTHER FULCRUMS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - HUMAN AND NATURAL RESOURCES

From the foregoing discussion of cultural diversity and its relevance in the attainment of development goals, it is expedient that we also examine two other resources, human and natural, that are a critical in this regard.

Human Resource Diversity

One other outcome of cultural diversity is human resource diversity. Human resource diversity (HRD) or workforce diversity (WFD) suggests that organizational workforce can be unique in certain dimensions like sex, race or ethnicity, but be different in others: age, educational background, religious, etc. Nigeria is often regarded as one of the most populous industrially developing nations in the world and richly endowed with abundant human resources. Out of the population of about one hundred and fifty million persons, more than half are of working age. Managers of work organizations will then be faced with a critical challenge of the proper management of diversity in the work place (Miebi, 2014).

Many modern work organizations have people of variegated cultural backgrounds working together as employees which may be a potential source of organizational conflict (Ukachukwu and Iherionhanna, 2013 cited in Miebi, 2014). Again, diversity in the personality and other dimensions of diversity could also affect employee behavioural outcomes (Afolabi and Omole, 2011 cited in Miebi, 2014). then be faced with a critical challenge of the proper management of diversity in the work place. In the light of the present realities facing organizations today, it may be inferred that workforce diversity. In Nigeria, a nation with several ethnic nationalities and languages, as well as diverse cultural and religious backgrounds, the issue of human resource diversity is inevitable. This diversity may create opportunities as well as pose challenges for the functioning and behaviour of organizations.

Natural Resources

Natural resources refer to nature-given material assets that can be harnessed by mankind to sustain life and create wealth. They include all organic valuables accruable from the earth, land, waters, the wild (forests) and natural vegetation. Examples of such resources include minerals, metals, wildlife, fish, timber, wood, sand, clay, to mention but a few. These resources are freely supplied by nature in both subsistence and surplus quantities for human exploitation and use. Nigeria is reputed to be a natural resource-rich country; with over forty different minerals (both liquid and solid) that are commercially viable and globally competitive (RMRDC, 2014). These resources are found in many states of the federation. In addition to these are other water-based, wild-based and land-based natural resources, such as game (wildlife), timber, wood, fish, rangeland and farmland, among others.

Nigeria's natural resource base is characterized by immense diversity and abundance. Regrettably, the oil and gas industry has, in the last few decades, taken all the attention. The agricultural and solid mineral sub-sectors have been grossly neglected by successive governments in Nigeria. The dependence on oil and gas as the main source of revenue has been blamed for current hardship occasioned by the drastic drop in oil price in the global market. By and large, Nigeria's natural resource profile reveals a richly endowed resource base that has been so poorly harnessed and exploited. The reason for this state of affairs is the absence of a robust natural resources governance regime capable of delivering the good.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that Nigeria's cultural diversity has been played up as the major factor for its myriads of troubles to the extent that many have canvassed for its bifurcation at different periods of its existence. These advocates of break-up have referred to Nigeria as a colonial creation and "a mere geographical expression" meaning that in terms of social relationships and national identification, one cannot speak of Nigeria as one speaks of its components. However, we must remember that "nations are made, not born" and that there is hardly any contemporary nation that did not begin as a geographical expression, in one form or another from its already existing heterogeneous socio-cultural system.

Although Nigeria formally became one entity in 1914, its artificiality is not clear. There is a sub stratum of Negro culture, particularly in the southern parts of Nigeria, which is indicative of some apparent degree of socio-cultural homogeneity among a large section of the Nigerian society. Also owing to a long and complicated migratory and settlement history, as well as admixture and overlapping in social relationships, Nigeria can hardly be successfully divided into neat somatic and cultural areas. Be that as it may, we will like to submit that despite the seemingly cultural differences, there are also common areas of similarity in most of the cultures which explains that the people of Nigeria have a common origin and hence, they are capable of understanding each other. But two things are paramount in multi-cultural or highly diversified society: similarities and differences. While the similarities in the cultural practices of the groups bring harmony in the society and encourage peace among the people, the existing differences among these tribes/ethnic groups sometimes must be acknowledged and utilized for the benefit of all. Nigerians as well as people in any culturally diversified or ethnically mixed society must be able to maximize the opportunities by fostering "unity in diversity" instead of manipulating the diversity against the unity of their various societies, for selfish purposes. The human resource diversity can be also harnessed to engender sustainable growth and

development if workplace management can emplace performance driven culture that endorses and enhance a high performing work system. The huge human capital of the country could be harnessed by economic diversification that could lead to the promotion of the hitherto moribund agricultural and mining sectors.

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