National Youths Service Corps and Multiculturalism: The Epicenter for National Integration in Nigeria

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Abstract: *The heterogeneous nature of Nigerian society has been a contentious issue n the frameworks of national leadership since independence. Multiculturalism is a uniting or divisive factor for Nigeria; it is an instrument of nationhood, culminating in a civil war, agitations for state creation, sovereign national conference, rotational presidency, and zoning system in recent times, ethnic and religious insurgency as well as terrorist violence. National integration is far-fetched and a quest by successive administrations and non-state actors who are stakeholders in the Nigerian project. The context of external influences such as migrants, foreign visitors and unwanted aliens and their activities is un accountable. This paper examines the evolution of multiculturalism in the challenge of national unity, with particular attention on national youth service corps scheme in Nigeria's 21st century. The grave dangers of insecurity posed by unchecked aliens and non-patriotic aliens flock into the nation through the countries porous border. A descriptive-analytical approach is applied, while the data are basically collected from texts and academic journals. The Nigerian state requires an overhaul of its security within and outside its borders for cursory look at immigration system.*

Keywords: National Unity, Ethnic Interest, Cultural Practices, Multiculturalism, Youths.

Introduction

The NYSC scheme was created in a bid to reconstruct, reconcile and rebuild the country after the Nigerian Civil war. The unfortunate antecedents in our national history gave impetus to the establishment of the National Youth Service Corps by Decree. 24 of 1973 which stated that the scheme is established encourage and develop common ties among the youths of Nigeria and promote national unity (www.nysc.gov.ng/history). It is a culture in Nigeria that once a student graduates from the University or a polytechnic, with degree or Higher National Diploma, (HND) within the age of 30 years; he or she is sent to a state in Nigeria to serve the Nation. The NYSC scheme has 3 stages, the 3 weeks orientation camp, community development services (CDS) done once a week, and place of primary assignments, where every corps member is posted to after the orientation camp to serve for one year. NYSC has not been without its ups and downs, with tales of killings and abductions of corps members across the federation (Ekwueme and Ajayi, 2000). The corps members complained of underpayment, late payment and even non-payment at all. Some lost their lives on the course of this national assignment in some regions they are serving due to religious, ethnic or political violence (Otwin, 1990).

In 2011, a series of bomb and violent attacks, from north east rocked the stability of the country during 2011 gubernatorial and presidential elections. Most of these attacks were perpetuated by the Islamist extremist terrorist group called Boko Haram (www.punchng.com/news/corps-members-protest). The Boko Haram group is against western education and plan to establish Islamic state in northern Nigeria. The worst of is that corps members who lost their lives was paid compensation by President Goodluck Jonathan in tune of N5 million to those families who lost their lives in the bomb blast. The president promised to offer jobs to affected corps members immediately after the service year to the nation. But years later, the job is shelved and the affected graduate is roaming the streets looking for jobs. The one-year mandatory service engage the corps members in various sectors that require graduate expertise especially in rural areas, public service, health centers, schools and others (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/nysc). Some corps members have been offered miniature jobs in their place of primary assignment, these graduates have been roaming the streets unemployed. Some host communities benefited from the scheme through services rendered by this corps members in government and private firms during their service year (Amana, 1997). Also, the scheme has failed in socio-economic and cultural development of host communities in some areas (www.thisdayonline.com/archive).

Nigeria is a conglomerate of different ethnic groups of Hausa, Fulani, Tiv, Kanuri, and Nupe in the North; Yoruba, Edo, Urhobo, Itsekiri and Ijaw in the West; Ibo, Ibibio and Efik in the East (Uwechue, 2004). The country is plagued with problems attendant on condition of under development like poverty, mass illiteracy, acute shortage of high skilled manpower, inadequate socioeconomic infrastructural facilities, housing, water and sewage facilities, road, healthcare services and effective communication system. All this has undermined multiculturalism and cultural diversity due to ethnic and tribal interest, and the reason is not far-fetched because Nigeria is a multi-ethnic nation with diverse cultures and traditions. In spite of the seeming challenges in Nigeria, many institutions have continued to promote values to keep the nation united but all to no avail (Okafor, 2014). Specifically, the scheme is a starting point for Nigerian youths to engage themselves in the wide labour market. Similarly, every society has to ensure that its people behave in consonance with its normative values to ensure social cohesion and national integration. It is against this backdrop that the paper ascertains that the best way to make Nigeria society as one

indivisible entity, with common identity is the NYSC programme, for peaceful co-existence among these diverse cultures. This prompted the merger of northern and southern protectorates of 1914 in Nigeria.

Objectives of NYSC Scheme in Nigeria

According to Maduka (2002) the objectives of National Youth Service corps as spelt out in Decree no 51of 16th June 1993 are:

a) Inculcate discipline and instill industrialization among youths, patriotism in any situation they find themselves.
b) Raise the moral tone of Nigerian youths by giving them the opportunity to learn ideals of national, social and cultural achievement (Ojukwu, 2013).
c) Develop the mind attitude of Nigerian youths through shared experience and train them to be amenable in mobilizing national interest.
d) Ensure spirit of self reliance and skills acquisition for self employment among youths.
e) Contribute an accelerated growth of the national economic development.
f) Promote national unity and integration among Nigerian youths.
g) Eliminate prejudice, ignorance and confirm the similarities among all ethnic groups.
h) Develop corporate existence and common ties among Nigerian youths.

Clarification of Concepts
(A.) Culture

According to Taylor (1995) Culture is defined as the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs and all other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of Society. Linton (1980:3) states that the culture of a society is the way of life of its members; the collection of ideas and habits which they learn, share and transmit from generation to generation. Culture embraces all the material and non-material expression of a people as well as the processes with which these expressions communicated (Andah, 1982). It has to do with the social, ethical, intellectual, scientific, artistic and technological expressions and process of people ethnically or supra-nationally related living in a geographically contiguous area. Culture is the totality of people's way of life historically created and shared by all members of the society. It is not genetically learnt but transmitted through socialization process universal, variable and dynamic. The two aspects of culture are material culture and non-material culture. Material culture refers to arts, craft, artefacts as well as technology of the society. The material aspect of culture involves the products of man's ingenuity and industry in his attempt to exploit his environment for survival.

Non-material culture refers to norms, values, beliefs or religion, ideas and philosophy, music and dance, drama, festivals, ceremonies, folklore. It is the non-physical aspect of culture which is learnt through socialization process. However, both material and non-material aspects of culture influence each other and the line of demarcation between two Nigerian societies is characterized by heterogeneity of cultures and diverse ethnic groups. Ethnographers estimated that there are between 250 and 400 different ethnic groups in Nigeria. Some of these ethnic groups and states of the federation located are: They are located in states like Anambra, Enugu, Imo, Abia, Delta, Kano, Jigawa, Sokoto, Kebbi, Bauchi, Adamawa, Ogun, Lagos, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, Edo, Kwara, Kogi. Sokoto, Kebbi, Kano, Jigawa, Kaduna, Katsina, Bauchi. Fulani, Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo ethnic group is a clear-cut.

Although cultural elements like norms, values and beliefs vary from society to society, as certain ways of life common to all societies. These ways of life are called cultural universals. For instance like marriage, cooking, incest taboo, systems of social stratification, language and social institutions as family, religion, education and systems of government. There are variations on the ways of life take from society to society. A profound emotional reaction can be experienced by a person living in a different society, the culture of which he is not familiar. This is referred to as culture shock with an outstanding feature of the inability of person involved to make any sense out of the behaviour of others or inability to predict what they would say or do. A society as a group is made up of two or more sub-groups, each of such sub-groups acquires behaviour pattern peculiar to it. This peculiar pattern is known as sub-culture. There are class, youth, family, deviant subcultures in a society. Ethnocentrism is the tendency to judge other cultures by the standard of one's culture. Ethno-centric person feels that his own culture is superior to other cultures, therefore impose his cultural ideas on others. The ethnic groups of Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo are dominant ones constituting about 58 % of Nigerian population (NPB, 19M). These ethnic groups have different cultures with which their members identify. This cultural diversity generates ethnocentric tendencies. Indeed, ethnocentric feelings are prevalent in Nigeria, and sometimes engender strife that may degenerate into societal disintegration (Oyeneye and Shoremi, 1985). For the non-material aspect, we consider music and dance, festivals as well as marriage ceremonies. For material aspect culture, art and craft among Nigerian cultural groups.

(B.) Multiculturalism

Rosado (1997) states that multiculturalism is a system of beliefs and behaviour that recognizes and respects the presence of all diverse groups in a society, it acknowledges values socio-cultural differences, and encourages their contribution within an inclusive cultural context which empowers all within the organization or society. However, it surmounts racial, discriminatory, ostracizing or marginalizing tendencies. Multiculturalism queries the concept of national identity, it appreciates and recognizes without ignoring or turning blind side to the presence of variety of cultural groups co-existing in a particular society, than conjuring a common identity for a wide dispersed groups (Heywood, 2007; Udebunu, 2011), multiculturalism

describes the co-existence of numerous cultures, without anyone dominating the others (Wong, 2006). Garba (2011) assert that multiculturalism appreciate, tolerate and promote multiple cultures and identities situated within the confines of a community. Udebunu (2011) submits that multiculturalism is a plurality of cultures. Takaki (1993) and Yinger (1994) suggest that cultural diversity should be celebrated (Richeson and Nussbaum, 2003). Multiculturalists argue that governance, rights of divergent groups, ethnic minority group and cultural identities are to be respected, and multiculturalism is in tandem with the principle of equality (Kymlycka, 1995).

According to the World Book Dictionary (1985) Multiculturalism is a community of people who share a common language, culture, ethnicity, descent, or history. The complex nature of Nigeria multi-nations are linked in a single political and economic organization (Ekanola, 2006). National integration is the thorough understanding on the fundamentals of past, conceiving practical steps of what happens after cohesive disposition, subject to a mutual agreed programme (Ojo, 2009). In essence, according to Ojukwu (2013) the main aim of the National Youth Service Corps, without any doubt, is exposure to the variegated socio-cultural, multi- religious, multi-ethnic condition of this giant of the black world.

(C.) National Integration

National integration is a multifaceted and multidimensional concept, it is the process of unifying a society which tends to make a harmonious city, based on order its members regard as equitably harmonious. The success of national integration depends on the perception by the federating units on how equitably cordial the binding order is in terms of harmonious federal-state relations and inters ethnic relations (Ojo, 2002). Akinbade (2004) views integration as the process of maintaining territorial integrity of a state in sharp divided society with 'babel' of voices like Nigeria, national integration is a task that must be implemented for the purpose of securing stability and adaptability within the state. According to Fatile and Adejuwon (2012), this arises from the plurality that attempts conceptual explication of the term.

National integration has to do with geographical or territorial mass of a country. In the light of this, national integration could be achieved if different parts that make a country are lumped together as monolithic whole. The unification of different parts of the state serves as a deterrent for co-operation and interdependence. National integration binds together various interest groups in a territorial entity to pursue common goals or objectives (Okafor and Okeke, 2008; Iwokwagh, 2008). Morrison et al. (Ojo, 2009), states that national integration is a process of inter-locking linkages where every dividing boundaries are dismantled for co-operation, and consensus. Nkom (2008) describes national integration as a high degree of comprehensiveness; multiculturalism is the behaviour of appreciating and accommodating cultural diversities, while national integration is the process of governing these diversities with equity and justice.

National integration is a specific problem to create sense of territorial nationality and eliminate subordinate parochial loyalties. It is presumed that an ethnic plural society in which each group is characterized by its language or other self-conscious cultural qualities. The integration used the tensions and discontinuities on horizontal plane to create homogeneous progressive reduction of cultural and regional territorial political community (Bamiseye, 2003). National integration reduces socio-cultural and economic differences to strengthen national unity that is not imposed by any authority. People share ideas, values and emotional bonds; national integration is feeling of unity within diversity. National identity is cultural unity, constitution, territorial continuity, common economic problems, art, literature, national festivals, national flag, national anthem and national emblem to promote national integration (www.wikianswers.com). National integration can be seen as the process whereby several desperate groups within a given territorial are united together or cooperate under conditions which do not appear to permit satisfaction of their system needs in any other way (Fatile and Adejuwon, 2012).

According to Elaigwu (1987), states that national integration is determined by the degree to which members and groups in a plural society adapt to the demands of national existence while co-existing harmoniously, usually affected by contending social forces. National integration led to political cohesion and sentiments of loyalty toward a central political authority and institutions by individuals belonging to different social groups or political units. National integration is a process whereby political actors in distinct national setting are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities towards a new centre, whose institution posses or demand jurisdiction over pre-existing nation-state (Oyeleye, 1987). As noted by Mazrui (1972), the major aspects of national integration are fusion of norms and culture; promotion of social interdependence; narrow gap between the elites and the masses, urban and the rural areas, rich or poor. The conflicts resolution and sharing of mutual experiences for people to discover; that they had undergone some important experiences together.

For there to be national integration, Ibogje and Dode (2007) stated that there must be a central authority to serve as a rallying point. In the quest for national integration, citizens are expected to respect the overriding supremacy of the national government. 'This entails subordination of institutions and cultural values to the demands of the central authority. Often, intra-and inter-ethnic crisis task the state's security apparatus. The ability of the state to resolve the recurring crises and create an enabling environment where the people's respect and love for their nation is enhanced affect the tempo of the nation's integration positively. National integration covers a vast range of human relationships and attitudes, the integration of diverse cultural loyalties and the development of a sense of nationality; the integration of the rulers and the ruled and the integration of the citizens into a common political process. National integration has a common link in that they point to the fact that integration is what holds a society and a political system together.

Evolution of Multiculturalism and National Integration in Nigeria

The structure of Nigeria was forcefully assembled through the technological and economic superiority of the British government in 1914, by amalgamating of Northern and Southern protectorate (Ekanola, 2006). This act brought together

numerous linguistic, ethnic, cultural groups, communities, kingdoms, and caliphate attained different levels of economic and political development. These entities which have different, unrelated, cultural, traditional and historical backgrounds were foisted to form a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-national society; this arrangement was to satisfy imperialistic desires. Ifeanacho and Nwagwu (2009) aver that Nigeria structure did not depict integration but a mere production plant to meet the needs of the metropolitan economy. Shively (2003) argues that Nigeria was not constructed for cohesion but for the administrative convenience of the British.

Despite the illegitimate foist of different nationalities internal divisions were orchestrated by the colonial lords by the introduction several constitutional methods of divide and rule, and impose Hausa/Fulani Emirs on other ethnic groups. This created a sense of mutual suspicion, distrust, intolerance and conflicts found expression after independence. These exploitative and oppressive activities of colonial lords created a crop of elite who called themselves nationalists, but after independence power mongers took advantage of their positions to pursue ethno-religious interests, and create opportunities for themselves and their ethnic groups to plunder the country's economy, institutionalize ethnic centered leadership (Ifeanacho and Nwagwu, 2009). Ekanola (2006) asserts that the creation of Nigeria is a single territorial and institutional framework expanded inter-ethnic interactions through the practice of colonial system, thereby fabricating a common history of economic exploitation, political, administrative, and cultural oppression.

The resemblance of multiculturalism is the nature of conflagration of these multiplicities of culture carry with it attendant suspicion, intolerance, discrimination and hostility, making it difficult to have a true national integration. After independence, ethnic and tribal practices that pervaded the political environment at colonial period obviously reflected in the formation of political parties began to tear the new state apart. The political system from 1960-1966 was characterized by dominance between the central and the regions. The disintegration of the multi-cultural nature of Nigeria, political parties was established in such line. The Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) remained a regional party (Crowder and Abdullahi, 1979). At this period, no attempt for national integration was pursued as each political organizations desired to dominate the entire federation from its regional base alone, preventing penetration by other regions. Jackson describes it as regional security, quoting late Sir Ahmadu Bello who preferred to lead from his regional base, sending his deputy to represent him at the centre.

At its inception, the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) was a national party until 1961 when the reality of regionalism dawned on it. By 1961 it was only able to win most electoral seats in the East, won one seat in the North and became unpopular in the west. Apparently, the Action Group safeguarded the political yearnings of the Yorubas in Western Nigeria. Each of these political blocks jealously guarded its territorial sphere; the region (Crowder and Abdullahi, 1979). The disintegrative practices of the colonialists, ruling NPC government fabricated a heated national census figures in 1963 to subjugate the other regions and provide a basis for fraudulent re-allocation of seats after the 1964 general elections into the federal parliament (Adeoye and John, 2005). Apart from census and electoral manipulations, the Northern nation sought other means to multiply social differences and weaken the strength of opposition political parties in the Southern region. The creation of a new Mid-West region in 1963initated in 1961, it was timely in 1963 to weaken the support of Action Group in the South. This goes in tandem with the observation of that more Nigeria is divided in smaller units the more the component units are weaker and the centre stronger (Ozoigbo, 2010). The seed of discord was sown in the person of Chief S.L. Akintola, who deputizes Chief Obafemi Awolowo. Akintola formed a coalition government with NNDP (Ifeanacho and Nwagwu, 2009).

In 1966, increased tension had enveloped the entire country, culminating in violence among the regions and ethnic groups, most especially between the East and the North. The quantum of killing the Northern and Eastern soldiers, brought 1966 coup d'état headed by late Aguiyi-Ironsi in January and political parties was banned; the abolition of federalism is shortchanged with unitary system alleged as a plot by Ibos to dominate Nigeria. In July 1966, the Northern military officers staged a counter-coup during which Ironsi and other eastern militaries were killed (South East Nigeria, 2012). This ethnic and tribal sentiment permeated the entire fabric of the Nigeria's socio-political system leading to feeling of rejection and hate eventually lead to civil war in 1967.

The fifteen years military rule in Nigeria is a deliberate attempts to forcefully sustain the oneness of the diverse ethnic groups and create a system of government that harmonize the divergent culture in the country like the abolition of regional police, state or region coat of arms and mottos, took over regional and state television stations, news papers, deployment of soldiers as administrators in states other than their own with cultures different from theirs, and the full take-over of Christian and regional schools. All these conjure national identity to replace the multiplicity of culture that makes up Nigeria (Ojo, 2009). Despite this attempt by the military to maintain the relative peace in Nigeria, the military intervention in politics did not recognize the cultural differences of colonial masters. Instead, the military turned blind eye to Nigeria's multi-culture, multi-ethnic, and multi-religion to bring oneness (Udebunu, 2011). This makes national integration impossible, true understanding, respect and appreciation of differences entities being integrated (Nkom, 2008).

Factors Affecting National Youths Service Corps Scheme in Nigerian Federation
1.) Integration Question: The forces of non-integration in Nigeria have its root in colonialism as a result of the restrictive policies from the British imperialist between the North and South. Nigeria is an ethnic mixture with over 250 ethnic groups each of which possesses its unique language, traits and identity that militates against integration and national consciousness (Ubi, 2004). Yet, it is instructive to recognize that societies cannot be regarded as parochial localities autonomous unto themselves. Indeed, they constitute their own identities, but inevitably have to interact with others to exchange ideas, goods and services. The society is embodied in diversity but one forces of disunity in Nigeria is too much emphasis on our

differences than the experiences shared by people inhabiting the area. The issue of integration is the quest for land acquisition and occupancy in Nigerian jurisprudence (Falola, 2010). It is stated in section 315 of land use act, the right of all Nigerians irrespective of ethnic and religious affiliations has rights to acquire occupancy in any part of the nation. But most people, still held tenacious view of ethnic ownership for land (Usman and Abba, 2005). The implication of this is that this act only exists in theory and yet to be fully enforced in practice. Ubi (2004) states that to deny a citizen full residence rights in a nation state of his birth as it is in Nigeria makes citizenship a political joke and national integration a futility.

2.) Ethno-Religious Conflicts: This phenomenon has threatened the existence of Nigeria since political independence. This has been attributed to the attempt to have control over land in the nation's leadership, the legitimacy question in the political structure, struggle for chieftaincy titles or kingship positions, the indigene-settlers phenomenon as witnessed in Nasarawa, Taraba and Plateau States, poverty, unguided utterances by religious leader, religious fanaticism, intolerance, fundamentalism, external influence to the rising tides of ethno-religious conflicts (Sylvester, 2007). All these have serious negative effects on the country; not only do they breed mistrust amongst Nigerians, and colossal destruction of lives and properties thereby causing retrogression in our attempt to national development. The intra-state conflicts have increasingly militarized through the utilization of arms and ammunition.

3.) Porous Border Disputes: The Bakassi Peninsula constitutes a threat to Nigeria's territorial sovereignty. This controversy was attributed to the presence of crude oil and gas in the region with a strategic significance. The Peninsula possessed enormous water, fish, plantain, banana, fruits, yam, cassava, coconut, palm oil and other resources (Odeh, 2008). Nigerians inhabiting the area in question were maltreated through the forceful collection of land rents, personal income taxes and placing economic embargo thereby barring Nigerians from business in Nigerian markets or utilize the naira. There were incessant armed invasion of villages and fishing settlements occupied by Nigerians, abduction, detention and torture of Nigerian fishermen, traders and military personnel, vandalization of Nigerian settlements and forceful ejection of Nigerians. The lease of Peninsula to Cameroon has its implication deprive off shore oil deposits and vast fishing grounds to Cameroon against wellbeing of Nigerians. Nigerians residing were unwilling to recant their citizenship to Cameroon (Shehu and Aliyu, 2008). The International Court of Justice ruling in 2002 is a continuous ill-treatment of Nigerians in the area representing the breech of the Green Tree Agreement. The October 16, 2009 attack of Nigerian fishermen in Bakassi territorial waters claiming 6 lives and March 7, 2013 invasion of Efut Obot Ikot, an area in Bakassi with predominant Nigerian residents killing 5 and rendering 1800 people homeless. The Green Tree Agreement signed between both countries meant to facilitate the peaceful transfer of the Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroun, encouraged the evacuation of Nigeria military from the Peninsula stressing that the protection of the fundamental human rights of Bakassi Nigerians residing in the region will be granted by the Cameroonian authorities (World Press, 2013, August 9). The proliferation of illegal immigrants into Nigeria due to the porous nature of our border is threats to the government at nation building (World Press, 2013). It is relevant to note that most of the illegal immigrants are now gainfully employed to the detriment of our teeming unemployed youths.

4.) Poverty: Nigeria is the 6th major producer and exporter of crude oil in the world, yet poverty is ravaging its populace culminating in high rate of crime, teenage marriages, child labour, human trafficking, and terrorism. Indeed, rural and urban poverty is a common sight in the country as this manifest to in insufficient consumption of basic needs of life; indebtedness, inadequate shelter, poor quality of life, over-crowding and insecure housing, lack of savings and host of others. The absence of industrialization and wind up of industries like the textile industry threw many into unemployment (Onikosi and Ojibo, 2008). In the banking sector, about 15,000 employees were relied means of livelihood following the consolidation policy of the government by the Central Bank of Nigeria.

Many Nigerians have been reduced to the level of poverty with the privatization of public enterprises causing loss of jobs (Oyeshola, 2009). The implication of this was the rating of Nigeria as the 26th poorest nations globally irrespective of huge human and natural resources. The consequence of poverty is the reduction of peoples' potentials and productivity since it affects their very survival. It increases the wave of identity conflicts along communal, ethnic, religious and regional lines in the country. The strained relationship between the indigenes and non-indigenes producing the citizenship and settler questions could be linked to the issue of poverty (Adetula, 2006).

5.) Environmental Problems and Desertification: Desertification is threatening the existence of most Northern States in Kebbi, Zamfara, Katsina, Yobe, Sokoto and Bauchi. Also, erosion has impact negatively in Abia, Imo, Anambra, Enugu, Ondo, Edo, Ebonyi, Jigawa, Zamfara, Kebbi, Sokoto and Gombe States axis. It is on record that gully erosion in Kebbi threatens communities in Zuru, Jeda, Shanga, Yahuri, Argungu, Arewa, Aleiro, Bagudo and Birnin Kebbi. In Awka, Nanka, Nnewi, Ekwulobia and Oko more than 1,000 persons and over 4,000 families lost their homelands to the gullies that ravaged the town. In addition to this, Lagos, Maiduguri, Aba, Warri, Benin and Ibadan are not free from flooding. The implications is that houses, farmlands, economic trees like rubber, oil palm, cocoa, infrastructures such as roads, bridges and a host of others situated in such communities are destroyed. Indeed, some were even associated with loss of lives (Adetula, 2006).

6.) Inadequate Infrastructure: The provision of social services like water, health care facilities, education, power, quality road network, housing and others are some aspects of national development. Nigeria citizens are still faced with inadequate provision of these basic infrastructures for instance; water scarcity is a major challenge to nation building. The world is running out of fresh water because humanity is polluting, diverting and depleting water resources at a startling rate, the demand for fresh water surpasses its availability and numbers of people are put at risk (Barlow and Clarke, 2002). It is averred that legacies of factory farming, flood irrigation, construction of massive dams, toxic dumping, wetlands and forest destruction, urban and industrial pollution have damaged the earth's surface water in such a way that there is mining of underground water

reserves so fast than it could be replenished by nature (Barlow and Clarke, 2002). Nigeria's surface water is fast depleting as a result of the associated factors above. This has the capacity to paralyze socio-economic functions; the impact of water scarcity is that most people suffer from water borne diseases in their bid to utilize water from sources other than treated tap water. A lot is still needed to be done in the area of water supply across the country. The electricity supply after five decades of political independence, the result in Nigeria is that of insufficient power generation and epileptic supply. The power generating capacity in Nigeria power station is 5400 Megawatts (MW) but merely 1,600 (29%) MW was generated. The required global benchmark for electricity is 37,500 MW but less than 3000 MW was generated in the 4th quarter of 2007 and 1st quarter of 2008 respectively. The per capita consumption rate is 27KW/hr per person in Nigeria is less than the 2500KW/hr fixed as the World Per Capita Consumption rate per person. Corruption is the heart of constant inadequate power supply Nigerians is plagued with (Mawoli and Aminu, 2010). This has affected industrialization both small and medium scale industries which could have metamorphosed into big industries is handicapped by the nature of power supply. The effect of this is the increase in utilizing power generating sets by business owners culminating in high cost of production transferred to the consumers in the form of high cost of consumer goods. A disturbing situation is not only the noise pollution but the hazardous smoke emanating from the power generators which have negative consequences on human health in addition to its contribution to the depletion of the ozone layer threatening the existence of the earth and humanity.

7.) Corruption and Poor Leadership: Corruption has been defined as the manifestation of anti-social behaviour by an individual or social group which confers fraudulent benefit on its perpetrators and is inconsistent with the established legal norms and prescribed moral ethos of the land and likely to subvert the capacity of the legitimate authorities to provide for the material and spiritual well being of all members of the society in a just and equitable manner (Ifamose, 2007). Despite government campaigns and fight through the anti-corruption bodies of EFCC and ICPC, indicates the prevalence of corruption amongst top government officials involving the fraudulent looting of treasury in addition to money laundering. Ifamose (2007) indicates that a former Senate President was alleged to have accepted the graft of 39,000 million naira as Christmas bonus in 1999. Also, the Minister of Housing was sacked for scandals related to sales of government houses as a means of implementing the new housing policy. The Minister of Education lost his job as a result of 55 million naira bribe offered to the Senate members to approve his ministry's inflated budget figures. Also, 14 governors were highlighted as having possessed foreign accounts. Indeed, Bayelsa and Plateau States governors were in the forefront of this malaise. In addition, an ex-Inspector General of Police enriched himself to the tune of 17 billion naira; the corruption over fuel subsidy in which few individuals had enriched themselves immensely at the expense of the Nigerian masses. Poor leadership over the past 4 decades has impacted adversely on the Nigerian polity. It has been argued in some quarters that bad followership produces bad leadership. This is an exaggeration and an attempt to criticize the citizenry for the obvious limitations of the leaders.

While it is true that leaders needed the co-operation of the populace to function effectively in the area of good governance, it is equally true that they are expected to lead by example which will produce such dialectical relationship. For, the bench mark for assessing greatness is the extent to which a leader increased the freedom of man, enhance his dignity, better the lot of man, contribute in the promotion of world peace (Odey, 1997) engenders equity in wealth distribution thus bridging the gap between the rich and the poor. Indeed, Odey (1997) argue that any regime either civil or military that delights in sending those who clamour for justice and equity in the country to prison, exile or the grave while associating with a handful of political sycophants and opportunists who jointly imposed distress on the nation is a bizarre one. Nigerians are in dare need of a democracy that is anchored on the twin pillars of representation of citizens and accountability to citizens; the absence of which democracy does not exist (Usman and Abba, 2005). It is indeed, disheartening to note how contemporary politicians manipulate the ethnic identities in the country to perpetuate their economic dominance and divert attention away from their economic and political mismanagement (Falola, 2010). It is undoubtedly true that, accountability and equity in the distribution of the nation's resources are major pre-requisite for security, self worth and mutual co-existence amongst Nigerians otherwise, insecurity, mistrust, and hatred will manifest itself culminating into violence with its attendant consequences for the nation.

8.) The Security Question: One of the challenges of nation building confronting Nigeria is the frequent incidence of kidnapping which brings into focus the question of security. Security is indicative of freedom from danger of threats, safety or the ability of a nation to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interest to enhance wellbeing of its people without intimidation from internal or external sources (Odofin, 2007). Undoubtedly therefore, any development contrary to the foregoing connotes insecurity. The kidnapping phenomenon started in the form of hostage taking of oil company expatriate staff in the Niger Delta demanding huge sums of money as ransom. It later metamorphosed into the kidnapping of prominent personalities in society especially those related to politicians. It was regarded as a business; a lucrative business indeed! The recent occurrence involved the kidnapping of 15 students in Aba on their way to school in September 2010. The kidnappers asked for $130,000 dollars equivalent for their release. They were rescued by the security agencies, but the malaise led to the closure of schools, banks and emigration of many Aba residents (BBC, 2010). The preceding portrays the level of insecurity in Nigeria as a critical national question. Indeed, it degenerated to the point of bomb dropping at Abuja- the capital and seat of power on the day Nigeria was marking its 50th Anniversary in 2010; it claimed lives and maimed several persons. The security implication of such obnoxious activities in the country is enormous. Again, the proliferation of bombings by a militant group referred to as the Boko Haram in most parts of Northern Nigeria has posed serious security threat to the nation since 2010. Thus, the nation is still battling with the challenges of providing adequate security for its citizenry after 50 years of self rule.

9.) Gender Inequality: Gender relations in Nigeria have gradually developed into the National Question. Although, the Nigerian constitution made provisions for fundamental human rights for all its citizens implying equal rights to both men and women; this is only obtainable in theory while in practice women have been relegated to the background through marginalization, oppression and exploitation by the men folks who re-enforced religion and socio-cultural dictum to perpetuate their dominance. Odey (1997) argues that women still remain the most disadvantaged gender in society and this is based on the premise that they constitute a disproportionate number of poor Nigerians with low access to economic activities mostly in the reproductive areas which are either unpaid or taken for granted, and women have a lower share of the national income than men. There are massive income and consumption disparities to their disadvantage and credit/loan facilities they receive smaller than men. Women are faced with the challenges of living in the society irrespective of how they define their roles, aspirations, identity and femininity, while negotiating gender relations with men (Falola, 2010). Undoubtedly, it was the manifestation of the impact of the injustices suffered by women in society that prompted most young girls to unknowingly become victims of exploitation by human traffickers who promised to take them to Europe for greener pastures which often turned out to be an illusion. For example, it was reported that a brothel in Mali managed by some "Madams" in a slave-like condition became the destination of a number of Nigerian girls who were supposedly on their way to Europe (BBC News, 2010). The United Nations summit advocated for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The United Nations also made a declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (Sani, 2001). At the Beijing Conference, 30% political representation of women was endorsed. Although, women have held some key positions in the political arena in Nigeria since the inception of democratic governance, it needs to be stressed that Nigeria is yet to meet the bench mark. Men are called upon to co-operate in the movement to "eradicate the oppression and exploitation of women, the personal prejudices that lead to hostility, and the institutionalization of male privileges" (Falola, 2010).

10.) Political Violence: has constituted a bane in the electoral process in Nigeria, political violence should be minimized and if possible, eradicated from our electoral process. It is disturbing to note that in the 21st century, elections in the country are characterized by snatching of ballot boxes from the polling units, the circulation of hidden thumb printed ballot papers and boxes prior to or the day of election, rigging in favour of a particular political party lead to political violence. Indeed, how else can one explain the snatching of ballot boxes at the point of a dagger, machete, knife or a gun (Analysis Magazine, 2003) or inflate election result figures in favour of a given political party. Crisis over election related issues have maimed many and even claimed lives. Election in Nigeria is a do or dies affair. It portrays the scenario that "the winner takes all and loses all." Little wonder the inflow of election petitions filed before election tribunals by the losing parties and this threatens political stability in the country. The widely acclaimed success of the 2011 elections was dented by post-election violence that broke out following the announcement of the results of the presidential elections The 2011 post-election violence is seen by many as the bloodiest incident of electoral violence in Nigeria's history (Shuaibu and Iroegbu, 2011).

In fourteen Northern States of Adamawa, Kano, Kaduna, and Bauchi States, where the post-election violence was most prevalent, violent protesters killed unspecified number of National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members (HRW 2011). The initial results clearly showed that President Goodluck Jonathan, commander-in-chief of the armed forces Federal Republic of Nigeria lead with wide margin. This did not go down well with certain elements who expected General Muhammadu Buhari of Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) to win the polls. They alleged fraud and manipulation of figures in favour of President Jonathan. In venting their anger some miscreants took to the streets, attacked everything and object available including innocent Nigerians. The spate of human and material destruction was not enough, the protesters specifically targeted corps members accused of collaborating with the characters that manipulated the polls in favour of President Jonathan. The hoodlums pounced on defense less corps members, and kill ten of them at a go in Bauchi State burnt down their residences and belongings and inflict grievous bodily harm on those they could not succeed in killing (Mohammed, 2011; Daily Trust, April, 25).

The national outrage that followed these senseless, premeditated and cold-blooded murders was expected. People began to call for the scrapping of the programme outright. It should be recalled that the post-presidential election violence aforementioned was not the first occasion that corpers would be murdered in cold blood. About two years ago, certain number of corpers was murdered under similar circumstances in Jos, following the perennial ethno-religious crises that engulfed in a peaceful northern town. The hapless corpers were from the southern part of Nigeria just like the ten that lost their lives in April, 2011 (Eze, 2012). The question remains serving one's fatherland provide the platform of NYSC worth it? Aside these, incidents such as motor accidents, ritual killings and abuse of corps members in form of subjecting them outside the ones prescribed by the NYSC act.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The paper centers on NYSC and national integration as a situation in which citizens of a country see themselves as one people, bound by shared historical experiences and common values, and imbued spirit of patriotism and unity which transcends traditional, primordial diverse tendencies. In post-colonial societies like Nigeria, it embodies a strategy of forging unity in diversity, and connotes a unified people in modern, colonially created, nation-state. National integration sought to create patriotic citizens out of disparate, antagonistic groups. Indeed, national leaders' espoused beliefs in commitments national integration at the level of real politics, they pursued ethno-religious, regional and other divisive agendas, whipping primordial sentiments and generating conflicts that disunite rather than integrate the people. The relationship on the failure of national integration was evidenced by increased violent political and communal conflicts and socio-economic instability which

in no small measure a constraint to development. In the democratization process of the last couple of years has been exploited to pursue division and potentially disintegration agendas by reckless members of the political class. Ethno-religious warlords used the relative expanded political spaces created by democratization to push extremist notions of self-determination, resource control and political restructuring. Gone are the days when corps members are welcomed with open arms to their various places of primary assignment. Today, corps members are more readily rejected than accepted by employers of labour. Surprisingly enough, the situation is so bad that even government establishments now reject youth corpers that are duly posted to them.

The 1999 constitution has failed to address the structural imbalance in Nigeria, since the inception of civilian rule of May 29, President Obasanjo and late Yar'adua kept deaf ears on calls for sovereign national conference. The recommendations by presidential committee on the review of 1999 constitution have the interest for decentralized and protect minority rights.

The march to national integration is in tandem with non accountability and transparency, poor state of economy, infrastructural decay and electoral malpractice. Finally national integration focus on institutions that are allergic to equal representatives on various sectional groups and this promotes political culture that inculcates tolerance and inclusion as a mechanism for national unity.

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