# IJIVIE

## International Journal of Intercultural Values and Indigenous Ecoethics

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INTERCULTURAL VALUES AND INDIGENOUS ECOETHICS (IJIVIE)

VOL. 4 No. 1, July. 2024

# About the Journal

**International Journal of Intercultural Values and Indigenous Ecoethics (IJIVIE)** is an interdisciplinary journal concerned with researching, exploring, and propagating ethical values found in world indigenous cultures and among indigenous people. It is particularly interested in environmental ethical values and values that affirm human welfare and wellbeing across all human cultures. It emphasizes dialogue of ideas and practices among planetary cultures to promote global understanding and ecological harmony.

It is a peer-reviewed journal published by the International Association for the Study of Intercultural Values & Indigenous Ethics (IASIVIE). This journal is an avenue for academics, researchers, scholars, and others to make available their research findings to the global community and thus contribute to the dialogue of civilizations.

## Guidelines:

1. Manuscripts should be written in the English Language, in MS-Word, Times New Roman, 12 font, single line spacing, and should be between 3,000-7,000 words including references.

2. Manuscripts should contain an abstract of not more than 250 words, a concise title, and keywords. The manuscript should use the current APA . Be consistent in the APA style you use.

The submission has not been previously published, nor is it before another journal for consideration (or an explanation has been provided in Comments to the Editor).

The submission file is in Open Office, Microsoft Word, or RTF document file format.

Where available, URLs for the references have been provided.

The text is single-spaced; uses a 12-point font; employs italics, rather than underlining (except with URL addresses); and all illustrations, figures, and tables are placed within the text at the appropriate points, rather than at the end.

The text adheres to the stylistic and bibliographic requirements outlined in the Author Guidelines.

3. Contributors should indicate their names, affiliations, status, phone numbers, and email addresses.

4. All manuscripts should be submitted electronically as an attachment to: gasivie@yahoo.com

5. A peer-review assessment fee of N5,000 should be paid

6. A publication fee of N25,000 only will be charged for the online publication of accepted papers and to defray the cost of hosting the journal website.

7. Inquiries can be addressed to Prof M O Ikeke, Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria through the journal email

## Announcements:

IJIVIE is published twice a year in January and July. And there are Special Editions when necessary. You can send your papers anytime in the year. Papers received at least a month before publication that come out successfully from peer review will be considered for the next publication. See the guidelines section for other information.

## Call for membership.

Those interested in becoming members of this association should send their request to the email of the association: gasivie@yahoo.com

## Submission Preparation Checklist

As part of the submission process, authors must check off their submission's compliance with all of the following items, and submissions may be returned to authors who do not adhere to these guidelines.

**Editorial Team**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Editor-in-Chief** | **Prof M O Ikeke** |
| **Editors** | Dr. K Emina |
| | Dr. J I Ukutsemuya |
| | Dr R Nwobodo |
| | Dr. F Ejegbavwo |
| **Editorial Secretaries** | Toma Brume |
| | Dr Monday Osebor |

**Editorial Consultants**

**Prof Olatunji Oyeshile** (Department of Philosophy, University of Ibadan, Nigeria)

**Prof Maduabuchi Dukor** (Department of Philosophy, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria)

**Prof Kingsley Ufuoma Omoyibo** (Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Benin, Nigeria)

**Prof Jack Aigbodioh** (Department of Philosophy, Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma, Nigeria)

**Prof Sunny Awhefeada** (Department of English and Literary Studies, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria)

**Professor Macaulay Mowarin** Department of English and Literary Studies, (Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria)

**Prof Emma Mordi** (Department of English and Literary Studies, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria)

**Prof Anthony Ikechukwu Kanu** (Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy, Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy, Tansian University, Umunya, Nigeria)

**Prof Ejajite Ojaruega** (Department of English and Literary Studies, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria)

v

**Prof Godwin Idjakpo** (Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria)

**Prof Nduka Otiona** (Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada)

**Prof Chinelo Nwokolo** (Directorate of General Studies, Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Effurun, Nigeria)

**Assoc Prof Money Udi** (Directorate of General Studies, Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Effurun, Nigeria)

# Note:
**The views and positions expressed in the papers in the journal are not necessarily the views of the journal editors nor of IASIVIE. Authors are responsible to ensure they have not infringed on any copyright and that their works are free from plagiarism following global best practices and their institutional guidelines.**

# Table of Contents

# Safe Guarding the Right to Environmental Health in Nigeria

**Mark Omorovie Ikeke**
**Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy**
**Delta State University, Abraka**
drikeke@delsu.edu.ng

## Abstract

The environment is vital for human survival and well-being in Nigeria. When the environment is degraded, it becomes hazardous to human beings and causes various health problems. Despite what poor environmental protection causes, the environment is poorly protected in Nigeria. Human beings, as asserted in various human rights declarations, have rights to health and a healthy environment. This paper argues that the rights to health and a healthy environment are by implication a right to environmental health. A right to a healthy environment implies that the environment should be protected and kept safe to ensure human welfare and wellbeing. A right to health includes protection from environmental harm and occupational hazards. Nigeria is inundated with environmental health problems such as air and marine pollution, mismanagement of solid and chemical waste, desertification, and deforestation. Critical hermeneutic and analytic methods are used to interpret the meaning of the right to environmental health and the rationale for safeguarding it in Nigeria. The conclusion reached here is that there is a need to safeguard the right to environmental health to abate environmental hazards.

**Keywords**: Human rights, Environment, Environmental Health, Health, and Nigeria.

## Introduction

This paper states that the environment is essential to

human life and well-being. When the environment is harmed, it causes hazards for human persons. (Ordinioha, 2010: 13). Environmental health is an essential human right. Different human rights instruments recognise the right to a healthy environment. In Principle One of the Stockholm declaration, it is enunciated that an environment of a quality that promotes a dignifying life and well-being is required for human beings to enjoy their fundamental right to equity, freedom, and adequate life conditions (United Nations, 1972). A similar idea is declared in the Rio Declaration, which says that human beings are entitled to a productive and healthy life harmoniously with nature. The statement of the Rio Declaration makes it very clear that human beings have a right to a healthy life in harmony with the entire environment. The African Charter in article 24 affirms that: "all people shall have the right to a general satisfactory environment favourable to their development" (Organisation of African Unity, 1981). It is worth recalling that in the Philippines, the Supreme Court ruled in a case between Minors Oposa Vs Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources that the aggrieved persons (Minors) had a justifiable right to a healthful ecology in harmony with nature flowing from the Constitutions of the Philippines that enunciated: "The State shall protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature" (Republic of the Philippines, 1987).

From the perspective of the African Charter having a satisfactory environment is a human right. A generally satisfactory environment implies a peaceful, harmonious, conducive, and life-enhancing environment. This is the kind of environment that promotes development, including psycho-social, physical, mental, and health development. Environmental health implies human beings living healthy lives in their environment and the environment enhancing the enjoyment of that life. But if human beings degrade the

environment it becomes difficult for the environment to enhance the healthy life they desire. Without a healthy environment, human beings will not be able to enjoy environmental health. Environmental health is intractably linked to a healthy environment. The discussion on environmental health is a discourse on the need for a healthy environment. For it is a healthy environment that promotes environmental health and wellbeing for both human beings and other entities in nature. Whatever causes environmental ill-health is unacceptable. As rightly noted: "All persons have the right to freedom from pollution, environmental degradation and activities that adversely affect the environment, threaten life, health, livelihood, wellbeing or sustainable development within, across or outside national boundaries (United Nations, 1994). This is a right to be free from environmental harm and suffering. This is a right to environmental health.

The kind of environment needed for sustaining good health and healthy living for all Nigerians is often lacking. The Nigerian environment whether the social or natural environment is suffering from degradation and other environmental problems. The social environment is inundated with poverty, insecurity, unemployment, lack of adequate social infrastructure, and so forth. This has invariably affected people's health and led to the death of many. In terms of the natural environment, environmental problems like desertification, gas flaring, air, and marine pollution, soil erosion, poor management of solid waste, etc have made the environment insecure and weakened the physical and mental health of many Nigerians.

The goal of this paper is to examine the right to environmental health amidst Nigeria's environmental predicaments. This paper shall, later on, examine the right to environmental health in addition to what has been propounded above. It is pertinent to ask here: Is there a right to

environmental health in Nigeria that is justifiable? Usman has argued regarding a sound environment that in the 1999 Constitution, there is no right in favour of Nigerian citizens to a healthy environment as the provision about environmental protection is not placed under the section on fundamental rights, rather it is under the state's objective; thus it is from the viewpoint of the state and so it is a mere policy statement and not a categorical imperative (Usman, 2012: 7). This paper argues that even though the provision for environmental protection from environmental harms and occupational hazards is not under fundamental rights, the reality is that it is a fundamental imperative/objective of the Nigerian state. Citizens should expect the state to carry out its objectives. Under the section on fundamental rights in the Nigerian Constitution, it is asserted that citizens have a right to life and they are not to be deprived of their rights except for criminal offences. They also have a right to dignity of their person, freedom of association, religion, and movement. It is practically impossible for these fundamental human rights to be maximally enjoyed if environmental protection and environmental health are not guaranteed. The fact also is that Nigeria is a signatory to the international and African rights instruments that affirm a right to health, of which environmental health is a core aspect. The international human rights instruments apply to all persons irrespective of country. The one of Africa applies to all Africans. It will be illogical to argue that because you are a Nigerian citizen and the section of the Nigerian constitution on fundamental rights does not mention environmental health or a healthy environment as a right; you a Nigerian are not entitled to that right. The constitution may not list all rights and that is why there are many other rules and regulations in the land.

The paper argues that all Nigerians have a right to enjoy environmental health. The government has to safeguard this right by mitigating environmental problems that cause environmental ill-health. Citizens and all groups in

society also have to promote this right for the well-being of all Nigerians. The paper uses critical analytic and hermeneutic methods to understand this right and its implications for Nigerian society. In terms of procedure, the paper will present the situation of the environmental predicament in Nigeria to give a background and context to the issues discussed. This will be followed by a contextualization of the right to environmental health. The factors that militate against the full enjoyment of this right and the ways to safeguard the right will also be discussed. When that has been done, the paper will be brought to a conclusion.

**The Situation of Environmental Health in Nigeria**

Many Nigerians are suffering from environmental health issues. The country is suffering from weak environmental governance. There are many environmental laws but they are often not enforced by some corrupt government officials. The country is also suffering from weak and inadequate health facilities. Many people are suffering from environmental hazards and sicknesses with little or no resources to take care of their health. In this section, some of what causes environmental hazards and ill-health are commented upon. They include various forms of pollution.

Pollution has a serious negative effect on human health. It also impacts food resources that human life depends upon. Pollution poisons and endangers fishes, animals, birds, plants, and indeed the entire environment. In Nigeria, due to the pollution of the rivers and streams from oil exploration and extraction activities, the rivers and land are not as productive as they once were. Many species of fish, animals, and birds have either gone into extinction or have withdrawn into more peaceful places conducive to their survival. Writing of the damages caused by petroleum oil activities, Ekuerhare writes that:

Gas flaring has rendered crops unproductive and it

has impoverished the bush-meat population. Heat from flares causes increased river water temperatures that kill off fish-food organisms. This has led to fish depletion from the rivers through death and forced migration. Acid rains increase the acidity of both the river waters and the soil. Vapour effluents from the Warri Refinery and Petrochemical Company, the Delta Steel Company Plant, and gas flares are contributory to the depletion of the ozone layer (Ekuerhare, 2007:557).

Another serious environmental health issue in the country is noise pollution. Noise is "audible acoustic energy that adversely affects or may affect the physiological and psychological wellbeing of people. Noise unreasonably interferes with the peace, comfort, and convenience of any hearer." (Rim-Rukeh, 2009: 267). On the other hand, noise pollution is defined as: "unwanted or offensive sound that unreasonably intrudes into our daily activities." (Rim-Rukeh, 2009: 267).  Noise pollution comes from various sources such as vehicles and equipment, industrial machinery, generating sets, and electronic equipment. Noise pollution is very common in Nigeria. When one plies the Nigerian roads you observe many drivers blaring their horns amid a traffic jam. Some religious houses without consideration for the health and wellbeing of others deliberately install their loudspeakers to face buildings around them. They don't border to reduce the volume of their speakers. On most weekends in Nigeria, many people can hardly sleep as there is so much noise emanating from night vigils and other religious services. Some persons' pattern of sleep is disrupted and this impacts their health. The output from some airplane engines in the country far exceeds the required safe limit.  Some People living near Nigerian airports often find it difficult to sleep and concentrate.  The deafening noise from planes along air routes in places like Mafoluku, Okota, and Ejigbo areas of

Lagos Nigeria can prevent people from hearing for seconds. The noises from these engines shake the foundations of buildings causing a crack that can make those buildings collapse. Nigeria could be said to be a land of generators. Due to poor and epileptic power supply from the energy companies, many homes and industries have to rely on generators. A building of ten occupants can have ten generators. At night there is so much noise pollution as every generating set is powered on. Then some people constantly raise the volume of their electronic gadgets causing so much noise in the neighbourhood. In places like Ojoo, Orile, Iganmu, Amukoko, Mushin, Ajegunle, and other places in Lagos the noise from musical sets is so high that it causes annoyance and discomfort. There have been cases of neighbours fighting over noises coming from their neighbour's houses.

Water and sewage pollution is another common problem in Nigeria. Nigerian water sources are polluted and often poisoned by chemicals and human waste. Best writes that water sources in different communities are polluted with religious sacrificial materials and human faeces (Ordinioha, 2010: 47). Open defecation is common in Nigeria. Many Landlords and landladies have no care for the environment. Some build houses without toilet facilities while some channel the sewage water from their compounds directly into the drainage channels along the roads and streets. Best has written that as people drink from polluted water, they incur diseases such as hepatitis, poliomyelitis, typhoid fever, cholera, etc (Ordinioha, 2010:49). In some riverine areas in Nigeria's Niger Delta because of the difficulty of constructing sanitation facilities many persons construct a "jetty-type-latrine" hanging over the water and defecate directly into the water (Ordinioham, 2010: 94). The health implications of this are unimaginable as people will still drink from this water.

Solid waste also causes grave environmental hazards

and ill health. Many forms of human activities generate solid waste which can be domestic and industrial. In the process of maintaining the household, carrying out kitchen duties, washing clothes, and other necessary chores to keep the household, people generate solid waste. Solid waste can be remnants of food, decaying food, papers, worn-out clothing, fallen leaves of plants, etc. Many of these unwanted items are not properly disposed of but dumped on nearby roads, streams, and unauthorised locations. Many industries produce solid waste and just dump it into the rivers and land space near their factories. All of these hurt human health and well-being. Those who sell in many Nigerian markets without any care for hygiene dump waste right on the market premises. As noted by Osondu, "The culture of recycling and treatment of wastes, which has flourished in advanced countries...is yet to be imbibed in Nigeria, hence solid waste management continues to pose a serious problem..." (Osondu, 2012:33). Solid waste not properly managed affects human health as it emits an offensive odour, causes a traffic jam, and creates methane gas that pollutes the environment (Osondu, 2012:33). Some Nigerian towns and cities are inundated with solid waste carelessly thrown away on the roadsides. This as noted has heightened traffic jams. People get anxious in traffic jams and this may cause high blood pressure. Hours are wasted in traffic jams and by the time some get to their places of work, they are already exhausted. Hazardous chemicals and wastes are also poorly managed in the nation. In 1988 an Italian firm dumped toxic waste in Koko in Delta State, Nigeria. A visit to the oil-producing areas of the country and other areas where solid minerals are extracted reveals that the environment is filled with hazardous and chemical waste.

There is also the serious problem of marine and air pollution, especially from the oil and gas industry. The country has attempted in the past to end the flaring of gas. But at the time of writing this paper gas flaring is still taking in the

states of the Niger Delta. The night skies in many places in the Niger Delta are filled with fumes and gases. The gas flaring sites are not far from where people reside. Many can hardly sleep at night as a result of the lightning in the night skies. Gas fumes cause fog in the early morning constituting a driving hazard to drivers. Many are sick as a result of gas flaring. Nigeria's oil extractive industries are prime polluters of the environment. Realize that: "Oil activities from start to finish degrade the environment. From the cutting of seismic lines to the actual extraction of oil, the environment suffers. In the course of oil exploration, formation/produce water is pumped into the environment destroying living organisms in the location" (Awajiusuk, 2012:68-81). In the same place, Awajiusuk writes further that the pollution caused by oil companies causes soil infertility and depletes rivers of fish thus causing food insecurity, and health problems such as cancer, premature births, respiratory diseases, and other strange ailments.

**Conceptualizing the Right to Environmental Health**

The right to environmental health is an aspect of the fundamental right to health. The human rights instruments recognise a fundamental human right to health (United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2000). In 1948 the United Nations proclaimed: "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing, and medical care and necessary social services. (United Nations, 1948). This right is indispensable if other rights like the right to life, freedom of movement, and right to free speech are to be exercised. The right to health covers environmental health. This is why a right to health is also a right to environmental health. Concerning the right to physical and mental health, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) puts an obligation on states to take steps to realize this right. Some of the steps that states are encouraged to take are (1) total

improvement of 'environmental and industrial hygiene and (2) prevention of occupational diseases (United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2000). The right to health cannot be excluded from issues of environmental and occupational concerns. Environmental and occupational hygiene directly promotes health and prevents diseases. The right to health is a right to a healthy natural environment and also workplace safety. It involves the prevention of occupational accidents, occupational diseases, availability of safe potable water and sanitation, prevention of human persons from harmful substances, protection from other harmful environmental conditions, and causes of health hazards. Environmental health is an intrinsic part of the right to health. Deducing from all these human rights instruments, environmental health can be conceptualized as a right. The point that is being argued here is that there is a human right to environmental health.

What is environmental health? Environmental health deals with the connection between the environment and human health. Take the fact for instance that climatic change and adverse weather conditions negatively impact human health as a change in seas temperatures brings pollen into the air and causes respiratory problems; harmful bacteria and viruses from the air, water or even food affect humans, and scientific and industrial advancements have at times negatively degraded nature and affected human health (Rajagopalan, 2011:222-223). Environmental health issues that need attention for people to live healthy lives include; indoor and outdoor air pollution, water and sewage pollution, noise pollution, radioactive contamination, hazardous substances, and electromagnetic fields (Rajagopalan, 2011: 255). One definition of environmental health sees it as "the theory and practice of assessing, correcting, controlling, and preventing those factors in the environment that can potentially affect the health of present and future generations" (Rajagopalan, 2011: 255). The National Environmental

Health Awareness defines it as the scientific practice of preventing human beings from illness and injury while promoting their well-being and protecting human beings from hazardous wastes, substances, and all that emanates from the environment that could do humans harm (National Environmental Health Awareness, 2013: 72). The World Health Organization (WHO) has clearly stated that adequate water, good sanitation, safer working places, healthy built environments, clean air, safe agricultural practices, prevention from harmful radiation, and preservation of nature are all quintessential for good health (World Health Organization, 2020). WHO has also strongly noted that the current COVID-19 pandemic reveals that there is a delicate relationship between the planet and people. Environmental Health also refers to the interconnectedness of people and the environment in which they live. The goal of environmental health is to ensure that human activities foster the environmental quality needed for a healthy life. Environmental health is concerned with 'the complex relationship between environmental risk factors and human biology within affected individuals and communities to prevent diseases, illnesses and promote health (National Environmental Health Awareness, 2013: 72).

**Factors Militating Against Environmental Health in Nigeria**

It is clear from the preceding that environmental health is a human right. Many factors militate against the enjoyment of this right in Nigeria. One key factor that militates against environmental health in Nigeria is the negligence of extractive industries, especially the oil and gas prospecting companies. Much of the environmental damage that affects the health of people is caused by the activities of these companies. They care little or nothing about their environment. They are more concerned with their profits than the welfare and well-being of the people. Because of the income that the government receives from these industries,

they are often not brought to book for environmental pollution. Take for instance oil companies that have been flaring gas into the atmosphere of the Niger Delta of Nigeria for many decades now and yet the government has failed to stop them. The Nigerian government has always set deadlines to end gas flaring but the deadline has always passed without the oil companies ending gas flaring.

Another factor is ignorance and lack of adequate environmental awareness. These also militate against the promotion of environmental health. Those who are ignorant of the value of their health tend to live in a hazardous manner and show little or no concern for cultivating environmentally healthy behaviours. In some states, in Nigeria, a monthly environmental sanitation day is observed. Some persons lack a value for the importance of this environmental health practice and so they don't border to observe it. Ignorance or lack of diligence makes people keep their domestic waste for months on their premises without properly disposing of it. Even when they dispose of their waste it is done carelessly.

Overpopulation is a factor that also instigates environmental hazards that militate against environmental health. Overpopulation affects people's standard of living. Nigeria has a high and rising population. Poverty hurts the environment as poor people over-depend on environmental resources even causing deforestation. Overpopulation also precipitates environmental conflicts as people struggle for nature's goods/resources.

Not to be forgotten among the factors is poor or inadequate enforcement of environmental policies and regulations. Many policies are tailored toward controlling and preventing environmental hazards and occupational accidents that impede environmental health. A fundamental problem with Nigeria is that many of these laws are hardly enforced. Thus there is impunity in the land making some

individuals and corporate bodies violate environmental regulations. Associated with this is that there is poor environmental governance on the land. One of the most degraded regions in the world is Ogoniland in Nigeria. Much of this degradation was caused by Shell and other oil companies' exploration activities. The United Nations noted that it will take up to 25 years to remediate the region's environment. Remediation activities that should have commenced fully many years back are stuck in governmental bureaucratic processes and little has been done.

**The rationale for Safeguarding the Right to Environmental Health**

There are various rationales for safeguarding the right to environmental health. It has been argued that environmental health is sustained by preserving a healthy environment. A healthy environment is vital to preserving 'amenity', the intangible qualities that make nature beautiful and make it foster pleasure, delightfulness, and enjoyment for people. These services as it is provided by a healthy and peaceful environment add value to human health and wellbeing. A despoiled, degraded, and exploited environment reduces in capacity to give pleasure to humans. The fact that nature adds value to human health and wellbeing can be attested to by the millions of eco-tourists travelling every year on the planet. Environmental health is enhanced by a serene, majestic, and beautiful environment. Environmental harms invariably harm human beings. Human beings depend on food, water, pharmaceuticals, and medicine for survival and sustenance. Nature's ecosystems render valuable services not only to non-human lives but also to human beings. Ecosystem services are threatened by population explosion, deforestation, global warming, poor agricultural practices, and introduction of exotic species, flooding, soil erosion, pollution, unsustainable exploitation and consumption, and activities of extractive industries among others. Human endangering and destruction of ecosystems negatively affect

human survival as human sources of vital resources are degraded and harmed (Agbogidi, 2019:4). Humans benefit from protecting nature and the ecosystems. Destroying environmental resources can cause food insecurity and threaten human health and well-being. Thinking of plants, sustain all living organisms on the planet and so the destruction of plants affects all organisms including human beings (Agbogidi, 2019:4). It has been said that a major source of health hazards that has caused the death of millions, especially the poor is pollution (Francis, 2015:17); and so pollution must be mitigated. Protecting the environment is quintessential to securing environmental health for poor environmental care negatively impacts human health, moral development, and wellbeing. Human beings are affected gravely by environmental degradation and depreciation in the following ways also: use of toxic chemicals, pollution, and pesticides cause diseases; excessive hunting and fishing deplete food sources; wilderness destruction deprives people of the areas needed for religious, recreational, and philosophical inspiration; ecosystems destructions spoil clean water sources and ecosystem services; biodiversity loss destroys valuable medical species; deforestation leads to global warming, and inhumane treatment of animals and environmental abuse diminishes human respect for their fellow human beings (Resnik, 2012:59).

Another vital reason for safeguarding the right to environmental health is because of health hazards. The right to environmental health is safeguarded so that human beings will be protected from health hazards. Health hazards can come from the natural environment or human occupations. It is for the good of human persons that environmental health is propagated. Pollution can lead to human hazards. For example, Mercury dumped into rivers can affect the fish in the river which bioaccumulates in man as he consumes such fish. DDT and other pesticides also used on crops can enter steams and equally affect man indirectly causing serious hazardous

problems. Problems like noise pollution and overcrowding are detrimental to the human psyche and can cause physical illness and inspire social vices and criminality. One of environmental health's major aspects is protecting humans from the environment and occupational hazards. To be forcefully emphasised here is that human health and flourishing require safeguarding the right.

There is also the human rights rationale for why environmental health should be preserved. So that humans will be able to enjoy all their rights. It is difficult to enjoy human rights to the fullest amid atmospheric and marine pollution, depletion of the ozone layer, noise pollution, dirty water, and poor sanitation. For public health concerns, there is a need to safeguard the right to environmental health. Because of the benefits that human beings derive from nature's ecosystems, the environment must be protected from harm. If the environment is not protected from harm it negatively affects what human beings depend on for their health and wellbeing. Thus their right to environmental health is infringed upon. The right to environmental health does not exist in a vacuum. It is dependent on and exercised within the environment. Without a healthy environment, there cannot be environmental health. The human being is entitled to many rights. They include the right to life, dignity, and happiness. These rights cannot be enjoyed to the optimum if there is no healthy environment. Safeguarding the right to environmental health involves protecting the environment on which human beings depend and protecting humans from the harms emanating from human activities on earth. Human interactions with nature have created environmental hazards such as pollution, chemical and solid waste, and hazardous waste. When all these are not well managed they affect human health. Human beings have a right to health flowing from their right to life,

For the sake of unborn children or future generations,

15

there is a need to preserve the right to environmental health. African traditional thought like the thought of other indigenous peoples affirms the need for the present generation to live in fidelity to the heritage of the ancestors. They believed the land was sacred and should be preserved for generations to come. The right to environmental health requires preserving and keeping a healthy environment that prevents environmental hazards. The earth is perceived as a common patrimony not just for the present generations but also for future generations to come.

Environmental health is also by implication beneficial for the ecosystems and the entire earth community. Working to prevent environmental hazards and problems makes humans protect nature and ecosystems. Thus other organisms and non-human lives on the planet benefit.

**Ways to Safeguard the Right to Environmental Health**
For the above and many other reasons, it is a human responsibility to preserve the right to environmental health. The fundamental way to safeguard the right to environmental health is to protect the social and natural environment. Regarding the natural environment, "all politics and life itself are tied to the welfare and general good health of the natural environment that surrounds us" (Hiskes, 2009:4)

The law is a powerful instrument to promote environmental health. The supreme law of Nigeria is the constitution. It has a vital role in promoting the right to environmental health. Every other law, norm, and regulation emanates from it. The Nigerian Constitution affirms the environmental objective of the Nigerian State: "The State shall protect and improve the environment and safeguard the water, air, and land, forest and wildlife of Nigeria." (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2012). This constitutional mandate is not to be ignored for by safeguarding water, air, land, forest, and wildlife they are protected from degradation and

despoliation, and thus human environmental health is boosted. Elsewhere the constitution endorses that the Nigerian state policy shall be directed among others towards ensuring that: (1) "conditions of work are just and humane and that there are adequate facilities for leisure and social, religious and cultural life"; "the health, safety, and welfare of all person in employment are safeguarded and not endangered or abused"; and (3) "there are adequate medical and health facilities for all persons" ( Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2012).  Environmental health as defined previously is enhanced by these constitutional provisions. Organizations, companies, corporations, and businesses have a constitutional obligation to ensure that their environments and workplaces are organized to promote occupational hygiene and health. Occupational hygiene and health are strong components of environmental health. The Nigerian state should ensure that environmental regulations are enforced to fulfil this constitutional provision.

Policies on health, environmental health, and environmental protection have to be devised and implemented to guarantee this right. Environmental problems such as solid waste mismanagement, hazardous waste, air, and marine pollution, noise pollution, poor sanitation, etc. pose a threat to the health of human beings. There should be policies on the effective management of these problems. And the policies should be implemented and enforced. These policies and their implementation are important. Without effective environmental health policies, many persons will not feel constrained to keep and protect the environment and secure human health. There are many environmental laws and regulations in Nigeria such as those on disposal of solid waste, environmental sanitation, town planning regulations, etc. but often people disobey and break these laws. These laws need to be enforced. There are many environmental laws in Nigeria that if properly enforced will help in maintaining environmental health. These laws include; the 1999 FEPA

Waste Management Regulations, and the Harmful Waste (Special Criminal Provision). On the International level, Nigeria has also signed the 1989 Basel Convention on the Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Waste, the 1992 Environmental Impact Assessment Act, the 1991 Effluent Regulations, the 1991 Pollution Abatement in Industries and Facilities Generating Waste, 1991 Gaseous Emission and Noise Limitation, 2006 The Mineral Oils (Safety) Regulations and the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency Act (Environmental Law Research Institute, 2011).

Besides the federal regulations, different states in Nigeria have laws on waste management, pollution control, etc. There are a lot of environmental regulatory frameworks in Nigeria but due to a lack of political will, many of them go unimplemented. (Amechi, 2009). This lack of political will can be due to corruption, prioritizing socio-economic development over sustainability, and valuing revenue from polluting industries (Amechi, 2009). Related to the fact that environmental laws and regulations should be enforced, environmental health workers have a grievous role to play in this. Environmental health workers include environmental sanitation workers, waste management workers, street and road sweepers, and cleaners,

To safeguard the right to environmental health, it is vital to also secure other rights such as the rights to food, education, work, housing, life, human dignity, equality, non-discrimination, and other rights (United Nations; Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2000). If these rights are not realized, it is difficult for people to enjoy environmental health. Food comes from the environment and if the environment is not secured humans will either lack food or be vulnerable to poisonous food. Adequate and clean housing is necessary to enjoy environmental health. Lack of housing, inadequate housing, or housing without proper

water and sanitation can subject the human person to various health problems. A safe working environment is necessary for enjoying mental health. If the working environment is unsafe and polluted, human beings can be negatively affected by sicknesses. Safeguarding other rights then, especially by the government, and other organizations and social agents is important to promote environmental health. Speaking of safe working environments companies and corporations that employ people should create such an environment.

Promoting economic and social development is an important way to create a healthy environment. Economic and social development should be done in line with the principles of sustainability.  Without development, human beings will find it difficult to live in the environment.  It should be realized that human beings are different from other animals that don't create culture. Human beings adapt to their environment through developmental activities. When they are deprived of economic and social development they are vulnerable to dehumanizing lives and experiencing poverty. On the whole, poverty hurts the environment. Poverty causes disparity in the standard of living of citizens and makes life unbearable for the majority of people (United Nations, 1992). It is highly difficult for people living in poverty to meet their health needs arising from sicknesses emanating from environmental destruction. A fundamental way to promote environmental health is to mitigate or end poverty.

Education is also vital in promoting the right to environmental health. The Stockholm Declaration in principle 19 asserts that:
> Education in environmental matters, for the younger generation as well as adults, giving due consideration to the underprivileged, is essential in order to broaden the basis for an enlightened opinion and responsible conduct by individuals, enterprises, and communities in protecting and

improving the environment in its full human dimension. It is also essential that mass media of communications avoid contributing to the deterioration of the environment, but, on the contrary, disseminate information of an educational nature on the need to project and improve the environment in order to enable mal to develop in every respect. (United Nations, 1972).

Through education, citizens can be made more aware of this right. Through education, they can know their responsibilities and duties to cultivate environmental habits and protect the environment. In protecting the environment, they promote environmental health for it is degradation and destruction, and abuse of the environment and environmental resources that precipitate environmentally induced ill-health and other environmental problems that deprive human beings of healthy life in their environment. The environmental health values previously indicated should be promoted through civic education, social studies education, and other curricular engagements.

Another vital way to safeguard this right is environmental litigation (Amechi, 2009:322). The Nigerian state has often failed to enforce environmental regulations and left the rights of citizens violated. Environmental litigation becomes a vital way to get the state fulfil its obligations and stop industrial polluters and so ensure environmental health for the people (Amechi, 2009:322).

In seeking ways to foster the right to environmental health, African eco-cultural values should not be discountenanced. These values should be forcefully propelled through all forms of the educational curriculum in Nigeria. Traditional values help protect the environment from harm. Different ethnic groups in Nigeria have unique eco-cultural practices and religio-philosophical ideas on land use,

water preservation, and animal care. Nigeria is not bereft of environmental values. These values and insights should be harnessed to foster environmental care, which in turn helps in sustaining environmental health. There are many sacred groves and protected forests in Nigeria. One such protected forest is the Lasabi forest in Degesin village in Ogun State, and Umuaja, from where the River Ethiope takes its source. Other indigenous environmental practices are the prevention of killing of pregnant animals at festival times, Iroko community law abhorring bush burning for hunting animals, indiscriminate cutting down of trees, Ijebu community requirement of tree planting to stem the erosion of the sedimentary soil, Bola community forbidding fishing for sea lobsters and periwinkle. (Usman, 2012:1-2). Sacred groves and forests help to control climate change and thus help to foster more conducive weather conditions for human health. They also provide a rich source of oxygen for human beings thus refreshing human persons. Though at times some of these environmental practices may be simply based on taboo (Usman, 2012:1-2); they can be tapped and integrated into modern environmental health ethics.

**Conclusion**

The paper has argued and shown that environmental health is a human right. It was indicated above that this right in Nigeria is threatened by poor environmental health habits, poor environmental governance on the path of government, poor environmental awareness and education, lack of adequate environmental responsibility by oil companies, etc. The importance of safeguarding environmental health for human wellbeing and that of the earth community was also outlined. By reversing the factors that threaten environmental health the right can be safeguarded. This done, many more Nigerians will be able to enjoy environmental health.

**REFERENCES:**
Agbogidi, M.O., E*cosystem Services and Management for Better Life*,

Abraka, Delta State University Printing Press. 2019.

Amechi, E.P., Litigating *Right to Healthy Environment in Nigeria: An Examination of the Impacts of the Fundamental Rights (Enforcement Procedure) Rules 2009*, *In Ensuring Access to Justice for Victims of Environmental Degradation. Law, Environment and Development Journal,* 6, 3, p. 20-334, available at http://www.lead-journal.org/content/10320.pdf, accessed 06 December 2021, 2010.

Awajiusuk, F.J., *African Environmental Ethics or Environmental Activism: Which Way Forward for the Niger Delta*, Journal of African Environmental Ethics and Values, 2, p. 68-81, 2012.

Ekuerhare, B.U., 2007*, Urhobo and the National Question: Urhobo's Environment and Natural Resources*, In *History of the Urhobo People of Niger Delta*,ed. Peter P Ekeh, Buffalo: Urhobo Historical Society, p. 555-562.

Environmental Law Research Institute, *A Synopsis of Laws and Regulations on the Environment in Nigeria*, **available at** http://www.elri-ng.org/newsandrelease2.html**, accessed 06 December 2021, 2011.**

Federal Republic of Nigeria, *1999Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria with Amendments*, Abuja, The National Assembly, 2011.

Hiskes, R.P., The *Human Right to a Green Future: Environmental Rights and Intergenerational Justice*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009.

National Environmental Health Awareness, *NEHA News: New Perspectives on Environmental Health: The Approval of New Definitions*, Journal of Environmental Health, NEHA News, 7, 3, p. 72-73, available from https://www.neha.org/sites/default/files/about/JEH-Oct-2013-Definition-Environmental-Health.pdf, accessed 10 September 2022, 2013.

Ordinioha, B., Principles *and Practice of Environmental Health in Nigeria*. Port Harcourt, Rural Health Forum, 2010.

Organisation of African Unity, *The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights*, available at file:///C:/Users/ADMIN/Downloads/banjul_charter%20(1).pdf , accessed 06 December 2020, 1981.

Osondu, A.C., Our Common Environment: Understanding the Environment, Law and Policy, Lagos, University of Lagos Press, 2012.

Francis,P., Laudato Si': Encyclical Letter of the Holy Father Francis on Care for Our Common Home, Nairobi, Pauline Publications Africa, 2015.

Rajagopalan, R., Environmental Studies: From Crisis to Cure, Oxford,

Oxford University Press, 2011.

Republic of the Philippines, The Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines-Article II, Section 16, available at https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/constitutions/the-1987-constitution-of-the-republic-of-the-philippines/the-1987-constitution-of-the-republic-of-the-philippines-article-ii/, accessed 03 December 2020, 1987.

Resnik, D.B., Environmental Health Ethics, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Rim-Rukeh, A., Environmental Science: An Introduction. Ibadan: Kraft Books, 2009.

United Nations, Universal Declaration on Human Rights, article 25.1, available at https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/, accessed 03 December 2020, 1948.

_____., Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, available at file:///C:/Users/ADMIN/Downloads/6471%20(1).pdf, accessed on 03 December 2020, 1972.

_____., Draft Declaration on Human Rights and the Environment', article 6, available at http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/instree/1994-dec.htm, accessed 03 December 2020, 1994.

_____., Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, principle 5, available at https://www.cbd.int/doc/ref/rio-declaration.shtml, accessed 06 December 2021, 1992.

United Nations' Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, ICESCR General Comment No. 14: The Right to the Highest Attainable Standard of Health (Art. 12), available at https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4538838d0.pdf, accessed 03 December 2021, 2000.

Usman, A.K., Environmental Protection Law and Practice, Ibadan, Ababa Press, 2012.

World health Organization, Environmental Health, available at https://www.who.int/health-topics/environmental-health#tab=tab_1, accessed 03 December 2020, 2020.

# Contemporary Applications of Leopold's Land Ethic and Relevance to Conservation and Environmental Policy

**OGELENYA, Grace**
**Department of Religious Studies & Philosophy**
**Delta State University Abraka**
**ogenelyagrace@gmail.com**

## Abstract

Aldo Leopold's Land Ethic, in "A Sand County Almanac," written in 1949 has had a profound influence on environmental ethics since its publication. This research aims to investigate the relevance and applicability of Leopold's Land Ethic in contemporary conservation practices and environmental policy-making. Through a multidisciplinary approach combining philosophical analysis and policy evaluation, this study seeks to assess the extent to which Leopold's principles have been integrated into modern environmental management strategies. Additionally, it aims to identify challenges and opportunities for further incorporating Leopold's Land Ethic into current conservation frameworks. This work aimsto provide insights into the significance of Leopold's ideas and their potential for guiding sustainable environmental stewardship in the 21st century.

**Keywords**: Land Ethic, conversation, environment,

Environmental Ethics, ecology, policy.

## Introduction

Aldo Leopold(1887-1948), renowned conservationist and author of "A Sand County Almanac," published posthumously introduced the concept of a Land Ethic, which has since become a cornerstone in environmental philosophy and conservation practice.

Leopold's Land Ethic posits that humans are members of a broader community that includes not only other human beings but also plants, animals, soil, and water. Leopold's land ethic calls for a moral and ethical consideration of the natural world, extending the boundaries of ethical consideration beyond solely human interests. The Land Ethic posits that humans are members of the biotic community, interconnected with and dependent upon the health and integrity of the land and everything in it. He argued that ethical relationships with the land should extend beyond human interests to encompass the well-being of the entire ecological community. Since its publication in 1949, Leopold's Land Ethic has profoundly influenced environmental ethics, shaping the way we perceive and interact with the natural world. Leopold's holistic approach to conservation emphasized the interconnectedness of all living beings and advocated for a shift from a human-centered to a bio-centric worldview. However, despite its widespread recognition and influence, questions remain regarding the practical application and contemporary relevance of Leopold's principles in the face of accelerating environmental degradation and biodiversity loss.

Leopold's Land Ethic is grounded in the principles of ecological interdependence, acknowledging that all components of the natural world are intrinsically linked and that the well-being of one element affects the whole. This holistic perspective recognizes the inherent value of non-human species and ecosystems, independent of their utility to humans (Callicott, 1989). Furthermore, the Land Ethic emphasizes the importance of preserving ecological processes and systems, rather than solely focusing on the conservation of individual species or resources.

This work aims to explore the contemporary applications of Aldo Leopold's Land Ethic in conservation and environmental policy. By examining the evolution of

Leopold's ideas, analyzing case studies, and engaging with stakeholders involved in conservation practice, this study seeks to assess the extent to which Leopold's principles have been integrated into modern environmental management strategies. Furthermore, it aims to identify challenges and opportunities for further incorporating Leopold's Land Ethic into current conservation frameworks, considering diverse cultural, social, and economic contexts.

Through a multidisciplinary approach combining philosophical analysis, empirical investigation, and policy evaluation, this research aims to provide insights into the enduring significance of Leopold's ideas and their potential for guiding sustainable environmental stewardship in the 21st century. By critically examining the relevance and practical implications of Leopold's Land Ethic, this study contributes to ongoing discussions in environmental ethics and conservation biology, informing policymakers, conservation practitioners, and environmental advocates about effective strategies for promoting ethical and sustainable relationships between humans and the natural world.

## Influence of Aldo Leopold's Land Ethic on Contemporary Conservation Practices

Aldo Leopold often referred to as the "father of wildlife ecology," was a pioneering environmentalist, forester, conservationist, and philosopher. Born in 1887, Leopold's early experiences in the American Midwest instilled in him a deep appreciation for the natural world. He developed a profound understanding of ecology and conservation through his work as a forest ranger, wildlife manager, and Professor at the University of Wisconsin.

The influence of Aldo Leopold's Land Ethic on contemporary conservation practices is profound and far-reaching. Leopold's ideas have shaped the way conservationists, policymakers, and environmentalists

approach the management of natural resources and the protection of biodiversity.Leopold's Land Ethic emphasizes the interconnectedness of ecological systems and the importance of preserving the integrity and stability of entire ecosystems. This perspective has led to a shift away from single-species management towards ecosystem-based approaches in conservation practices. Conservation efforts increasingly focus on protecting entire habitats and restoring ecosystem functions rather than prioritizing individual species. He also argued for the intrinsic value of nature, advocating for the protection of wildlife and natural landscapes for their own sake, rather than solely for human benefit. This perspective has influenced conservationists to consider the inherent worth of biodiversity and ecosystems, leading to the establishment of protected areas and conservation policies aimed at preserving ecological integrity and biodiversity hotspots.

It also emphasizes the ethical responsibility of humans to act as stewards of the land, caring for and conserving natural resources for future generations. His writings have inspired a sense of environmental stewardship among individuals, communities, and organizations, fostering a culture of conservation and sustainability. Leopold recognized the importance of considering both social and ecological values in conservation decision-making. His Land Ethic encourages the incorporation of cultural, aesthetic, and recreational values alongside ecological considerations in conservation planning and management. This holistic approach to conservation promotes the engagement of diverse stakeholders and the integration of local knowledge and perspectives. His Land Ethic emphasizes the importance of restoring degraded ecosystems and rehabilitating landscapes altered by human activities. His ideas have influenced contemporary conservation efforts to prioritize ecological restoration projects aimed at enhancing biodiversity, improving

ecosystem services, and promoting resilience to environmental change.

The Land Ethic has also influenced the development of environmental policies and regulations aimed at protecting natural resources and mitigating environmental degradation. His ideas have been reflected in legislation related to wilderness protection, endangered species conservation, habitat restoration, and sustainable land management.

Leopold's land ethic continues to be a guiding principle in contemporary conservation practices, shaping the ethical foundations and practical strategies employed by conservationists worldwide. By promoting a deeper understanding of humanity's relationship with the land and advocating for responsible stewardship of natural resources, Leopold's ideas have left a lasting legacy in the field of conservation biology and environmental ethics.

## Contemporary Applications of Land Ethics in Conservation

The Land Ethic has profoundly influenced contemporary approaches to conservation and resource management. One notable application is ecosystem-based management, which aligns with Leopold's emphasis on preserving ecological processes and systems. This approach considers the interconnectedness of various components within an ecosystem, recognizing that the well-being of individual species is inextricably linked to the health of the broader ecological community (Grumbine, 1994). Ecosystem-based management has been adopted in various conservation initiatives, such as the management of national parks, wilderness areas, and protected habitats.

Another area where Leopold's ideas have gained traction is wildlife conservation and habitat restoration efforts. The Land Ethic's recognition of the inherent value of

non-human species has shaped policies and initiatives aimed at protecting endangered and threatened species, as well as preserving their habitats. This has led to the establishment of wildlife corridors, reintroduction programs, and habitat restoration projects that aim to maintain ecological integrity and biodiversity (Soulé & Noss, 1998).

**Challenges and Critiques**

While the land ethic has significantly influenced conservation and environmental policies, its implementation and application have faced various challenges and critiques. One critique concerns the inherent tension between preserving ecological integrity and meeting human needs and economic demands (Callicott, 1990). Balancing the ethical considerations outlined by Leopold with the realities of resource exploitation and development has proven challenging in many contexts.

Another critique relates to the perceived anthropocentrism of the Land Ethic, as it still places humans at the center of moral consideration, albeit within a broader ecological context (Naess, 1973). Some deep ecologists argue for a more ecocentric perspective, which grants intrinsic value to the natural world independent of human interests or utilitarian considerations.

Furthermore, the implementation of the Land Ethic has faced practical challenges, such as the complexities of defining and measuring ecological integrity, the difficulties in balancing competing stakeholder interests, and the limitations of existing legal and policy frameworks to fully incorporate the principles of the Land Ethic (Freyfogle, 2003).

**Relevance of Aldo Leopold's Land Ethic to Contemporary Conservation in the Face of Emerging Environmental Challenges**

Leopold's influential book "A Sand County Almanac," published posthumously in 1949, outlined a visionary "Land Ethic" that remains highly pertinent to modern environmental philosophy and conservation practices (Leopold, 1949). Leopold called for an ethical paradigm shift in humanity's relationship with the natural world, one that extends the boundaries of moral consideration to encompass whole ecosystems and biotic communities rather than just individual organisms.

At the core of Leopold's Land Ethic is the idea that humans are plain members and citizens of the biotic community, not its conquerors (Newton, 2006). He advocated replacing the long-prevailing view of land as a commodity to be exploited with a perspective that assigns intrinsic value to all parts of the environment. Under this holistic ethical framework, private land ownership and economic pursuits must be tempered by an obligation to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the land and its multitude of life forms (Ouderkirk & Hill, 2002).

Leopold's ecocentric ethic openly challenged the entrenched anthropocentric view that the natural world exists solely for human benefit and domination (Newton, 2006). His ideas presaged and influenced many subsequent environmental movements by articulating a non-instrumentalist philosophy that judges right action based on whether it preserves the land's capacity for self-renewal and sustainable ecological flourishing (Callicott, 1987).

While contemporary adaptations have refined and expanded Leopold's original ideas, the foundational principles of his Land Ethic -- such as prioritizing biodiversity, restraining transformative impacts on

ecosystems, maintaining ecological integrity, respecting the intrinsic value of nature, and humans as members of the biotic community -- remain integral to modern conservation science, policy and activism (Newton, 2006; Ouderkirk & Hill, 2002). Leopold's call to extend ethical obligations to the land itself continues to resonate and shape efforts worldwide to sustainably coexist within the Earth's environmental systems. As the world faces serious environmental challenges such as climate change, habitat loss, pollution, and biodiversity decline, the relevance of Leopold's Land Ethic becomes increasingly pronounced. Leopold's holistic approach to conservation, emphasizing the interconnectedness of ecological systems and the ethical responsibility of humans towards the land, offers valuable insights and guidance in addressing these pressing issues.

Leopold's Land Ethic underscores the importance of preserving the integrity and stability of ecosystems, which are crucial for mitigating and adapting to climate change. Strategies informed by his principles, such as habitat conservation, reforestation, and sustainable land management, can enhance ecosystem resilience and contribute to climate change mitigation efforts. His emphasis on the intrinsic value of nature and the ethical imperative to protect biodiversity remains relevant amidst ongoing biodiversity loss. Conservation practices guided by his principles, including habitat restoration, species conservation, and the establishment of protected areas, are essential for safeguarding biodiversity and ecosystem functioning.

His Land Ethic promotes responsible stewardship of natural resources, advocating for practices that maintain ecological integrity while meeting human needs. In the face of resource depletion and environmental degradation, integrating his principles into resource management policies can foster sustainable practices that balance ecological,

social, and economic considerations.

Leopold's recognition of the interconnectedness of social and ecological values highlights the importance of addressing environmental justice and equity concerns. Integrating his principles into environmental policy-making can promote equitable access to natural resources, empower marginalized communities, and ensure that conservation efforts benefit both people and the planet.

Increasing awareness and understanding of Leopold's Land Ethic among policymakers, stakeholders, and the general public is essential for fostering support and implementation of his principles. Educational initiatives, outreach programs, and interdisciplinary collaborations can promote the integration of ethical considerations into environmental policy-making and stewardship. Incorporating Leopold's principles into environmental policies, regulations, and management plans can enhance their effectiveness and sustainability. Policy frameworks that prioritize ecosystem-based management, conservation of biodiversity, and promotion of environmental stewardship align with Leopold's land Ethic and can guide decision-making at local, regional, and global levels. Collaboration among government agencies, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, and local communities is essential for advancing Leopold's vision of ethical and sustainable land use. Building partnerships and fostering dialogue among diverse stakeholders can facilitate the integration of his principles into collaborative conservation initiatives and adaptive management approaches.

Leopold's Land Ethic offers timeless principles and ethical guidance for addressing emerging environmental challenges and promoting sustainable stewardship of the land. By recognizing the intrinsic value of nature, fostering holistic approaches to conservation, and promoting ethical

relationships between humans and the environment, Leopold's ideas provide a foundation for integrating ethics into environmental policy-making and stewardship efforts in the 21st century. Embracing his vision of a land ethic can lead to more resilient, equitable, and sustainable futures for both people and the planet.

**Conclusion**

Leopold's Land Ethic remains a profoundly influential concept in the realms of conservation and environmental policy. Its principles have shaped contemporary approaches to ecosystem-based management, wildlife conservation, habitat restoration, and the development of environmental regulations. The paper herein delves into the enduring relevance and practical implications of Aldo Leopold's Land Ethic in the context of contemporary conservation practices and environmental policy-making. Through an exploration of Leopold's foundational ideas, examination of their influence on current conservation strategies, and consideration of opportunities for further integration into environmental stewardship, this study highlights the profound impact of Leopold's ethical framework on shaping our relationship with the natural world.Leopold's Land Ethic, rooted in the recognition of the intrinsic value of nature and the interconnectedness of ecological systems, offers timeless principles for navigating the complex environmental challenges of the 21st century. In a world grappling with climate change, biodiversity loss, habitat degradation, and environmental injustice, Leopold's holistic approach to conservation provides a moral compass for guiding ethical decision-making and fostering sustainable practices.

The relevance of Leopold's Land Ethic is evident in its ability to inform and inspire a wide range of conservation efforts, from ecosystem-based management to biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation, and environmental

justice initiatives. His emphasis on the ethical responsibility of humans to act as stewards of the land underscores the importance of fostering a deeper sense of connection, care, and reverence for the natural world. In conclusion, Aldo Leopold's Land Ethic stands as a beacon of hope and wisdom in a world facing unprecedented environmental challenges. By embracing his principles and working collectively towards their realization, we can honor his legacy, protect the integrity and beauty of the biotic community, and ensure the well-being of both present and future generations.

**References**

Callicott, J. B. (1987). The Conceptual Foundations of the Land Ethic. In J. B. Callicott (Ed.), *Companion to A Sand County Almanac: Interpretive And Critical Essays* (pp. 186-217). University of Wisconsin Press

--------------. (1989). *In Defense of The Land Ethic: Essays in Environmental Philosophy*. State University of New York Press.

-------------- (1990). Whither Conservation Ethics? *Conservation Biology*, 4(1), 15-20. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1523-1739.

Grumbine, R. E. (1994). What is Ecosystem Management? *Conservation Biology*, 8(1), 27-38. https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1523-1739.1994.08010027.x

Leopold, A. (1987) *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There*, Oxford University Press

------------(1986) *Game Management*, University of Wisconsin Press Reprint edition

Naess, A. (1973). *The Shallow And The Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement. A Summary*.

Newton, J. L. (2006). *Aldo Leopold's Odyssey* (Revised Edition). Island Press. Inquiry, 16(1-4), 95-100. https://doi.org/10.1080/00201747308601682

Ouderkirk, W., &Hill, J. (Eds.). (2002). *Land, Value, Community: Callicott and Environmental*

*Philosophy.* State University of New York Press.

Soulé, M. E., &Noss, R. (1998). Rewilding and Biodiversity: Complementary Goals for Continental Conservation. *Wild Earth*, 8(3), 18-28.

Yonggang Z,(2016) An Analysis of Aldo Leopold's Land Ethics in *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education (IJHSSE)* www.arcjournals.org Volume 3, Issue 12, PP 21-25

# Economic Self-Reliance of Nigerian Youths in the Light of Nigerian Politicians' Knowledge of Awolowo's Socio-Political Metaphysics

**Enomah Sylvester PhD**

**Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Administration and**

**Management, Delta State University of Science and Technology,**

**Ozoro, Nigeria**

## Abstract

It is an indubitable reality that Nigeria youths even after graduation from tertiary institutions are still not emancipated from economic dependence and freedom, and to survive they engage in despicable acts of prostitution, kidnapping, robbery, cultism, internet fraud, and related dirty businesses thereby creating incessant fear and security challenges in the society. The economic paucity of Nigerian youths is predicated on Nigerian Politicians' ignorance of the metaphysics of Awolowo's four cardinal programs for economic freedom and liberation in his socio-political philosophy. This paper is intended to draw the attention of the government to the metaphysics of Chief Obafemi Awolowo's four programs in his socio-political philosophy for the economic self-reliance of Nigerian youths. The study reveals that the understanding and implementation of Awolowo's four cardinal programs by political leaders will inevitably help the Nigerian youths to attain economic self-reliance and this will unequivocally bring about the overall development of the nation and security in Nigeria.

**Keywords**: Metaphysics, cardinal, self-reliance, suicide, mortality, philosophy

## Introduction

The future grandeur of a nation depends on the

37

prospect of her present youths who will inevitably replace the elderly when they eventually exit this mortal life as they advance in age. Needless to a soothsayer before one can authoritatively predict confidently that the opulence of Africa in the nearest future of Nigeria will be a mirage just as the present-day quandaries of African youths could be predicated on the negligence of the successive political leaders to incorporate or capture the interest of the youths in political considerations. It is heartbroken that in juxtaposing the past and present-day Africa, one could observe conspicuously the rapid waning of the magnificence of Nigeria which was referred to as the 'giant of Africa'. The wilting of the magnificence of Nigeria is paralleled by the economic flaccidity of the Nigerian youths. The economic flabbiness of the Nigerian youths is spotlighted on the Nigerian politicians' lack of knowledge and implementation of the metaphysics of the four cardinal programs advanced by Chief Obafemi Awolowo in his socio-political philosophy which has occasioned incidences of social vices. In other words, in the bid to liquidate the economic deficiency generated by the inability of Nigerian Political Leaders to incorporate the four cardinal programs of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Nigerian youths espouse negative remedies, namely, prostitution, kidnapping, kidnapping and robbery, cyber fraud and fetishism, polygamy, early marriage, proliferation of churches, religious deception and fanaticism, and suicide/youth mortality.

**Prostitution**: Newspapers and Social Media are agog with news of the involvement of Nigerian youths in prostitution. According to THIS DAY LIVE 27 Jan 2023, some immigrants have turned to prostitution in European and Asian countries, and also within the country some people have turned to prostitution including virtual prostitution, and Nigerian street corners, residential homes, hostels, in places like Abuja, Enugu, Port Harcourt; and also the US Department of States has reported that most full-time prostitution workers are from Nigeria or Albania. Furthermore, the Sahara Reporters (24 June 2023) stated that Oba youths and local vigilantes were said to have busted a brothel called Nwanyi Ukwu Venza's at Umuagu Umuogali in Oba, in the Idemili South local government area of the State where underage girls were reportedly being used for prostitution. Odita Sunday reports in The Guardian News of 3 Dec. 2022 that "Lagos state police Commissioner Abiodun Alibi…The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Angels Assurance Security Outfit Limited, Ms Ange Ify Udeogalanya, has rescued seven girls from being trafficked to Ghana by an international prostitution ring". Daily Trust on 28 Apr 2023 reports that "…the Nigerian army raided an underage brothel in Maiduguri, Borno State. The brothel which was located at Kasuwar Fara in the Shagari low-cost area, was swooped open after an exclusive report by the Daily Trust on Saturday which exposed how the juvenile sex trade thrives in those areas of Maiduguri metropolis… The report revealed how every evening, young girls, mostly teenagers,

engage in the sex trade with their male clients who are mostly uninformed men. The story further revealed how several poor households in Maiduguri push their underage girls into sex for money as a means of survival…" Jimitota Onoyume reports in Vanguard of May 7, 2023, that "The police have arrested 94 commercial sex workers…in Ughelli North local government Areas and environs in Delta State". All these incidents indicate that economic deficiency propels these youths to engage in prostitution as the only option for survival. Economic deficiency also impels their families to send their children into prostitution.

**Kidnapping and Robbery**: Kunle Adebajo in *Hum Angle* of January 9, 2023, stated that "Over 9,000 and over 4,600 were kidnapped last year. While the figures are lower compared to incidents in 2021, they still fit into a worrying pattern. As many as 9,076 lives were lost to violent incidents that unsettled last year, and 4,680 people were victims of abduction." He further revealed that some of the most notorious incidents from 2022 include the terror attack on the Abuja-Kaduna train in March that led to several deaths and the abduction of over 60 passengers; the massacre of congregants at St Francis Catholic Church in Ondo in June; and the raid of the medium-security custodial facility in Kuje, Abuja, in July that led to hundreds of inmates breaking out…" Emmanuel Addah also reports in THIS DAY LIVE 27 Aug of 2023 that "At least 430 civilians were killed, while over N5 billion was demanded from 3,620 persons in 582

kidnap-related cases in the last year, according to a news report by SBM Intelligence". The involvement of Nigerian youths in kidnapping and robbery is predicated on their fiscal tumbling as a result of a lack of job opportunities.

**Cyber Fraud and Robbery**: Economic nose-diving among Nigerian youths makes them delve into internet fraud and fetishism as instantaneous remedies. Cyber fraud also known as *yahoo-yahoo* business is the act of playing on the intelligence of victims to release money to fund imaginary projects or charity organizations. To hypnotize victims, cyber fraudsters back up their acts with fetishism or ritualism which predominantly involve the use of human beings as sacrificial victims leading to, sometimes, organ harvesting. According to Egole and Okumgba (2023) in *Punch News* of 5 December, there is a rise in cybercrime as a result of massive youth unemployment, and many youths now use the compute for criminal activities to swindle people, commit financial fraud, do 419, and live as Yahoo boys. Sad enough, *Leadership News* reports that "In the last six months, nearly 3,000 young Nigerians have either been arrested or jailed for involvement in internet fraud notoriously known as *yahoo-yahoo*. But the more they are arrested and jailed, the more the numbers of these wire scammers dominate the records of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the agency charged with tackling financial crimes". This has resulted in the killing of innocent citizens of Nigeria.

**Polygamy, Early Marriage, and Population Explosion**: These in Nigeria are not unconnected with illiteracy, idleness, or joblessness. When the vitality and vim of the youths are not maximally exploited and utilized in meaningful employment, they channel them to sexual engagements; they expend their dynamism and verve on reproduction. Young men with meagre resources become polygamous producing large families they cannot cater to. These children who lack basic education and necessities of life due to the inability of their parents to provide for them adequately eventually take social vices thereby making society unsafe, violent, and insecure.

**Proliferation of Churches, Religious Deception, and Fanaticism:** The reality of the geometrical progression or increase of the number of Churches in Nigeria is incontrovertible. This exponential growth in the number of Churches in Nigeria is not unconnected with the realism of joblessness and pecuniary paucity among the youths. The report of *Akinblogdotcom* in *Niaraland Forum* of 12 October 2023 about a Pastor who attempted suicide because his church was not growing reveals the truism that some churches are established solely for money or commercial purposes. "A Nigerian Pastor of a Pentecostal church reportedly attempted to take his life over frustration from his ministry. Narrating what led to his action, he said 'I'm tired. You people should allow me to die. Since 2000 when I opened my ministry, no members, only 15. God, you called me, I

have fasted, I have prayed, and I have done everything to make sure my church grows. I have gone for evangelism, I have gone for morning call, I have called for night vigil, I have done everything so that my church grows… My colleagues with whom we went to school together, are doing well, their churches have grown, and they're traveling abroad while mine is not growing. I will host a crusade; I will not even see money to settle the debts incurred. I have done everything. I cannot even pay my house rent'". The requirements of establishing a church are not cumbersome; it is simply getting an accommodating which even could be one's apartment and a Bible. It does not require a seminary or theological formation.  The motive is essentially pecuniary, to make money, to make a living. In order to deceive and hypnotize their converts, they preach compromised and prosperous gospels, perform staged miracles, accommodate indecent dressings in their churches, and condemn other Churches' doctrines, theologies, and faith.  To register the rapid growth of their churches and to perform prodigies to the admiration of their members they delve into ritualism and cultism. The result of this is that their converts become so worldly, are spiritually empty and bankrupt. Hence, one can observe that despitethe proliferation of churches, population explosion of Christians, and robust religiosity, Nigeria is beleaguered and inundated with moral degradation, corruption, and nauseating ostentation of wealth, violence, and insecurity.  I believe Nigerian young Pastors will close down their churches when they have money as in the case of a

Ugandan Pastor, David Ochieng who shut down his Church after winning over 100 million from a sports bet (Rachael Omidiji in Nigeria Tribune of March 23, 2023). Rachael revealed that "According to an online outlet, the Pastor confessed that he has been struggling to make ends meet through a collection of tithes. 'I must admit that I opened this Church due to 'greed' but not anointing. I saw how several make pastors money through the crowds they have and making fake prophesies to attract more, he narrated".

**Suicide and Youths Mortality**: Poverty or financial deficiency is an absurdity in human life and existence. According to Omoregbe (1991), "Camus is the philosopher of absurdity. Life is absurd, the universe is absurd. This means that the universe is meaningless, human life is meaningless, and all human endeavors are meaningless…"Economic absurdity is veracity in the life of Nigerian youths triggered by the nonchalant attitude of Nigerian politicians. As a therapy to the existence of the absurdity of economic recession, some Nigerian youth opt for suicide. Suicide is defined as the taking of one's own life. The Latin word *Suicidium* means "killing of oneself" or *Sucida* which stands for "self-killer". For Oghenerobo (2022), suicide means the act of killing oneself. Blackburn (1996) sees suicide as intentional self-killing and Hornby (2005) defines suicide as the act of "killing oneself". In Nigeria, some youths had already preferred suicide as a remedy to the existence of economic paucity. Onyedike

Agbedo in *The Guardian* of 25 May 2019 gives insightful descriptions of those Nigerian youths who committed suicide in the recent past. According to him, youths who commit suicide have lofty dreams, hopes, and great expectations, and people love and celebrate them; but their dreams fade and they go into depression. Some Nigerian youths who committed suicide in the recent past include Uzaka Ebiweni, Chkwuemeka Akachi, Amos Ibrahim, Kenile Nwabuzor, and Olaitan Gbadamosi." In addition, hunger, unbalanced diet, lack of proper medication, frustration, and depression as a result of economic deficiency have occasioned youth mortality.

To exterminate the above social vices and create economic viability and self-reliance among Nigerian youths, the knowledge and favorable consideration of the four cardinal programs of Obafemi Awolowo by Nigerian politicians is expedient. The four cardinal programs include free education, free medical care, integrated rural development, and full employment. These four cardinal programs are indispensable roadmaps to Nigerians' attainment of economic self-reliance, development, and prosperity of her citizens at a comparatively early date (within 20 years if she executes his four programs) (Awolowo, 1968). This paper is intended to draw the attention of Nigerian politicians to the metaphysics of Awolowo's four cardinal programs in his socio-political philosophy and their implementations for the economic

benefits of the Nigerian youths, for the securement of a peaceful Nigerian, and her future magnificence. To achieve this, the paper embarks on the following outline: abstract, introduction, the four cardinal programs of Awolowo, the metaphysics of the four cardinal programs of Awolowo and its implications, conclusion, and recommendation.

**Awolowo's Four Cardinal Programs**

According to Ogunmodede (1986), the economic development of man is embodied in what Awolowo calls the 4 cardinal programs. Nigeria can attain economic self-reliance, development, and prosperity for her all citizens at a comparatively early date, within 20 years, if she executes the four cardinal programs, i.e. if she forthwith adopts the socialist approach to all her socio-economic problems. In other words, Nigeria could become a developed nation if it specifically adopts and executes the four cardinal programs of Awolowo's Democratic Socialist-oriented Unity Party of Nigeria and which namely are (i) Free Education, (ii) Free Medical Care, (iii) Integrated Rural Development (iv) Full Employment (UPN, 1979) (Awolowo, 1968).

**Free Education**: Awolowo agrees with the dictum of Francis Bacon that knowledge is power. Hence, he took education to be the fundamental basis and cornerstone of any development program. Without education, the acquisition of theoretical knowledge or practical skills is impossible (Ogunmodede, 1986). Similarly, "The foundation of every state is the

education of its youth" (Diogenes Laertius). Therefore, for Awolowo 1981), education is the "Most potent weapon" left to man to transform, change, and liberate him and society from the slavery of ignorance, disease, and backwardness and attain rapid socio-economic and political progress, prosperity, peace, and happiness. For Theodore (1965) "I contend that if education is to become meaningful…it …must become powerful. It is the one power left in the world that is greater than the forces of nature that man has now enslaved. Only the power of education is capable of controlling the other powers that man has gained and will use either for his annihilation or transformation". Similarly, for Pope Pius VI (1967) "It can even be affirmed that economic growth depends in the very first place upon social progress, thus basic education is the primary object of any plan of development. Indeed, hunger for education is no less debasing than hunger for food; an illiterate is a person with an undernourished mind". In the opinion of Alva Myrdal 1965 (Ogunmodede, 1986), "The paramount role for achieving any kind of development – and most definitely any development great enough to be judged beneficial to our whole world of the future – belongs to education. All progress achieved by mankind so far has been decisively dependent on this one lever the improving of the quality of the human resources". Gani Fawehinmi (1974) also opined that "In Nigeria, only education can make development possible because education is itself one development supreme goals. Nigerians must see education as a production agent, a factor

that contributes to the production factor which provides and adds to human skills – which promotes innovation and invention – which contributes to and facilitates change – which in these ways provides high growth rates in the economy rising levels of living among the population". According to Ogunmodede (1986), writing in 1947 under the theme "Education as a Means of National Freedom", Awolowo (1981) defines education in terms of the cultural process and dynamics involving the whole man. He says "…education is that process of physical and mental culture whereby a man's personality is developed to the fullest". Education is indeed for Awolowo (1981) is a "Systematic process of instruction and experience which induces and helps a man develop and bring out the best that is in him 'in order to evolve an integrated personality".

F. Okafor (1981) says "My own idea of education in terms of strict definition is that education is a process of acculturation through which the individual is helped to attain the development of this potentialities and their maximum activation when necessary, according to right reason and to achieve thereby his perfect self-fulfillment". Also for A.B. Fafunwa (1974), "…education is the aggregate of all processes by which a child or young adult develops the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behavior which are of positive values to the society in which he lives, that is to say, it is a process for transmitting culture in terms of continuity and growth and for disseminating knowledge either to ensure

social control or to guarantee the rational direction of the society or both. All educational systems, whether traditional or Western-oriented, seek to achieve these goals irrespective of the curriculum, methods and organization designed for the purpose". In fact, for Adesope (2021) "Education imparts in individual knowledge, skills, dexterity, character and desirable values that will precipitate and galvanize national development and self-actualization. The implication of the above is that education molds and trains the individual to be useful in society and contribute positively to national development. This is what is obtainable in advanced political systems with a quality educational system like the US, Britain, France, Singapore, South Korea, and so on". According toIschoolconnect (2024) "A good education not only teaches you skills but also helps you broaden your horizon, gain a better perspective, and teaches you to think for yourself". Furthermore, Awolowo (1971) emphasize that "Education is, therefore, a process of human nurture which is designed to promote, on an ever-increasing scale, the efficiency and constructiveness of the subjective level of the conscious phase of the mind in the performance of its functions".

According to Ogunmodede (1986), Awolowo opined that a true educational policy must be comprehensive, that is physical, mental, moral, and religious etc., and with his profound knowledge of the universal indispensability of knowledge to all Nigerians, and fully aware that there could

be States where men are not equally endowed financially because of their background, family and class etc. which would mean that not all citizens may be able to educate themselves even at the primary level, not to talk of reaching the university level, Awolowo (1968) therefore came to this conclusion in 1954 that the purpose and goals of education cannot be attained unless it is free at all levels. "In order to attain the goals of economic freedom and prosperity, Nigeria must do certain things as a matter of urgency and priority. It must provide free education (at all levels)…for the masses of its citizens". In the opinion of Gani Fawehinmi (1974), "Before Nigeria started free Primary Education in 1976, and included free education at all levels, as a goal in her Constitution in 1979, 71 nations had by 1974 done so". For U.N.O. 1948 (Ogunmodede, 1986), there is a right to education for all, which should be free and directed to the development of human personality, creating global understanding, tolerance, and peace. Awolowo (1968) was the first Nigerian to advocate a free education policy and to implement it as leader of Government in the West in 1955, and since then, he has been campaigning for it consistently and vigorously to the extent that he became in 1966, also, the first to suggest that it be included in our Constitution.

**Free Medical Care**: This is the second cardinal program of Awolowo. . It is cardinal because for the UPN Directorate, (1979) "To be wealthy, the nation also needs to be healthy" and for Awolowo in UPN Directorate, 1979) health should be

conjointly provided with educational program and should be developed like education. This is predicated on the fact that good health is "basic to human existence" (UPN Directorate, 1979). For Amedari, M.I. and Ejidike, I.C. (2021) "Providing equitable access to healthcare for every Nigerian is central in the country's National Health Act". Similarly for IHMS-HMO (2023), "Access to healthcare is a fundamental human right that plays a pivotal role in the well-being of individuals and families". According to Ogunmodede (1986), "An ignorant man may exist for a while but the trouble is that in the long run, his ignorance would bring him the disease that will kill him. To have a healthy body to work with, the provision of adequate health facilities also becomes a categorical imperative". Health programs in the mind of Awolowo, according to Ogunmodede (1986) should emphasize preventive medicine rather than curative. This emphasis shows the relation of this program with other programs like education, agriculture, and labor. "For, to prevent deadly sickness a man must learn what food to eat as well as the quality and quantity" (Ogunmodede, 1986). For Awolowo (1968), since health is as basic and indispensable as education, it should equally be free, for it is the responsibility of the state to protect the lives of its citizens. Emphasizing the need for the provision of free medical care, Awolowo (1968) stated "In order to attain the goals of economic freedom and prosperity, Nigeria must do certain things as a matter of urgency and priority. It must provide…free health facilities for the masses of its citizens."

**Integrated Rural Development**: As postulated by (Ogunmodede, 1986), history indicates that the industrial revolution is preceded by the agrarian revolution, and this cannot be otherwise in Nigeria. "A country that cannot produce sufficiently to feed herself, but must always import food from abroad, is a dependent country. The government of such a nation is irresponsible and plays a dangerous game with the belly of its citizens…if agriculture is to be the live-wire of a nation's economy, the method has to change from traditional to modern ways. Farming must be scientific and mechanized if it is to yield high dividends" Ogunmodede, 1986). For Claudia Adams (2023), "The importance of agriculture in Nigeria cannot be overstated. It is the bedrock of the country's economy, contributing immensely to GDP, employment, and exports…it is critical that the country invest in the sector to ensure its continued growth and development". Similarly, Sodiq (2024) asserts that "Agriculture is one of the key sectors of Nigerian the economy and has been for a long time. It plays a vital role in providing food security, nutrition, and livelihoods for a large proportion of the Nigerian population. It contributes significantly to economic growth in employment, foreign exchange earnings, and value-added production". It is on this premise that Awolowo postulated that the development of agriculture is the foundation for industrial and economic development. For him, "In an agricultural country such as Nigeria, the pride of place in economic planning must go the development of agriculture" (Awolowo, 1981). In fact, "In

unenlightened circles, agriculture and industry are often considered as alternatives to each other. The truth is that industrialization for a home market can make little progress unless agriculture is the industry's labor supply. If agriculture is stagnant, industry cannot grow" (Arthur Lewis). In the mind of Awolowo, a developing nation had better adopt modern farming based on the concept of Optimum Communities, or OPTICOMS, for short. Optimum Communities are units of farmers organized in large-scalecooperative farming settlements. Each OPTICOMS has all the basic facilities of life like pipe-born water, light, housing, health clinic, schools, good roads, storage, modern equipment and fertilizers. They get loans and assistance from the government; they harvest and market their own produce themselves" (Ogunmodede, 1986). In the opinion of Axmann (2021), mechanization strategies should go hand in hand with a more general rural development strategy, aiming for the diversification of rural economies. As a labor-saving intervention, mechanization can have the undesired side-effect of increasing rural unemployment. To mitigate this effect and possible resulting backlash, there need to be opportunities to use the time saved. This includes education for children and youth and opportunities for other economic activities for adults…This includes training of farmers and operators on effective machine use, as well as development of technical skills in rural communities". Apart from the fact that in the Optimum Communities food and job security are assured, they are also the food baskets of the nation

(Ogunmodede, 1986).

**Full Employment**: Awolowo believes that the prerequisite for full employment is self-evident (Awolowo, 1970). "After the acquisition of knowledge, skill and technique, development becomes still-born if able-bodied and healthy citizens, because of a poor government policy, cannot help transform, change and utilize available agricultural materials for their own benefits. Indeed, labor acquires an eminent position in the whole program of development in any nation. Without labor, there is no development, no production, no capital, no distribution, no remuneration, no peace, no happiness and prosperity. Everything is stagnant, man has to work, if he is to live, eat, and cater for himself, his family, and dependents (Ogunmodede, 1986). As observed by Olufemi Ariyo (2023) "Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa is grabbing with a significant challenge – youth unemployment. The term "youth" refers to individuals between ages 15 and 35 years old, and this segment of the population comprises a substantial portion of Nigeria's workforce". Unfortunately, many young Nigerians find themselves without gainful employment despite their energy and potential. According to recent statistics, the youth unemployment rate stands at an alarming 34%. This figure not only highlights the magnitude of the problem but also raises concerns about its long-term consequences for economic growth and social stability". The point of Awolowo is that if man is per se *homo faber* and work is indispensable, it is very absurd to speak of unemployment

or underemployment. The state must create and provide employment for all citizens according to their endowed talents and training. The concept of full employment is not even the state in which the number of unfilled vacancies equals the number of unemployed men. This is a negative concept of full employment. For Awolowo (1970), full employment is the state in which "there are more vacant jobs than unemployed men" (Awolowo, 1970). According to Ogunmodede (1986) in the formation of his theory of full employment, Awolowo is very much influenced by the views of Beveridge (1944) who says that "In default of a better policy directed to the production of useful things, any of these may be better than nothing at all. These who are taken into useless employment will, by what they earn and spend, useful employment to others. It better to employ people, however the money for paying their wages is obtained than not to employ them at all; enforced idleness is a waste of real resources and a waste of lives which can never be made good, and which cannot be defended on any financial ground". Thus, according to Ogunmodede (1986), "…Awolowo would see nothing wrong with pool betting or kalokalo game, etc." Hence, Awolowo and Beveridge, are of the view that in the case of unemployment and underemployment, it is better to employ people on useless projects, than not to employ them at all Ogunmodede (1986). However, it is imperative to state that useless jobs do not refer to immoral, amoral, or antisocial activities such as prostitution, cyber fraud, kidnapping, embezzlement, stealing, and ritualism. Rather

useless jobs refer to menial jobs or low-paid jobs that are morally and socially acceptable.

**The Metaphysics of Awolowo's Four Cardinal Programs and the Implications for the Nigerian Youths**

The metaphysics of Awolowo's Four Cardinal Programsis meant for their final cause and their expediency to Nigeria as an independent nation about the present and future lives of the Nigerian Youths. With the abundance of capital and natural resources in Nigeria, it only takes government willpower to implement the four cardinal programs of Awolowo, namely, free education, free medical health care, integrated rural development, and full employment, for the good and benefits of the Nigerian Youths.

In the first place, a lot of Nigerian youths are not economically self-sufficient because they are not educated. They are illiterate because education is inaccessible to them because of the high cost of education which is far beyond their financial capacities. Education in government educational institutions from primary through secondary to tertiary levels involves high tuition fees in addition to other fees for school uniforms, textbooks, acceptance, hostel accommodation, department, faculty, examination, enrolment, medical, project, matriculation, graduation, SUG, practical, excursion, etc. Indisputably, Nigeria is buoyant enough to initiate and implement free education for all her citizens at all levels of education. However, if this is not

feasible due to a lack of political will, then, at least, education should be maximally subsidized. The present exorbitant school fees in government schools coupled with the high cost of living make it impractically possible for parents to fund their wards' education. Political leaders should at least intervene and fund education to reduce school fees to a marginal level in addition to annihilation or abolition of acceptance fees. The provision of quality education also entails an upward review of salaries of teachers, prompt payment of salaries, and promotion arrears of government education workers. Education of Nigerian youths will emancipate them from the state of penury, indigence, illiteracy, and ignorance that coerce them into prostitution, stealing, cultism, early marriage, polygamy, untimely deaths/youth mortality, local champions, kidnapping, unwanted pregnancy, abortion, suicide, hooliganism, overproduction of children that cannot be catered for, and population explosion. It is quite obvious that to pay the exorbitant tuition fees, some undergraduates embark on armed robbery and kidnapping which creates insecurity and lack of peace in the society. The possibility of achieving a serene and peaceful society and prosperity for the youths is the possibility of accessibility of all Nigerian youths to education through a free education policy.

A lot of Nigerian youth embark on mass transit from rural settings to cities in search of jobs. But when their dreams of better living standard sare dashed, they engage in

kidnapping, thuggery, prostitution, hooliganism, robbery, and all kinds of anti-social activities to survive. In the area of integrated rural development of Awolowo, political leaders must embark on an agrarian revolution. According to Nwuneli (2011), "Agriculture is the most important sector in the Nigerian economy. It employs 60% of Nigerians, including many rural women, and contributes up to 35% of the country's GDP". The idea of Optimum Communities or OPTICOMS of Awolowo is very laudable in this regard. In this wise, basic amenities and facilities such as schools, access roads, pipe-born water, light, housing, health clinics, schools, storage, modern equipment, and fertilizers should be made available in rural communities. Lack of funds and coziness will certainly discourage and hinder youths from farming. Therefore, the government should provide loans to farmers. Nigerian youths will be willing to remain in their respective rural settings and also remain well-behaved and disciplined if farming is made lucrative to them.

Furthermore, since a lot of Nigerian youths are not financially self-reliant or buoyant they become physically and psychologically sick. Health is wealth. For Nigerian youths to be reasonably economically comfortable, they must be healthy. A sick man is a poor man because he is too weak to engage himself in physical and mental labor. Medical facilities in Nigerian health institutions are not adequate and good enough for satisfactory and efficacious medical attention for Nigerian youths. As Amedari, M.I. and Ejidike,

I.C. (2021) remarked, "Primary health is set-back due to weak governance and accountability system, poorly remunerated health care workers, and transparency mechanism and procurement laws which are weakly enforced". Also, according to IHMS-HMO (2023), "In Nigeria, a country with a population of over 200 million people, ensuring healthcare access for all remains a complex and multifaceted challenge". In fact, "The Nigerian healthcare industry is facing challenges associated with outbound medical tourism, deteriorating medical infrastructure, low government budget allocation, and poor compensation and subsequent emigration of skilled healthcare workers. Political leaders both at federal government should allocate 5% of their budget to health in 2021, compared to 15% it pledged as part of the 2001 Abuja Declaration" (Nigeria-Country Commercial Guide, 2023). Therefore, the government should implement Awolowo's Free Medical Care cardinal program by providing adequate, effective, and free medical care. Robust health will furnish Nigerian youths with the strength to engage in work that will boost their economic self-reliability. Hospital buildings are dilapidated, facilities are outdated and ineffective, and there is a delay in health workers' salaries resulting in incessant strikes. This drives Nigerian youths to engage in alternative health remedies of self-medication and the use of drugs which eventually culminate in drug abuse. Free medical care will abolish youth mortality, providing them with robust health to work for economic liberation. This will likewise

prevent them from the economic deficiency that makes them indulge in anti-social activities.

Even with their education and naturally endowed talents, a lot of Nigerian youths are not economically self-reliant or liberated because they are unemployed. The results of the research carried out by Okafor, et al. (2021) indicate that (1) job creation strategies did not contribute significantly to total employment in Nigeria (2) FG employment policies were not effective for creating jobs (3) job creation in Nigeria was susceptible trade cycle (4) NEEDS was a veritable tool for employment generation in Nigeria. Based on the above-stated findings, it was concluded that employment policies in Nigeria were yet to be adapted to the economic realities in the country's labor markets". In the words of Busayo Aderounmu (2021), Nigeria is a country with an abundance of natural resources and a land area of 923,768km. Tin, iron ore, coal, lead, zinc, and fertile land are among the country's wealth of natural resources. However, Africa's populous country has been labeled as one of the world's poorest and one of the countries in Sub-Sahara Africa with worst unemployment rates." In the opinion of Awolowo, it is the prerogative of the government to create full employment for her citizens according to their endowed talents and training. This does not mean that the number of unfilled vacancies should equal the number of unemployed youths. Rather as Awolowo (1970, Ogunmodede, 1986) postulated, full employment means there should be more vacant jobs than

unemployed men. This implies that every working youth must be employed. In the opinion of Adisa Adeleye (2021), "The idea of full employment does not imply that every adult would also be at work at the same time. There would be a period of adjustment for movement from one job to the other". Of course, it is a utopia for the government to embark on employing every working youth and thereby be inserted into the government payroll. Rather, in achieving or realizing the concept of full employment government should, in complementing the employment of youths in government establishments, embark on empowerment programs for the unemployed youths and provide them with loans, equipment, and facilities for self-job creation and investments. The provision of power, security, and an enabling environment by the government is top-notch. The government can also give monthly stipends to the unemployed until they are gainfully employed. Olufemi Ariyo (2023), asserts that "Addressing youth unemployment requires a comprehensive approach that focuses on creating more job opportunities while equipping young people with relevant skills needed in today's competitive job market. It calls for targeted government interventions that prioritize investment in education, vocational training programs, entrepreneurship support initiatives, as well as public-private partnerships aimed at fostering economic growth". This will unequivocally eradicate the engagement of hungry youths in prostitution, cultism, cyber fraud, ritual killings, armed robbery, and kidnapping.

**Conclusion**

The maxim that the youths of today are leaders of tomorrow is indubitable. The rate of youth mortality as a result of their involvement in ritualism and *yahooism*, prostitution, cultism, child and sex trafficking, as a result of economic deficiency and ignorance indicates their abandonment in political considerations and this calls for serious concern. The sorrows and predicaments of the youths of today are indications of the blink or ignominious future of Nigeria. The neglect of the youths is predicated on the Politicians' lack of knowledge of metaphysics and of Awolowo's four cardinal programs in his socio-political philosophy, namely, free education, free medical care, integrated rural development, and full employment which are roadmaps for economic self-reliant of the youths in particular and prosperity for all Nigerians in general. Understanding the metaphysics of the four cardinal programs of Awolowo and its implementation by Nigerian politicians will inevitably bring economic prosperity and happiness to Nigerian youths who are the future hope, glory, and brightness of Nigeria.

**Recommendations**

To achieve economic self-reliability for the Nigerian Youths which is an indispensable variable for the realization of serenity and development in all ramifications for the present-day and future Nigerian in the light of the four cardinal programs of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the paper makes the following recommendations.

(1). The study of philosophy should be introduced and emphasized at all levels of education to equip students who are future leaders with the rudiments of critical thinking and making reasonable decisions devoid of sentiments and emotions which could result in colossal damages.

(2). Free education should be embarked upon by the government to enable all Nigerian youths to have to access education.

(3). Vocational education and empowerment should be provided to all Nigerian youths to help them in the area of self-employment.

(4). The government should create an enabling environment for the establishment of businesses for local and foreign investors.

(5). The government should give monthly stipends to unemployed youths until they are gainfully employed to discourage them from engaging in anti-social activities for survival.

(6). Agricultural science should be made a compulsory subject instead of being made an elective subject in the Universal Basic Education Curriculum (UBE) in Nigeria (Universal Basic Education Curriculum UBEC (2008).

# REFERENCE

Adams, C. (2023*). What are the importance of Agriculture in Nigeria?* https://www.agriculturelore.com/what-are-the-importance-of-agriculture-in-nigeria/

Addeh, E. (2023). *430 civilians killed, 3,620 abducted, N5bn demanded in 582 crimes in one Year.* https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2023/08/27/report-430-civilians-killed-3620-abducted-n5bn-demanded-in-582-crimes-in-one-year/#google_vignette.

Adebajo, K. (2023). *Fewer killings, abduction in Nigeria in 2022 compared to previous year but…* https://humanglemedia.com/fewer-killings-abductions-in-nigeria-in-2022-compared-to-previous-year-but/

Aderounmu, B. (2021). *Achieving decent employment in Nigeria through fiscal and monetary policies.*https://businessday.ng/opinion/article/achieving-decent-employment-in-nigeria-through-fiscal-and-monetary-policies/

Adesope, A.O. (2021). 'The Role of Education on National Development'. *International Journal of Research in Education and Sustainable Development, 1(10), 74-80.* https://www.ijaar.org/articles/ijresd/v1n10/ijresd-v1n10-Oct21-p11012.pdf

Adeleye, A. (2021).*Is a state of full employment possible in Nigeria?* https://www.vanguardngr.com/2011/10/is-a-state-of-full-employment-possible-in-nigeria/

Akinblogdotcom. (2023).*Pastor attempts to commit suicide, says his church has only 15 members.*https://www.nairaland.com/7019685/port-harcourt-pastor-attempts-suicide/3

Amedari, M.I., et al. (2021). Improving access, quality and efficiency in health care delivery in Nigeria: a perspective. *PAMJ - One Health*, 5:3. doi: 10.11604/pamj-oh.2021.5.3.28204.

Ariyo, O. (2023). *Exploring government initiatives to tackle youth unemployment in Nigeria: A comprehensive analysis*. https://www.thecable.ng/exploring-government-initiatives-to-tackle-youth-unemployment-in-nigeria-a-comprehensive-analysis/

Axmann, H. (2021). Mechanization helps Nigerian farms reduce food loss and increase income. https://ccafs.cgiar.org/news/mechanization-helps-nigerian-farms-reduce-food-loss-and-increase-income

Blackburn, S. (1996). *Oxford dictionary of Philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Daily Trust (2023).  *Stop underage prostitution*. https://dailytrust.com/stop-underage-prostitution/

Egole, A., and Okumgba, J. (2023). *Worsening youth unemployment triggers fresh cybercrime, voodoo wave*.https://punchng.com/worsening-youth-unemployment-triggers-fresh-cybercrime-voodoo-wave/

Hassan, A. (2016). *What is education?* https://www.academia.edu/31432642/What_is_Education

Hornby, A.S. (2005). *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary,* 7th Edition. Oxford: University Press.

IHMS-HMO. (2023). https://www.linkedin.com > Access to Healthcare in Nigeria: Challenges and Opportunities for Families Ischoolconnect (2024). Importance of education in life: 9+compelling reasons of the importance education in 2024.https://ischoolconnect.com/blog/the-importance-of-education-reasons-why-we-need-it/#:~:text=Education%20helps%20you%20develop%20critical,and%20self%2Daware%20they%20are.

Leadership News. (n.d). *Nigerian youths and internet fraud.* https://leadership.ng/nigerian-youths-and-internet-fraud/#google_vignette.

Nigeria-Country Commercial Guide (2023).Healthcare.https://www.trade.gov/country-

commercial-guides/nigeria-healthcare

Nwuneli, N.O.  (2011). *A look at agriculture and agribusiness  in Nigeria.*
https://www.inter-reseaux.org/en/publication/51-special-issue-nigeria/a-look-at-agriculture-and-agribusiness-in-nigeria/#:~:text=Today%2C%20Nigeria%20is%20one%20of, sustain%20local%20production%20and%20processing..

Onoyume. J. (2023). *Police arrested 94 commercial-sex workers in Delta*.
https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/05/police-arrest-94-commercial-sex-workers-in-delta/

Oghenerobo O.J (2022). *A review of David Hume's postulate on suicide*. Kaduna: Saint Albert the GreatInstitute. Unpublished Material.

Ogunmodede, F.I. (1986). *Chief Obafemi Awolowo's Socio-Political Philosophy: A critical interpretation*.    Ibadan:  Intec Printers Limited.

Okafor, S.,  Mbah, S. and Oleribe, E. (2010). Job creation for full employment in Nigeria. Journal of Economic Studies, 9(1), 53-65. https://ssrn.com/abstract=2813545

Omidiji, R.  (2023).*Pastor shuts down church after winning N100m spots bet.*

Omoregbe, J.I. (1991).  *A simplified history of Western Philosophy: Contemporary Philosophy.* Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Limited.

Onyedike, Agbedo ( 2019). *Real reasons Nigerian youths are committing Suicide,*

Sahara Reporters (2023). *Youths declared war on brothel using underage girls as sex workers in Nigeria's Anambra State*. https://x.com/SaharaReporters/status/1672955664874844162

Sodiq, J. (2024). *10 importance of Agriculture in Nigeria*.

https://www.onlineworld.ng/2023/02/importance-agriculture-

nigeria.html

ThisDayLive.  (2023)*. The booming prostitution trade*.

https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2023/01/27/the-booming-prostitution-trade/#google_vignette

Universal Basic Education Curriculum .(2008). *Training manual on the new 9-year basic education curriculum.*

# Abortion and Nigeria's Abortion Provisions: An Evaluation

**ETAOGHENE PAUL POLO**
**Department of Philosophy, School of Basic Science and General Studies,**
**Margaret Lawrence University, Galilee, Delta State, Nigeria**
etaoghenepaulpolo@gmail.com/paul.polo@mlugalilee.edu.ng
**ORCID:** https://orcid.org/0009-0001-1606-0273
**OLAYINKA, Afeez Olanrewaju**
**Department of Philosophy, University of Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria**
olayinka.afeez17@gmail.com

## Abstract

So much value is ascribed to human life. This is so because life is generally regarded as a precious gift to humanity, which should be cherished and protected, as failure to cherish and protect life will bring about the inevitable extinction of the entire human race. Abortion is one of the numerous contemporary issues that undermine the sanctity and value of human life; for it involves terminating a pregnancy by removing a fetus or embryo before it can survive independent of the uterus, or killing the fetus inside the uterus. The issue of abortion is highly controversial; for while some individuals permit it, some others condemn it totally, as evident in the 'pro-life' versus 'pro-choice' controversy. 'Pro-life' advocates condemn abortion because it is an outright disrespect for the dignity and value of human life, and hold that there should be sustained discussions on it, to expose its danger and fatal consequences. 'Pro-choice' advocates are simply indifferent to the issue of abortion; for them, getting involved in abortion is a matter of choice for an individual - that is, one is at liberty to accept or reject abortion

so that in the final analysis, abortion should not be an issue for discussion. This article explores several arguments and bioethical concerns on abortion, approaches to the issue of abortion, and Nigeria's abortion provisions, which are evident in the Criminal and Penal Codes, respectively. Ultimately, this article recommends that beyond merely stating punishments for those involved in abortion, the following should be done: (a) Correcting the disparity between the Criminal and Penal Codes by ensuring that both Codes have the same penalty stated, or completely reducing them into a single Code that will be applied across the country, (b) Modifying the Criminal and Penal Codes by including information that will serve the purpose of educating Nigerians on the bioethical issues associated with abortion, and (c) Designating a body charged with ensuring compliance with and implementation of the abortion laws.

### Introduction

Of the numerous controversial issues discussed in ethics, abortion is arguably the foremost. Abortion is widely viewed as the murder of an unborn baby or child, the intentional (induced) or spontaneous termination or killing of a fetus to end a pregnancy. As characteristic of every controversial discourse in ethics, there are both positions for and against abortion. In other words, concerning the issue of abortion, scholars are divided into two camps; namely, 'pro-

life' and 'pro-choice.' While 'pro-life' advocates condemn abortion, 'pro-choice' advocates are simply indifferent to the issue of abortion.

This article will explore several arguments and bioethical concerns on abortion, as well as approaches to the issue of abortion. It will also critically evaluate Nigeria's abortion provisions evident in the Criminal and Penal Codes, respectively, with the ultimate aim of recommending measures that will help improve the *status quo*.

**The Notion of Abortion**

The word 'abortion' is an English word derived from another English word 'abort,' which means to 'stop,' 'terminate,' or 'end' something, an activity, or a process, as the case may be (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024). Abortion means stopping, ending, or terminating a pregnancy.

There are plural definitions of abortion. Though differing from each other in significant ways, all of these definitions have something in common; they all talk of abortion as referring to a process whereby a pregnancy is stopped, terminated, or ended, so that it does not develop further. For instance, the National Center for Health Statistics, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the World Health Organization (W.H.O) define abortion as the expulsion or termination of pregnancy before 20 weeks gestation, or a fetus born weighing 500gram or less (John *et al*, 2008), when it is not capable of independent survival. That

is, abortion involves removing or expelling a fetus from the uterus or womb of the mother before viability.

In a similar fashion to the above definition, abortion is also viewed as the removal or the extraction of the unborn from the uterine site before the age of viability, thereby subjecting the unborn to death (Mccanthy*et al*, 1998, 83). The standard medical definition of abortion is the extermination of a pregnancy before the fetus reaches the viability stage (George and Sherman, 2007), whether spontaneous or induced (Melissa and Mimi, 2008). Furthermore, abortion has to do with terminating a pregnancy through an intervention that either forces the pre-viable fetus or embryo out of the uterus (womb) or destroys the fetus or embryo within the womb (Wells, 2010, 277).The terms 'fetus' and 'embryo' as used here, simply refer to a baby undergoing different stages of development within the womb of his/her mother. Put simply, abortion is the unprompted or prompted termination of pregnancy before the fetus becomes viable (Davis, 2011).

From the foregoing, we can surmise that abortion, in all its forms and kinds, is the murder of an unborn baby or child, the intentional (induced) or spontaneous termination or killing of a fetus to end a pregnancy.

**Kinds of Abortion: Spontaneous and Induced Abortion**
As implied in the definitions of abortion given above,

abortion can occur in two ways; it can be spontaneous or induced (Okoro, 2005, 99). Spontaneous abortion is a situation whereby a pregnancy is terminated as a result of the sudden expulsion of the fetus from the uterus. This is otherwise known as 'miscarriage.' In other words, spontaneous abortion, which is also known as miscarriage or involuntary abortion, is an unplanned or accidental evacuation of the fetus from the womb of the mother due to some factors or circumstances within or beyond the control of the woman carrying the pregnancy (Gichure, 1997, 147).

Spontaneous abortion may occur if the pregnant woman gets involved in strenuous or hard work, falls or collides with something or someone, experiences great emotional or psychological trauma, or experiences shock as a result of some bad news (for instance the death of her loved one), to mention but a few.

Induced abortion is the medical or surgical termination of a pregnancy before the time of fetal viability. Simply put, it is a situation whereby a pregnancy is terminated through surgery or medication. Here, someone (for instance, a doctor, a nurse, physicians or other trained/experienced personnel, a lay person, or the pregnant woman herself) deliberately or unintentionally causes the abortion. Thus, induced abortion is intentional if the medication or surgery is done solely to terminate the pregnancy. On the other hand, induced abortion is

unintentional when the medication or surgery is done not solely to terminate the pregnancy, but in a view to ensuring the safety of the mother.

Following the immediately preceding paragraph, induced abortion can also occur as a result of some other actions, such as the treatment of some illness (Gichure, 1997, 147). In the case of the treatment of an illness, the intention of destroying the fetus is absent; nevertheless, the fetus is eventually terminated as a result of the drugs taken by the mother. That is; the death of the fetus in this case, is never a means by which the mother is treated, but only a result ofthe treatment; that is, it is not a cause but an effect of the act [treatment] (Onimhawo, 2005, 115).

**Methods of Deliberate Induced Abortion**

Induced abortion happens in various strata and has different phases in which it occurs. It also has its varied modes or methods, some of which are identified and discussed herein; namely: saline abortion, prostaglandin chemical abortion, dilation and curettage, dilation and evacuation, hysterectomy, and suction or vacuum aspiration.

**(i) Saline Abortion**

This method of abortion is also known as 'salt poisoning' or 'salting out.' It is commonly used after thirteen weeks of pregnancy. Here, abortion is done by inserting a large needle through the mother's abdomen, just below her

navel and six ounces of a strong saline solution are injected directly into the amniotic fluid which surrounds the child, having withdrawn about four ounces of the amniotic fluid. The baby, upon breathing and swallowing the saline solution, is slowly poisoned and his/her skin burns as well (Schwarz and Tacelli, 1989, 85). Barely a day after the act, the mother goes into labour to deliver a dead child. However, some babies have survived this method, and been born alive, though with fatal bruises.

**(ii) Prostaglandin Chemical Abortion**

This method of abortion is said to be the latest method of abortion. Here, developed chemicals are used. It is usually done by injecting hormone-like compounds into the muscle of the uterus (womb), causing it to contract (shrink) intensely, and thereby pushing out the developing baby (Schwarz and Tacelli, 1989, 85). The chemical(s) induced or applied can also cause constrictions of the blood vessels and disrupt the proper functioning of the heart, thus the child may suffer as if having a heart attack and then die eventually.

**(iii) Dilation and Curettage**

This method of abortion is said to be performed during the first trimester of the pregnancy, which is between seven to twelve weeks of the pregnancy. This method utilizes a sharp curved knife to approach the uterus through the virginal (Schwarz and Tacelli, 1989, 85).It commences with the instrumental expansion of the cervical opening or the

uterine wall (Okoro, 2005, 100). Then the body of the fetus is carefully and manually cut and scraped out of the uterus into a basin. Common to this method or technique of abortion is the profuse bleeding that usually accompanies it. Hence, it could lead to blood shortage and even death of the mother.

**(iv) Dilation and Evacuation**

Dilation and Evacuation is said to be a relatively new procedure in late-term abortion and is generally believed to be among the safest and least psychologically painful for the woman, though considered the most traumatic for doctors and staff. This method of abortion is said to be similar to Dilation and Curettage, for it involves cutting the child into pieces through the use of a sharp knife, only that the child is bigger and by far more developed, weighing about a pound, and measuring a foot in length. In other words, this method of abortion involves dismembering the fetus while still in the womb, thus certainly eliminating any possibility of survival for the fetus (Schwarz and Tacelli, 1989, 86).

**(v) Hysterectomy**

Hysterectomy is another method of abortion. It is considered a corrective measure for the failure of the saline solution in the quest to abort a child. This method of abortion is said to be more of a mini cesarean section performed in late pregnancy. The woman is operated upon and the baby is lifted out of her body and dumped somewhere to die (Okoro, 2005, 102).However, it must be noted that the child having attained

the age of viability may survive on itself. Thus to ensure a successful completion of this exercise, a dose of saline solution may be administered to the mother before the operation to procure certainty on the death of the baby.

**(vi) Suction or Vacuum Aspiration**

This method of abortion is usually performed between seven and twelve weeks of gestation. This technique employs the use of a powerful suction tube. It begins with the virginal insertion of a series of graduated instruments to stretch open the cervix, which is tightly closed during pregnancy (Okoro, 2005, 101).The cervix is opened, and a transparent plastic tube is introduced into the uterus, with a knife at the edge; then the placenta is sliced off and torn into pieces, and sucked into a jar (Bergel, 1985, 2-4). Based on the nature of this method of abortion, the body parts of the baby are seen in bits, in the flowing morass of blood and tissues.

**Reasons for Deliberate Induced Abortion**

There are several reasons why deliberately induced abortion may be carried out on a pregnant woman. Some of such reasons are given below:

a. Some pregnancies result from rape or incest, and women who are victims of these assaults often seek an abortion.

b. Most women, however, decide to have an abortion because the pregnancy represents a problem in their lives.

c. Some women feel emotionally unprepared to enter parenthood and raise a child; they are too young or do not have a reliable partner with whom to raise a child.

d. Many young women in high school or college find themselves pregnant and must choose between continuing the education they need to survive economically or dropping out to have a baby.

e. Young couples who are just starting their lives and do not want children at that moment, might prefer to develop financial security first to provide better care for their future children.

f. Sometimes, people enter into a casual sexual relationship that leads to pregnancy with no prospect of marriage, but even if the sexual relationship is more than casual, abortion is sometimes sought because a woman decides that the social status of the male is inappropriate.

g. Some of the most difficult and painful choices are faced by women who are happily pregnant for the first time late in the reproductive years (thirty-five to forty-five) but discover in late pregnancy (twenty-six or more weeks) that the fetus is so defective that it may not live or have a normal life. Even worse is a diagnosis of abnormalities that may occur in later stages of the child's development if he/she is born (Hern, 1995, 1-7).

**Arguments/Bioethical Concerns on Abortion**

There are both positions for and against abortion. Usually, agitators for abortion question the status of the embryo. For them, the embryo is to be viewed as not being a human person, as life for them, does not begin at conception, but rather at birth. Mary Ann Warren asserts this view by saying that even though the embryo possesses the potentiality of becoming a person, it however does not in any way sufficiently resemble a person (1988, 163).

Furthermore, those in support of abortion often subscribe to the view of Judith Jarvis Thomsonthat a woman has the right to determine what happens to her body; she decides whether to keep a pregnancy or to terminate it, so to argue otherwise, will be interpreted as a forced maternity, which of course is not accepted by any society (1988, 141). By extension, those who are sympathetic to abortion also regard it as a method of birth control and contraception.

Conversely, those against abortion opine that life begins at conception and that there is a sanctity and value that is accorded to human life. For them, every unborn innocent child has the right to life. The fertilized ovum has the human chromosome pattern containing all the inheritable factors, and it can never grow into anything else other than a human being (Okoro, 2005, 106). If we are to follow the view of those who permit abortion that life is measured by self-determination and rationality to a logical conclusion, then, a

one-year-old child, for instance, would automatically have no right to life, for at that point, the child is incapable of these conditions.

Finally, it is noteworthy that there are situations whereby certain actions are morally right, even though they are wrong intrinsically. These situations fall under the "Double Effect" principle. This principle is said to serve as the basis upon which women whose pregnancies pose a threat to their lives are treated.

**Approaches to the Issue of Abortion**

Regarding the issue of abortion, scholars are divided into two camps; namely, 'pro-life' and 'pro-choice.' While 'pro-life' scholars condemn abortion as immoral (evil) on the ground that it is an outright disrespect for the dignity and value of human life, and hold that there should be sustained discussions on it, to expose its danger and fatal consequences, 'pro-choice' scholars are simply indifferent to the issue of abortion; for them, getting involved in abortion is a matter of choice for an individual; that is, one is at liberty to accept or reject abortion, so that in the final analysis, abortion should not be an issue for discussion. As an addendum, pro-life scholars argue that our legal framework ought to reflect a prohibition of abortion so that the unborn baby (fetus) is necessarily protected from unjust harm (Beckwith, 119).

Beyond the pro-life and pro-choice battle, the issue of

abortion is also examined from three standpoints or perspectives; namely: the religious, medical, and legal perspectives, respectively. The religious opinion circles around the evaluation of all human actions and sees abortion as being morally wrong. From the religious view, life begins at conception, so abortion simply becomes equal to murder. This view is explicitly expressed in John Paul II's definition of abortion; namely that abortion is a direct and deliberate killing of a human person (1995, 45).

All though it is taken for granted that every human person has an inherent right to life (Patil *et al*, 2014, 544), from the medical perspective, abortion is considered a matter of choice; that is, an individual, in this case, the pregnant woman reserves the right to decide to keep or terminate his/her baby. Whereas, from the legal perspective, it is held that there are no universal legal laws, either for or against abortion (Aduba, 2011, 4). Legislation of such depends on the legislators of every country. In other words, every country is at liberty to permit or prohibit abortion.

**Nigeria's Abortion Provisions**
Just like most countries in the world, Nigeria is not without abortion provisions. Although abortions are done rampantly in the country, it should be noted that in reality, the abortion laws of Nigeriamake it one of the most restrictive countries regarding abortion (Love Matters, 2020). For instance, in Nigeria, the only situation recognized by the law

when one can have an abortion is if having the child is going to put the mother's life in danger (The United Nations). This does not in any way deny the fact that sex-selective abortion has long been accepted in Nigeria (Simran and Adetutu, 2018, the Economist, 2014).

Precisely, abortion in Nigeria is governed by two different laws, depending on the geographical location. The Northern part of Nigeria is governed by the 'Penal Code,' while the Southern part of Nigeria is governed by the 'Criminal Code' (Ayorinde and Co, 2014).

**The Criminal Code**

As stated above, this code is currently enforced across Southern States in Nigeria. Precisely, the abortion laws in this code are stated in sections such as 228, 229 and 230, respectively (World Intellectual Property Organization).

> Section 228 states that:
> Any person who, with intent to procure [the] miscarriage of a woman whether she is or is not with child, unlawfully administers to her or causes her to take any poison or other noxious thing, or uses any force of any kind, or uses any other means whatever is guilty of a felony, and is liable to imprisonment for fourteen years (World Intellectual Property Organization, 118).

The point expressed here is simply that masterminding abortion or administering any substance that can cause a woman abortion is

considered a criminal offense, and a person involved in that will be made to serve a 14-year jail term.

> Section 229 states that:
> Any woman who, with intent to procure her own miscarriage, whether she is or is not with child, unlawfully administers to herself any poison or other noxious thing, or uses any force of any kind, or uses any other means whatever, or permits any such thing or means to be administered or used to her, is guilty of a felony, and is liable to imprisonment for seven years" (World Intellectual Property Organization, 118).

This section simply states that any woman who masterminds abortion, administers to herself, or allows another person to administer any substance that can cause her abortion is considered guilty of a criminal offense, and will be made to serve a 7-year jail term.

Section 230 states that "any person who unlawfully supplies to or procures for any person anything whatever, knowing that it is intended to be unlawfully used to procure the miscarriage of a woman, whether she is or is not with child, is guilty of a felony, and is liable to imprisonment for three years" (World Intellectual Property Organization, 118). This simply means that anyone who supplies whatever that will aid abortion is equally considered guilty of a criminal offense, and will be made to serve a 3-year jail term.

Finally, it should be noted that the Criminal Code does not explicitly permit abortion to save the life of the mother.

However, following the cases of Rex vs Edgar (2016) and Rex vs Bourne (1938), it has become generally accepted that an abortion that is performed to save the mother's life is not necessarily considered an outright violation of the Criminal Code (Love Matters, 2020).

**The Penal Code**

As stated above, this code is currently enforced across Northern States in Nigeria. The Penal Code is different from the Criminal Code in the sense that while the Criminal Code only states imprisonment as punishment for offenders, the Penal Code's punishments include imprisonment, fine, or both (Love Matters, 2020). In addition, every offence against the Penal Code is punishable, whether the abortion was successfully done or not (Umeha, 2006).

Specifically, in the Penal Code, the abortion laws are stated in sections232, 233 and 234, respectively. Section 232 of the Penal Code basically talks about causing abortion. It states that "whoever voluntarily causes a woman with child to miscarry shall, if such miscarriage be not caused in good faith for the purpose of saving the life of the woman, be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to fourteen years or with fine or with both" (Center for Reproductive Rights). That is, an abortion caused intentionally, without the motive of saving the mother's life, is punishable by a jail term, which may be up to 14 years, and payment of fine.

Section 233 of the Penal Code talks about death caused as a result of an act done to cause abortion. It states:

> Whoever with intent to cause the miscarriage of a woman whether with child or not does any act which causes the death of such woman, shall be punished- (a) with imprisonment for a term which may extend to fourteen years and shall also be liable to fine, and (b) if the act is done without the consent of the woman, with imprisonment for life or for any less term and shall also be liable to fine (Center for Reproductive Rights).

This means that anyone who intentionally causes a woman miscarriage or acts in a way that leads to the death of that woman shall be made to serve a jail term, which may be up to 14 years, and pay a fine. If the woman willingly agreed to the act, she would be imprisoned for life or made to serve a less jail term and pay a fine.

Lastly, section 234 of the Penal Code talks about the unintentional causing of abortion. It states:

> Whoever uses force to any woman and thereby unintentionally causes her to miscarry, shall be punished- (a) with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years or with fine or with both, and (b) if the offender knew that the woman was with child, he shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years or with fine or with both (Center for Reproductive Rights).

This means that anyone who unintentionally causes a woman miscarriage by using force on her shall be made to serve a jail term, which may be up to 3 years, and pay a fine. If that person

was aware that the woman was pregnant, he/she shall be made to serve a jail term, which may be up to 5 years, and pay a fine.

**Evaluating Nigeria's Abortion Provisions**

Nigeria, no doubt, as evident in the Penal and Criminal Codes, strongly prohibits abortion, except when it is done to save the mother's life. While this is laudable, we still have numerous cases of abortions in the country. The reason for this is simply that Nigeria's abortion provisions are inadequate in a number of ways, some of which are stated below:

**a. Lack of uniformity:** There is some level of disparity between the Criminal and Penal Codes. While the former only states imprisonment as punishment for offenders, the latter's punishments include imprisonment, fine, or both. Such disparity or lack of uniformity is unsafe and not ideal for nationhood, as it can foster confusion and exclusion, since both codes are applied in the same country.

**b. Failure to educate Nigerians on the bioethical issues associated with abortion:** Merely stating punishments for those involved in abortion is not enough. In addition to this, Nigeria's abortion provisions should be modified in such a way that they will include information that will serve the purpose of educating Nigerians on the bioethical issues associated with abortion. This will significantly reduce the rate of abortion in the country, as so many Nigerians seem to

be ignorant of the moral implications of abortion.

**c. Failure to designate a body charged with ensuring compliance and implementation:**Usually, when an Act is enacted, a body that will be charged with ensuring compliance is immediately established. In the case of Nigeria's abortion provisions, ably represented by the Criminal and Penal Codes, there is not statement whatsoever that establishes a body that will ensure compliance throughout the country. Such body ordinarily is supposed to closely monitor medical centers in order to ensure that they are compliant, and when the laws are breached, the body is to ensure that necessary penalties are implemented on a case-by-case basis.

**Summary**

Thus far, this article has been able to establish a comprehensive understanding of the notion of abortion. It began by positing that abortion, in all its forms and kinds, is the murder of an unborn baby or child, the intentional (induced) or spontaneous termination or killing of a fetus to end a pregnancy, or put differently, a process whereby a pregnancy is stopped, terminated or ended, so that it does not develop further.

Going further, the kinds of abortion (spontaneous and induced abortion) were exposed, with spontaneous abortion being an involuntary, unplanned or accidental evacuation of

the fetus from the womb of the mother due to some factors or circumstances within or beyond the control of the mother, while induced abortion being the medical or surgical termination of a pregnancy before the time of fetal viability. Some methods of deliberate induced abortion were identified and discussed; namely: saline abortion, prostaglandin chemical abortion, dilation and curettage, dilation and evacuation, hysterectomy and suction or vacuum aspiration.

Still progressing, some reasons why deliberate induced abortion may be carried out on a pregnant woman were enumerated. It was also established that there are both arguments for and against abortion, especially with particular reference to the status of the embryo as either being or not being a person. There was also a discourse on the approaches to the issue of abortion. Here, the pro-life and pro-choice battle was exposed, as well as the three standpoints or perspectives from which the issue of abortion can be examined; namely: the religious, medical and legal perspectives respectively. The ultimate focus of this article was Nigeria's abortion provisions, which are evident in the Criminal and Penal Codes and applied in the Southern and Northern regions of Nigeria, respectively.

**Conclusion**

From the exposition on Nigeria's abortion provisions, it is clear that Nigeria's laws highly prohibit abortion. Even though this is the case, abortions are still rampant in the

country. The reason for this is simply that Nigeria's abortion laws are fraught with inadequacies, such as lack of uniformity, failure toeducate Nigerians on the bioethical issues associated with abortion and failure to designate a body charged with ensuring compliance and implementation.

To improve the *status quo*, the following should be done:

**a. Correcting the disparity between the Criminal and Penal Codes:**This can be done by ensuring that both Codes have the same penalty stated, or completely reducing them into a single Code that will be applied across the country.

**b. Modifying the Criminal and Penal Codes:**This can be done by including information that will serve the purpose of educating Nigerians on the bioethical issues associated with abortion. This will ultimately foster reduction in the rate of abortion in the country.

**c. Designating a body charged with ensuring compliance and implementation of the abortion laws in Nigeria:**This can be done by modifying the Criminal and Penal Codes to include a statement of a body that will ensure compliance with the abortion laws and implement the laws throughout the country.

**REFERENCES**

Aduba, J. N., (2011). *The Right to Life under Nigerian Constitution: The Law, the Courts and Reality*. Lagos: Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies.

Ayorinde, B. and Co., (18 February, 2014). Nigeria: A Reformatory Approach to the Criminal Justice System in Nigeria." Available at https://www.mondaq.com/nigeria/public-order/293894/a-reformatory-approach-to-the-criminal-justice-system-in-nigeria#:~:text=In%20respect%20to%20substantive%20law,applies%20in%20the%20Northern%20States. Accessed March 14, 2024.

Beckwith F. J., (2001). "Taking abortion seriously: a philosophical critique of the new anti- abortion rhetorical shift,"in *Ethics Med.* 2001 Fall;17(3):155-66. PMID: 15080146.

Bergel, G., (1985). *Abortion in America.* Elyria, Ohio: Intercessors for America.

Cambridge Dictionary, (2024). "Abort." Available at https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/abort. Accessed June 3, 2024.

Center for Reproductive Rights, (2024). "Nigeria's Abortion Provisions: Penal Code (Northern States) Federal Provisions Act, Chapter 345 of the Laws of the Federation of Nigeria (Revised ed. 1990), Articles 232-236 and Criminal Code Act, Chapter 77 of the Laws of the Federation of Nigeria (Revised ed. 1990), Articles 228-230, 297, 309, 328." Available at https://reproductiverights.org/maps/provision/nigerias-abortion-provisions/. Accessed March 14, 2024.

Davis, F. A., (2011). "Taber's Medical Dictionary: abortion," in *Taber's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary*.

George, A. J. and Sherman, E., (2007). "51. Legal and Ethical Issues in Obstetric Practice," in Gabbe, G. *et al.*, (eds.), *Obstetrics: Normal and Problem Pregnancies* (5 ed.). Churchill Livingstone.

Gichure, C. W., (1997). *Basic Concepts in Ethics*. Nairobi, Kenya: Focus Publications.

Hern, W. M., (1995). "Abortion: Medical and Social Aspects," in *Encyclopedia of Marriage and the Family*, David Levinson, (ed.). New York: Simon & Schuster MacMillan.

John *et al*. (eds.), "6. First-Trimester Abortion," in *Williams Gynecology* (1 ed.). McGraw-Hill Medical, 2008). ISBN 978-0-07-147257-9.

John Paul II, (1995). *Evangelium Vitae.* Vatican: Holy See, no. 45.

Love Matters (25 June, 2020). "Abortion: Types and the Nigerian law." Love Matters Naija. Available at https://lovematters.ng/pregnancy/unsure-about-being-pregnant/abortion-types-and-nigerian-law. Accessed March 14, 2024.

Mccanthy, D. *et al.*, (1998). *Handbook on Critical Life Issues*. Bangalore: Theological Publications.

Melissa, K. J., and Mimi, Z., (2008). "33. Management of Abortion," in Rock, A. *et al*., (eds.), *TeLinde's Operative Gynecology* (10

ed.). Lippincott Williams & Wikins.

Okoro, E., (2005). Principles of Ethics. Owerri: Readon Publishers Ltd.

Onimhawo, J., (2005). "The Abortion Controversy," in Iroegbu, P., *et al*., (eds.), *Kpim of Morality, Ethics: General, Special and Professional*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books.

Patil, A. B., *et al*., (2014). "Medical Ethics in Abortion," in *Indian Journal of Clinical Practice*, Vol. 25, No. 6.

Rex vs Bourne (1938). Available at https://simplestudying.com/r-v-bourne-1938-3-all-er-615. Accessed March 14, 2024.

Rex vs Edgar - SCC Cases (2016). Available at https://decisions.scc-csc.ca/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/2080/index.do. Accessed March 14, 2024.
Schwarz, S. D., and Tacelli, R. K., (1989). "Abortion and Some Philosophers: A Critical Examination," in *Public Affair Quarterly*, Vol. 3: No. 2: Illinois; University of Illinois Press.


Simran, S., and Adetutu, A., (2018). "Comparative Analysis of Sex-Selection in Nigeria and India," in *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Studies*. 4 (6): 71–89. doi:10.29032/ijhsss.v4.i6.2018.70-88. S2CID 169838841.

The Economist, (21 July 2014). *Bring back the girls*. Available at https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2014/07/21/bring-back-the-girls. Accessed March 14, 2024.

The United Nations: Population Division of the Department for Economic and Social Affairs United Nations Secretariat. "Abortion Policy – Nigeria." Available at https://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/abortion/d

oc/nigeria.doc. Accessed   March 14, 2024.

Thomson, J. J., (1988). *A Defense of Abortion.* Belmont: Wadsworth
    publishing company.

Umeha, C., (12 June 2006). "Unsafe Abortion: Threat to Nigerian
    Women," in *Africa News    Service. COMTEX News Network,
    Inc*. Available at
    http://allafrica.com/stories/200606120979.html. Accessed
    March 14, 2024.

Wells, S., (2010). *Christian Ethics: An Introductory Reader*. UK: Wiley-
    Blackwell Publications.

World Intellectual Property Organization. "Criminal Code Act Chapter
    77 Laws of the    Federation of Nigeria 1990."Available at
    https://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/ng/ng025en.pd
    f. Accessed March 14, 2024.

# African Traditional Deities and Their Resilience in the 21st Century

**Akpoduado, E. Juliet**
**Department of Religious Studies & Philosophy**
**Delta State University, Abraka**
**akpojuliet3@gmail.com**
**&**
**Professor J. Enuwosa**
**Department of Religious Studies & Philosophy**
**Delta State University, Abraka**

## Abstract

The 21st century is filled with enormous challenges. These challenges includes extreme forms of capitalism, religious fundamentalism and extremism, globalization, morbid nationalism, sectionalism, the environmental crisis, forced global migration, etc. All these challenges have affected the practice of African Traditional Religion in its belief in deities. Though the African traditional belief in deities may have been endangered, the belief is also very resilient and has not died. This paper uses critical analytic, sociological and hermeneutics to examine the resilience of African traditional deities. The paper finds that the belief in African deities is threatened. It concludes that the belief is still resilient and people should be tolerant of the belief in deities.

**Keywords:** Africa traditional religion, deities, 21st century, religion, challenges.

## Introduction

In every society, several forms of worship, beliefs, and norms are practiced, and entrenched in the belief system (religion) and culture of a people. The beauty in the diverse cultural practices from ancient till date is implanted in its social-religious entities and diversity. Religion with its unbroken ties with culture, pervades every nook and cranny of the African society. As ascertained by Adogbo (2010)

religion is interested not only in sacred beings or things but is also concerned with the totality of life and the world at large. Religion will continue to play its unique role in every society. There are several religions in Africa (Nigeria), however, the mother religion of African people has been battered over the years by evangelical religions (Christianity and Islam) and their missionaries thereby leading some scholars like Humphrey to the erroneous conclusion that the weight of these missionary religions would crush the traditional religion of the African folks. Contrary to this opinion, Robin (1971) has observed strength and resilience in the traditional religion of the African people. This vitality or strength could be traced to the worship of African deities, divination, ancestral recognition, and diverse forms of rituals.

The African traditional religion is a religion with no founder, it has maintained its originality from time immemorial till date except in areas of interaction with other religions. The religion of the African people is of great importance to Africa and the world at large due to its unique role in human society. The traditional religion of the Africans is found in the people's festivals, rituals, shrines, religious objects and symbols, sacred groves, myths and legends, proverbs, and other ceremonies.

The African religion cuts across every sphere and stage of life, though with diverse themes, yet inseparable from the people's daily life and practice. Burnett (1988) speaks of the Ga could not do without acknowledging the presence of their ancestors when eating or drinking. The Urhobo community also imbibe the same cultural practice in virtually everything they do; for the entertainment of guest they pray with kola nut and drink, in celebrations such as marriages, festivals, dedications (of baby, land, car, business or house), oracle, any form of social or religious gathering, praying with kola nut and drink is a major part of such celebration. Undeniably, some of these rituals minor or

simple has helped at one point or the other to strengthen African society. Onimhawo (2011) opine that religion inspires communal devotion and compliance of collective individual to an ethical standard that transcends the individual's purpose in society.

## Features of the 21$^{st}$ Century

Several features marks the 21$^{st}$ century. Such as insecurity, modernization of culture, the strong desire for illegal accumulation of wealth, power tussles, religious conflict, and many more. The African nation especially Nigeria has in the past been a home of peace, love, and justice. But today, there are negative replacements of all three qualities mentioned above. Reflecting back to the 19$^{th}$ and 20$^{th}$ centuries, Nigeria had a better image than it is today. The major ground for these images destroying battle today is the political arena and religious setting. Thus, this paper aims at pointing out some major features of the African traditional deities and how this traditional religion can help fix some of the mess in Nigeria.

Modernization of Culture When the word modernization is mentioned, what quickly flashes to mind is "current trend, the present". While culture points us to a particular lifestyle of a people. As envisaged by Aziza (2001), culture is everything that pertains to a people, that differentiates them from others. Modernization is a powerful tool for growth that needs to be appreciated as it brings infrastructural developments. However, it has some flaws on Africans and their cultural practices, such as their religion and cultural dressing.

Before the advent of westernization of Africa, Africans have their own existing religion and culture; a culture so unique and pure, a culture that command respect both for God (god) and man. Today, the negative impact of Westernization is eating deep into the African fabrics in the name of modernization. The African culture forbids the sale

97

and public display or advertisement of one's body especially as a woman, all around society today, men and women go naked like madman in the name of modernization. These could be regarded as abominable or forbidden act to the African traditionalists and their deities, but a welcome development to different churches and Christian homes today. The high rate of moral and spiritual decadence is a reflect of western culture and its imposition on the Bible and African people.

**Deforestation / Attack on Nature:** These are major features in 21$^{st}$ century in Africa especially Nigeria. Due to economic hardship and lack of understanding of the impact of rich vegetation, majority of the locals have turn themselves an enemy of nature in the country. This is reflected in the rate of bush burning either by herdsmen, children who are hunting for animals, and farmers; illegal lumbering and the use of dynamite and other intoxicants for fish; oil spillage and lack of clean-up by the oil producing companies.

**Insecurity:** This is a common phenomenon all around the world, insecurity had had its gripe on the various nook and cranny of different societies all over the world (America, Europe, Russia, the Arab world, Asia, Africa). This has led to the developing of new weapons and robotic tech by different developed nations. There are various groups formed especially by the various Islamic fanatics (the ISIS, Boko-Haram, ISWAP and the likes).

There are different Africa nations that have been engulfed in the nightmare of insecurity over the century Mali, Morocco, Nigeria just to mention but a few. The rate of insecurity in Nigeria had been so alarming, there had been several and countless cases of terrorist attack/activities since the inception of the 21$^{st}$ century. Frequent bombing of churches and other places (market and other social gatherings), between 2011 – 2013, kidnapping and mass

abduction of school children and travelers. For example:·
The abduction of Chibok girls.

·        The ambushed, killing, and abduction of passengers
en-route Abuja – Kaduna train, 28, March, 2022.

·        Murder of more than thirty persons in Owo church
attack by terrorists on 5, June, 2022.

·        Countless herdsmen attack on farmer and their
communities

·        The unbearable kidnapping activities in the Niger
Delta.

The IPOB unrest in the eastern part of Nigeria.

·        Cultism activities both in primary, secondary and
tertiary institution which is daily on the increase.

Every part of Nigeria has become unsafe as a result of
the failure on the part of parents, religious leaders and bad
government. As ascertained by delegates that represented
Nigeria on security related issues at ECOWAS parliament
that July and August 2022 witness a height of insecurity as
both security operatives and civilians encounter severe
attacks from terrorists and armed bandits.

Increase of Churches: During the 19th and 20th
centuries, the known and recognized churches/
denominations were the Catholic, Baptist, Anglican (CMS)
and Methodist. Though there was a little glimpse of
Pentecostal such as the Church of God Mission (CGM) which
others later emanated from, there had never been in history
the wide and radical spread of Pentecostalism as it is in the 21st
century. Despite the fact that one major purpose is to help
build good morals in the society and brings the individual
close to God or gods. As also ascertained by Onimhawo
(2011) that religion inspires communal devotion and
compliance of the individual to ethical standard that
transcends individual's purpose in the society. This focus has
been lost by more than ninety percent (90%) of todays
churches, their focus is rather shifted from the normal or usual

ethical standard of religion (selfless service and community service to God) to selfish and self-aggrandizement service. In a traditional African society, religion is mixed of the people's life and culture. In spite of the increased numbers of churches in this 21st century, the African society is starved of the impart of religion morally and spiritually. This lacuna which result from selfish interest has ushered in moral decay and degradation of the African society. Interest such as: desire for huge accumulation of wealth by church leaders and founders, show of power which has led some to what maybe described or regarded as syncretism, self-righteousness, lack of respect or regard for leadership. However, there is no depth that some originated as a result of response to call for duty.

This 21st century syndrome of multiplicity of churches would have been of great benefit to the African society if well managed with good intent.

**Power Tussle:** Is another common feature in the political arena of the 21st century. The government of different nations all over the world want to be in-charge (dominating) especially those of developed countries. For instance, the Russian - Ukraine war today is a result of power tussle between countries. as analyzed by Nataliya (2018), the existing international system is characterized by a diffusion of power among different state and non-state actors, a shift in a balance of regional and global powers, relative weakling established western nations and emerging of new power countries, increasing importance of regional integration, and return of great powers' geopolitical competition.

**Religious Fundamentalism:** A practice common to the missionary religions (Christianity and Islam) in West African especially Nigeria. These religious groups believe that their tenets and values are the best, thus, it should be practiced by all (everyone). The Muslim believe that anyone not practicing Islam is an unbeliever. According to Ayatollah's proclamation

during the 80s, "for Islam to conquer the world, Muslim need to engulf the nation with crises by repeatedly causing crises" (Ali, 1999). A declaration born out of the conviction and belief that the spread of Islam must be through violence in northern Nigeria since the inception of the 21$^{st}$ century. Fundamentalism as apologetic movement, which strictly follows the basic rules and teachings of any religion has become a common trend among Christians and Muslims that end up in struggle or claim of superiority. A practical demonstration was the introduction of Sharia law by Muslims as a main body of civil and criminal law in 2001 in twelve northern states of Nigeria.

**Materialism:** The crave for materialism is one great feature that characterizes the 21$^{st}$ century, that is undeniably wrecking this present generation. A generation like never was, were parents encourage their children in the get rich-quick syndrome (yahoo, yahoo), teachers encouraging students in examination malpractices, students at levels engage in cultism, politicians looting the nation's wealth, INEC and the counterpart specializes in rigging elections and subverting the people's will, all for materialism. The church which was once a watch-dog, now champion the course for materialism, leading to unwanted competition within and among churches.

## Impact of 21$^{st}$ Century Challenges on African Traditional Deities

A happy and lively home is an evidence of a friendly environment. There is no doubt that every creature (including man and deities) would want to remain and maintain a host municipal that is friendly to them, just as unfriendly environment would repel its inhabitant. There are several challenges confronting the African traditional deities in this 21$^{st}$ century. Some of the challenges are: deforestation, environmental hazard, destruction of symbols/objects and totems, attack from other religious groups (Christianity and

101

Islam). The impact of these challenges has been immensely pronounced on the African society.

**Deforestation / Environmental Hazard:** The forest has been a peaceful home to diverse African deities and wild life till recent when illegal lumbering and bush burning becomes the order of the day. The high rate of bush burning and illegal lumbering has daily posed serious threat to all forest inhabitants. Thus, some of these deities have lost their homes, sacred grooves lost, relocation and total extermination of these phenomena. For instance, majority of sacred grooves and sacred homes including shrine for deities are being occupied by churches, individual buildings and industries today. Wotogbe – Weneka (2017), when stating the implications of the massive demolition / destruction of sacred grooves in the 21$^{st}$ century among the Ikwerre people of Rivers State observed that it leads to loss of historical and geographical identity. This was also the case of majority of sacred points or places in Urhobo land in Delta State. For example; the 'eghwa-rode' (big bush by implication, sacred forest) in Samagidi-Kokori which was once a home both for the living-dead and several deities is been occupied by several buildings now, defiling, excommunicating, dislodging and destroying the original occupants. Seismic activity causing hazardous waste both to man and some of these deities dislodging and even killing them due to pollutant effects and use of explosive devise such as dynamites.

**Infrastructural Development:** This is a key point in modernization, which has to do with the development and progress of a people or community. Nonetheless, this appreciated development has become a threat to some African deities. An event which occurred along Nembe-Brass river was narrated by Dr. O. Cyril who had never believed in the existence of these beings (deities), he states there is a place called 'juju point' along Nembe-Brass river where bridge was to be constructed by a construction company

(Julius Beggar), but the work was abandoned as a result of careless destruction of work done by the company, and their properties. That the huge iron(s) pinned to the river bed were up-rooted and twisted by the water deity, possible occupant of that territory, that the sight alone prove a massive destruction which possibly could not have carried out by man-made machine but some forms of supernatural being.

Another event which occurred in a locality in Delta State where dynamite was cast into a swamp and a deity raced out of the water wailing the death of her children (interview with Jones and Sunday, 20, March, 2020) are all evidence of harassment and endangerment faced by the African traditional deities in this 21$^{st}$ century. The various activities associated with the 21$^{st}$ century, have impacted negatively one African traditional deities; loss (death) of some African traditional deities, harsh weather condition due to cutting down of trees, burning and destruction of grooves which serve as a home of some African traditional deities, relocation of some African traditional deities, unhealthy / unfriendly environment due to frequent harassment.

## The Resilience of African Traditional Deities

The practice of African Traditional Religion is as old as the African communities or society itself. A religion with no founder and cannot be separated from the people's culture. The Africans believe in a Supreme Being (God) who transcendent above all other beings. They believe in deities, spirits, ancestors, charms, oracle, magic and others. The hierarchical structure of their belief system is charted below:

The African society has both major and minor deities with one form of historical relationship or affliction that is bound to the existence of the community / their existence in

the community and their persistent till date despite the strong wave and influence of the missionary religion.

A case study of Urhobo land reveals some major and minor deities and their functions:

a)      **Major Deities**

·       Egba vo Ogidigbo of Kokori in Delta State.

These are two principal deities in Kokori land that have been worshipped from ancient time till date. Deities believed to have protective powers. The historical affiliation / origin of 'Egba' in Kokori land reveals that the deity was imported. In the ancient past due to the frequent inter-tribal wars, the people decided to invite a medicine man who travels from one community to the other preparing charms for battle, and the mystery behind this charm is that as he departs from that community he leaves with the charm. The Kokori people been very observant of the man's craftiness, thus, decided to execute that man after the preparation of the charm when he was invited by the Kokori people. They buried him at that same spot where the charm was prepared. Few days later, an iroko tress sprout from his grave and this spot remained the Egba shrine till date. The iroko tree grows with speed become gigantic and during its falls, it falls or break in piece in a very mysterious way by gathering itself at a spot, no damage is caused when it falls. Few days later, a new iroko comes up from that same spot, a mystery no one has been able to explain.

There is a ropy plant hanging over the iroko tree of 'Egba', it alerts the people any time there is danger in and within Kokori land (communities) by going slack and floating around the floor of the Egba shrine, and the warriors immediately swing into action. Individuals or group from far and near visit Egba shrine to prepare medicine or charm for protection (bullet-proof medicine, cutlass repellent etc.). Egba as a war deity is said to be readily available protect Kokori born not necessarily worshipper alone.

Ogidigbo – Another principal deity is Kokori community. Is believed to be a female deity who origin is unascertained or unknown to the people of the land. There are no written nor oral traditions that will help to trace the origin of Ogidigbo. Her worshippers are majorly females, she incites them with an incurable (medically) madness, unless and until the candidate is brought to Ogidigbo shrine, there will be no healing. Ogidigbo is a community deity that helps to protect Kokori indigene/elite in time danger and war situation. Ogidigbo is also believe to be a fertility goddess that blesses the individual(s) with children.

Egba vo Ogidigbo are celebrated side by side during the Egba festival in the month of February. The festival is an enactment of drama, pack full with diverse forms of rituals, dance, prayers of various degree and blessings. Participants and spectators come from far and near during the festival. These class of principal or major deities are common to majority African communities especially the Niger Delta territory of Nigeria. They continue to manifest their strength of vitality daily, this may be due to environmental influence, dedication of adherents, cultural affiliation, other factors for resilience could be traced to the desire for justice and crave for protection from danger in time of crises, and efficacious power of its medicine.

b)    **Minor Deities**
·      Edjorame (Water deity)
Edjorame is the name used generally by the Urhobos in Delta Central for water deities (mermaid) or mami-water (pidgin). This group of deities are common and mostly worshipped among the Urhobos probably due to their geographical location. According to Obegor (2016), scarcely would there be any Urhobo community without water gods or goddess (water deity(ies)) that is without religious connotation and mystical prowess. Some are believed to have been involved in the establishment and existence of some of

the communities in the Niger Delta territory. Most people in the past associated with fruitfulness (especially in child bearing), healing and protection.

In the $19^{th}$ and early $20^{th}$ centuries, Christianity manifested a strong force of vitalization through its evangelical move by African converts who took the gospel to the various locality introducing the liberating power of Jesus Christ, by moving from community to community, preaching the gospel of Christ. Because as at this time, some (traditional worshippers) were believed to be in bondage as the deity they worship will dictate for them the type of food to eat and what not to eat. As the gospel of Christ offer them privilege to eat whatever kind of food they desire to eat and heal the sick there was a shift from this traditional worship to Christianity was introduced by the mid-$20^{th}$ century, while a new understanding (interaction) of the traditional religion and Christianity was introduced by the mid-$20^{th}$ century. And by $21^{st}$ century, this interaction has gained more ground as individuals' shuttles between two religions today.

The advent of yahoo or yahoo$^{+}$ in the $21^{st}$ century have drastically increased the numbers of Edjorame worshipped as young boys and girls patronizes the worship of these deities as they believe their source of patronage and breakthrough is from the Edjorame. The theophany of Edjorame could be through dreams, some kind of strange illness, or disappearance of would-be votary. This experience sometimes involves been held hostage by Edjorame under water for seven days. And the re-appearance of the captive is followed by manifestation of some gifts such as healing the sick, insight into herbal, performance of some kind of rituals and sacrifices, and building of Ogua (place of worship). As the primary home for this class of deities is water (river, lake, swamp and ocean), their sacrifices are usually by the side of the river or altar established by the votary. Sacrificial items are usually soft drinks (Fanta, Coke, Merrinder or Pepsi),

106

biscuits, duckling, fowl, goat and other food items. Festivals are usually celebrated in honour of the water deities either at the beginning of the year or toward the end of the year.

Other traits associated with the revelation of Edjorameare offering of monetary gifts and other material gifts to would-be votaries and adherents.

## Conclusion

ATR the known ancient and modern religion of the African people has no history of historical founder as it is with other world religions. ATR has a long history of condemnation by scholars of various fields of studies such as Anthropologists, theologians, sociologists, Christian missionaries, and adherents of missionary religions (especially Christianity). The religion has for long not found its name on the good book of both African Christians and Westerners.

In spite of the condemnation derogatory names and terms used in classifying this religion, it has continue to maintain resilience on different grounds – worship of deities, ancestors, spirits and many more. Despite the edge gained by evangelical religions over ATR, the worship of deities has continued till this 21$^{st}$ century where the tide seems to be more favourable to adherents due to environmental factors, interaction, the new trend in Christianity (miracle seekers), yahoo yahoo generation, 21$^{st}$ century weakness in Christian faith, insecurity and crave for materialism as it seem to meet the demand of the people.

REFERENCES

Aidoghie P. Insecurity in Nigeria declining, Nigeria delegation tells ECOWAS Parliament. https://sunnevsonline.com/insecurity-in-nigeria-declining-nigeria-delegation-tell-ecowas-parliament/ (retrieve 26-July-2023).

Ali, M. (1999). Islam Reviewed. Labelle, FL: Fish House

Publishers.

Aziza, R. C. (2001). The Relationship between Language use and survival of culture: The case of Urhobo Youth. Nigerian Language Studies, 4.

Burnett, D. (1988). Unearthly powers. London: Whitefield House.

Erivwo, S. U. (2003). Traditional religion and Christianity in Nigeria: The Urhobo People. Nigeria: Benin`: AMBIK Press.

Francis, D. J. (2007). Peace and Conflict Studies: An African Overview of Basic Concepts. In Gaya B.Sc. (ed.), Introduction to Peace and Conflict Study in West Africa (pp. 32-34). Ibadan: Spectrum Books.

Gabriel, E. I. (2015). Africa Culture and Values.

John, O. U. (2003). Urhobo Traditional Medicine. Ibadan: Spectrum Book Ltd.

Nataliya, G. (2018). Major Features of the 21st Century International System from Ukraine's Perspective. Oleksandra Kordonska, Rostyslav Romaniuk (eds.). Modern Geopolitics Nation University for International Security. Ivan Franko Nation University of Lviv: Lviv-Olsztyn. https://elibrary.ivinas.gov.ua>searched 13-03-23.

Obegor, R. M. U. (2016). Themes in African Culture: The Urhobo People. Kokori: Patola Printing Press.

Odje, S. J. (1995). Kokori People Ancient and Modern. Benin City.

Ushe, U. M. (2015). Religious Conflict and Education in Nigeria: Implication for National Security.Journal of Education and Practice, 6 (2):117-129.

Wotogbe-Wenek, W. O. (2017). The Implication of the Demolition and Destruction of Sacred Groove in the 21st Century Ikwerre of North Eastern Niger Delta. In Religion in Historical Perspective(pp.42-53). Port-Harcourt.

# National Integration And Some Ethno-Religious Challenges In Nigeria

**Ejime Samuel Okoh**
**Department of Religion and Human Relations**
**Nnamdi  Azikiwe University, Akwa**
**Sallyugo2003@yahoo.com**
**&**
**Osbert Uyovwieyovwe Isiorhovoja**
**Department of Religion and Human Relations**
**University of Delta, Agbor.**
**Osbert.isiorhovoja@unidel.edu.ng**

## Abstract

Nigeria, established in 1914, has African Traditional Religions, Christianity, and Islam as its main religions. The constitution allows for the free practice of these faiths and promotes religious freedom. However, the prioritization of religious beliefs over national unity has led to division and disunity. This misuse of religion has impacted politics, development, and infrastructure in Nigeria. Ethnicity has also become a source of disunity, overshadowing religion. Nigeria's diverse languages, including Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa, have been affected by both religion and ethnicity. Adopting the sociological approach, the paper seeks to explore the challenges to national integration posed by religious and ethnic divisions in Nigeria. It seeks to guide Nigeria's leadership towards a deeper understanding of the collective identity of the nation. The paper delves into issues such as federal representation, widespread illiteracy, political manipulation, the politicization of religion, unemployment, and the responsibilities of Nigeria's leadership in upholding the nation's constitution.
**Keywords:** National, Integration, Religion, Ethnicism, Conflict, Nigeria.

## Introduction

For a nation to coalesce, individuals from diverse origins with distinct purposes fortuitously encounter one

another and establish a shared dwelling. Therefore, National Integration embodies the recognition of a unified identity among the populace of a country. It signifies that despite differing communities, castes, religions, cultures, and regions, along with varying languages spoken, all acknowledge their oneness. National Integration denotes a collective national consciousness, a prevailing national accord, and a unified National Identity, where states and subcultures merge into a cohesive National Political System. Preserving their respective cultural, political, religious, and ethnic sub-identities, while concurrently enjoying socio-economic rights and opportunities, is imperative for fostering the national integration process. According to Jehanza (2003), "It is a process by which individuals with shared objectives, a sense of belonging, and patriotic sentiments reach a consensus on social, political, cultural, religious, and economic cohesion amidst diversity" (p. 1).

Nigeria, as a case study, is a nation characterized by a multitude of cultural, religious, and linguistic diversities. The intricate interplay of ethnic and religious complexities in the formation of Nigeria was not adequately taken into account. Nevertheless, the citizens of Nigeria, recognizing the importance of national unity, agreed to coexist as a unified nation in 1914 under the governance of the British Colonial administration.

The issue of National Integration is a matter of great concern for individuals residing in diverse multi-ethnic and multi-racial societies. Frequently, people from varied cultural backgrounds are united as a nation due to historical circumstances, while at other times, individuals migrate to other nations in search of economic, social, and/or political security, despite having completely different cultural beliefs and lifestyles. Today, more than ever, leaders are confronted with the challenging task of integrating the disparate beliefs, attitudes, and practices of people into a cohesive whole to

empower their societies as unified entities capable of facing the modern challenges of the present day. In Nigeria, religion has been increasingly utilized as a tool for power struggles, the allocation of contracts, the selection of candidates for elective and appointed positions, the distribution of national resources, and the rationalization of violent acts, among other purposes. The exploitation of religion by certain individuals or groups, as well as religious leaders, for personal gain, is likely a contributing factor to these issues, ultimately leading to counter-productive outcomes (Roseline 2015).

## Conceptual Clarification

**Religion:** The concept of religion holds varying significance for individuals. Its etymology can be traced back to the Latin word that signifies the act of uniting or connecting (Lowell, 2016). Adebirigbe and Aiyegboyin (1997) view religion as a stabilizing influence within society, serving to unify and strengthen the community as a cohesive social force.

t is recognized that religion functions as a societal institution that encompasses the beliefs, actions, and inactions of a community, shaping the values, norms, ethics, and traditions within the collective cosmology of its members. Beyond being a significant influencer of human behavior, religion serves as a powerful catalyst for both social and moral transformations. This underscores the idea that religion serves as a system of practices and beliefs that unites individuals, despite their differences, towards a shared objective. In Nigeria, the three predominant religious groups are Christianity, Islam, and traditional religions. Christianity and Islam together account for approximately 90% of the country's total population (George & Amusan, 2012).

According to Lenin (1979), religion is identified as a manifestation of spiritual oppression that burdens the masses who are constantly toiling for others, facing deprivation and loneliness. Those who profit from the labor of others are

encouraged by religion to engage in acts of charity, providing them with a convenient means of rationalizing their role as exploiters. Religion is likened to opium, serving as a form of spiritual intoxicant through which the subjugated individuals under capitalistic rule seek solace, thereby sacrificing their true human essence for a life that is more or less dignified.

Bouquet (1941) defines religion as an established connection between the human self and a non-human entity, such as the sacred, the supernatural, the self-existent, the absolute, or simply, God. Feuerbach (1957), on the other hand, views religion as rooted not on the surface, but fundamentally, not in intention or according to its supposition, but in its core, in its essence. Believers, according to Feuerbach, are essentially worshipping nothing but the truths and complexities of human nature when they believe they are worshipping God. In essence, when man believes he is worshipping God, he is essentially worshipping his nature, projecting it outward as God. Based on these definitions and the contributions of scholars, it is evident that religion does not have a universally accepted meaning; this is because religion is perceived and defined differently depending on the perspective. It holds different meanings for theologians, anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, Marxists, and so forth. Religion, as understood, involves certain activities carried out by man in reverence to a being beyond himself.

**Ethnicity:** Ethnicity poses a significant challenge to achieving national integration in Nigeria since gaining independence in 1960. Ethnic sentiments permeate various aspects of Nigerian society including politics, economics, and social structures. The current low productivity and inefficiency in the country can be directly linked to these ethnic sentiments. This section delves into the obstacles posed by ethnicity on national unity. Nigeria comprises 250 distinct ethnic groups (Ejikeme, 2016), making it a nation

characterized by multilingualism and multi-ethnicity. These tribal distinctions have contributed to the diverse nature of the Nigerian state. Despite being united within one country, these ethnic groups have differing needs, objectives, and aspirations. This disparity is highlighted by Obafemi Awolowo, as cited by Akaih (2018), who referred to Nigeria as a mere geographical expression. Similarly, Yakubu Gowon, as cited by Akah (2018), stated that there is no strong basis for unity. These sentiments are reflected in the country's history since independence, casting doubt on the authenticity of the "One Nigeria" slogan. Ethnic biases often take precedence over merit and skills, particularly evident in appointments where nepotism, or "GodFatherism," influences decisions, tarnishing the reputation of Nigerian political parties. The federal character principle, enshrined in the Nigerian constitution since 1979, aims to ensure that appointments to public service institutions accurately represent the linguistic, ethnic, religious, and geographical diversity of the nation (Adamolekun, 2012).

Efiye (2015), referencing President Buhari, emphasized that Nigeria should not vote along religious and ethnic lines. Regardless of the original intentions, such actions and statements have the potential to incite suspicion and fuel crises between the two predominant religious groups. It can be argued that the concept of federal character is utilized as a mechanism to ensure equity in public service, sometimes at the expense of meritocracy and excellence. Scholars have pointed out that the focus on federal character, ethnicity, and religion poses significant challenges to national unity and integration. At the time of Nigeria's independence in 1960, every tribe, culture, and religious belief was duly represented. As noted by Talih (1987), the Federal Character principle embodies an endeavor to establish a nation where equal opportunities are prevalent, ensuring that every individual perceives an equal chance to engage in activities without the influence of ethnic biases. It serves as both a

response and a framework. It stands as a positive response aimed at rectifying past practices, particularly in the realm of public administration, which exploited the nation's diversities and fostered discord. Moreover, it acts as a response to practices that prioritize selfish motives and narrow considerations, particularly those detrimental forces that prioritize personal gain over the nation's welfare. The Federal Character principle entails a deliberate strategy to guarantee the equitable distribution of resources and government initiatives throughout the country.

Olagunju (1987) posited that Federal character is a purposeful mechanism intended to incorporate marginalized yet frequently vocal interests. Essentially, it serves as a tool aimed at de-politicizing emerging demands through institutional frameworks, thereby suggesting that this principle should be refined and gradually extended even to the realm of private enterprise. Similarly, Ezenwa (1987) observed that the establishment of the Federal Character principle was necessitated by the disparities resulting from the haphazard and unequal allocation of natural and economic resources. He expressed skepticism regarding the ability of individuals to rectify these entrenched anomalies within the diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria. Nevertheless, he dismissed the notion that this inequality, particularly evident in revenue distribution and educational progress, intensified following independence.

Ikejiani and Ikejiani (1986) observed that the prevalence of multi-ethnic and multi-racial affiliations in the country is the primary cause of persistent crises, attributing blame to the government for its failure to address this issue. They posited that the solution to this problem lies in the implementation of the Federal Character Concept, particularly about the geographical distribution, personnel composition, and admission criteria of students in tertiary institutions, as well as in employment, appointments, and

elections across the country. Thus, some scholars have also advocated for the establishment of new states based on ethnic lines to prevent any particular ethnic group from dominating others. This raises the question of whether Nigeria is the sole multi-ethnic country in the world. It is worth noting that countries like Canada and the United States of America (USA) are also multi-ethnic, yet they have not encountered the same level of ethnic challenges as Nigeria. Therefore, the adoption of the federal character principle in Nigeria serves to unify the various states as one cohesive entity. Consequently, the Character Commission in Nigeria must be proactive in safeguarding the interests of minority groups for the sake of national integration. Ethnicity has significantly hindered the process of national integration in various ways, and as we delve further into this paper, we aim to highlight the obstacles faced in achieving a better Nigeria.

## National Integration

Nation-building, national integration, and national unity share a common foundation. Nation-building entails the assimilation of ethnic, cultural, and linguistic loyalties into a dominant coercive authority (nation) (Deutsch and Foltz, 1963). On the other hand, national integration involves transcending all ethnic affiliations and ties, consolidating these elements under a superior central authority to foster national unity, stability, and progress. As Durverger (1980) stated, national integration is the process of uniting a society in a way that creates a harmonious community based on a shared order, with its members considered equally harmonious. It is important to note that while national integration necessitates harmony, not all harmonious communities are integrated. Integration is a dynamic process that facilitates interaction, a feat that cannot be achieved by remaining isolated.

Willord (1970) It has been contended that the mere interaction of political structures could lead to political or

national integration in a diverse society, in contrast to Nnolie's (1978) belief that the mere interdependence of political structures within a society cannot foster the loyalty of its citizens towards national unity. Nnoli (1986) defined national integration as the process of diminishing social divides within a society, promoting harmony and cooperation over conflict and discord that often characterize social interactions. Nnoli identified extreme socio-economic scarcity, hostility, prejudice, antagonism, and conflict among individuals, groups, and communities as barriers to national integration. Similarly, Olupona and Turki (1988) pointed out that religious conflicts in Nigeria, involving Islam, Christianity, and African Traditional Religions, hinder the full realization of national integration in the country. They argued that the issue of religion is a significant challenge that cannot be overlooked in Nigeria.

## Religion And National Integration

Nigerians are deeply devout individuals. Metuach (1994) identified three predominant religions in Nigeria: Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional Religions. Kukah (2002) suggests that in 1960, the country was divided along religious lines, with Muslims predominantly in the north and Christians in the south. The traditional religions, characterized by their non-proselytizing nature, demonstrate a unique quality of accommodation and tolerance towards other faiths. Kukah (1996) raises the question of how religion has influenced national unity, pondering whether religion has been utilized as a tool for integration in Nigeria. It is suggested that religion has, in fact, contributed negatively to the fragmentation of Nigerians. For instance, during President Babangida's regime, Nigeria joined the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC).

Ajayi (2000) asserts that despite Babangida's government citing economic reasons for their decision, which was to gain access to loans available to OIC member

countries during a time when Nigeria was in dire need of financing, Christians perceived this move as an effort to Islamize Nigeria. This marked the onset of confrontations between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. The first religious riot fueled by ethnicity between Muslims and Christians occurred in Kafanchan, old Kaduna State, in March 1987 (Asemota, 2013). The subsequent month, a conflict erupted in Ilorin, Kwara State, when Christian youths conducted an Easter Procession in a predominantly Muslim neighborhood, gesturing towards houses and singing."*Jesus dey here*" meaning, "Is Jesus here" *He dey,* "He's here" (The tension persisted, involving prominent figures such as Tafawa Balewa, Zongo Kotaf, and Kano (Asemota, 2013; *This Day Live*, April 24, 2014, p.2).

Moreover, following the suspension of the former central bank Governor Mallam Sanusi Lamido Sanusi for financial misconduct and his subsequent replacement by Godwin Emefiele, a Christian, certain factions in the North began to offer ethno-religious explanations for Sanusi's removal (*Naira Land Forum*, April 23, 2014). Senator David Mark once again sounded the alarm regarding certain individuals resorting to the manipulation of ethnicity and religion to undermine the unity and tranquility of the Nigerian nation. Mark concluded by emphasizing that he has observed a trend where ethnicity and religion are often misused, emphasizing the importance of engaging in profound interreligious dialogue characterized by sincerity, integrity, transparency, inclusivity, and comprehension as necessary steps toward progress. The current state of national unity in Nigeria is facing a significant challenge, with the Muslim community pushing for autonomy. This demand is a clear indication of the growing tensions within the country. It is important to note that the constitution of Nigeria does not specify any official State religion, highlighting the need for a balanced approach to address religious diversity and promote harmony among all citizens. The issue of autonomy for the

117

Muslim community raises questions about the overall cohesion of the nation and the importance of finding inclusive solutions that respect the rights and beliefs of all individuals. Ultimately, fostering a sense of unity and understanding among different religious groups is crucial for the long-term stability and prosperity of Nigeria as a whole. However, this principle was breached when the leaders in the Northern state granted permission to Islamize public life in Zamfara, the pioneering state to implement a stringent version of Sharia law. Muhammed (2010) claimed that the government was pushing forward with religious reform, which was said to bring about substantial changes. This reform was expected to impact every aspect of public life, shaping institutions following Islamic principles. The goal was to create a society where Islamic values were deeply embedded in all facets of governance and public life.

The state-sponsored Islamization strategy not only impacted non-Muslims but also subjected them to gender segregation in various public spaces such as hotels, restaurants, buses, and taxis (Asemota, 2013, p.3). These practices have significantly hindered the process of national integration in Nigeria, particularly in the realms of social, political, and economic development. Wilson (2012) further elaborated on how the tendency of religious groups to politicize religious activities has added complexity to the governance of the country. For instance, in March 2006, a demonstration against the blasphemous depictions of the Prophet Muhammad in the Northern region coincided with protests opposing a potential third term for a political leader. Subsequently, numerous Christians lost their lives, triggering retaliatory repercussions in the Southern part of the country, notably in Onitsha (The Observer, March 65, 2016).

t has been noted that religion can hurt the economy and national unity, leading to stagnation rather than progress and causing loss of life. Asemota (2002) highlighted that from

1980 to 1992, a total of twenty religious riots took place in Nigeria, resulting in an official death toll of 6,775. Currently, there is a rising number of religious conflicts in the nation. The Christian government of Nigeria recorded twenty-four religious riots between 1993 and 2006, with around 500 casualties (Christians Social Movement, 2006). The frequency of religious crises in Nigeria appears to be unending, with new incidents cropping up daily. This ongoing trend of religious violence is a significant concern for the country's stability and progress, as it not only impacts the economy negatively but also threatens the unity and lives of its citizens.

Akah (2018) noted that it is not that lives are lost at each religious riot but many are rendered orphans at a tender age, people are rendered refugees in their band and those constitute socio-economy problems for the national integration of the country the current insurgency of Boko-Haram is worthy to mention here which destroyed lives and Properties. In terms of damages done to the country by Boko-Haram as far as human and material resources are cornered is Unquantifiable. Investors both local and foreign had fled because no one wanted to do business in an insecurity risk nation like Nigeria. Presently, are the Fulani herdsmen and farmers ravaging the country?

The international community would not invest in the country as long as violence persisted. Awowdle (2000) said another negative effect religion has had on the country's integration is the promotion of a culture of corruption. Almost every aspect of society is corruption and religion which ought to have been the tool to correct this abnormality has failed in this regard. Some of the Pastors and Imams have aided and assisted corruption by tasking their followers to look for money at all costs because poverty is not meant for the children of God, to help God. In churches today Preaching centers on money, Property, and so on (Ephraim, 2014).

119

Whereas, the Holy Book (both the Bible and the Quran), has not taught us that. Religious morals are expected to regulate the entire human life or activities.Religion has led to various religious conflicts.

### Religio- Ethnic Challenges of National Integration

Various factors constitute challenges for national integration. They are examined below:

**Illiteracy:**

This leads to a lack of comprehension regarding the teachings of religion, as all religions advocate for peace. The Quran advises Muslims against engaging in disputes with followers of other faiths, except to peacefully invite them to Islam using courteous language, good behavior, and positive role modeling (Aurum 2006). This indicates that it is prohibited to associate with individuals who engage in harmful behaviors such as corruption, violence, animosity, and murder, as these actions are not aligned with the principles of any religion. Promoting peace, development and national unity can be achieved.  But when adherents of different religions are ignorant of their religions and their peace content, they tend to promote violence and conflicts.

**Politicization of One's Religion:**

This pertains to individuals within a nation who categorize their religion or ethnic background as superior or inferior to gain access to resources. Heated debates ensue regarding who constitutes the majority or minority, which, if left unchecked, may escalate into violent ethnic or religious clashes, resulting in adverse effects on the lives and properties of individuals. Consequently, the absence of peaceful coexistence leads to devastation. Therefore, both Christians and Muslims must abstain from engaging in such futile conflicts.

**Political Manipulation:**

One of the key factors contributing to religious

ethnocentrism crises and impeding national integration in Nigeria can be seen in Babangida's decision to align the country with the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) during his time in power. This move was viewed by Christians as an attempt to convert Nigeria into an Islamic state, leading to violent clashes between followers of Christianity and Islam in the nation.

In addition to this, other issues such as a lack of respect for diverse cultures, low levels of tolerance, widespread poverty, and high rates of unemployment serve to further worsen the already complex challenges surrounding religious diversity in Nigeria. With a population of around 150 million individuals hailing from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, religious intolerance continues to be a significant problem, potentially resulting in chaos, animosity, and conflicts that undermine the unity of the nation. The need for promoting understanding, acceptance, and peaceful coexistence among different religious groups has never been more pressing to foster a more harmonious and unified Nigeria.

Sen(2006) highlighted several significant challenges that Nigeria faces, including high levels of unemployment, the influence of global extremists, and the lack of adequate representation in the media. These obstacles contribute to the perpetuation of singular identities within the country, which in turn hinders the promotion of diversity and multiculturalism. As a result, the acceptance of various religious beliefs is gradually eroded, posing a threat to the unity and harmony of the nation. Policymakers and stakeholders must address these issues to foster a more inclusive and tolerant society in Nigeria.

**Conclusion**
This paper has thus far illustrated that religion and ethnocentrismpose a significant impediment to the national

cohesion of Nigeria. The intertwining of religion and ethnicity has led to substantial discord rather than harmony. The country's leaders have placed excessive emphasis on religious and ethnic divisions, neglecting the imperative of fostering national unity and solidarity. The phenomenon has led to numerous failures in national integration, as dominant ethnic and religious groups have utilized it to suppress minorities and their religious beliefs. This paper further underscores the importance of Nigerians prioritizing national unity over their individual religious and ethnic affiliations. It emphasizes the need for political parties in Nigeria to refrain from engaging in regional and religious politics to foster true national integration. Presently, political parties are nominating candidates of the same religious affiliation for the positions of president and vice president, reflecting a narrow-minded approach. This indicates a lack of commitment to national unity, particularly in a country like Nigeria where there are two predominant religions and religious conflicts have historically been a significant issue. These political parties prioritize their interests over the collective well-being of the nation. Hence, political parties should play a crucial role in promoting national unity through their selection of candidates. Adhering to the principle of federal character is essential to prevent the dominance of any one religion or ethnic group, among other factors.

This paper recommends that effective leadership is crucial in the restructuring of Nigeria across different governmental sectors to mitigate oppression and agitations from various religious and ethnic groups. For national integration to be realized as intended, the Nigerian government and its leadership must prioritize the implementation of the principle of federal character in both employment and the appointment of officers without any form of bias. Upholding equity and justice is imperative. Furthermore, adherence to the federal constitution of Nigeria must be strictly enforced as a guiding framework.

The National Assembly should convene to enact legislation mandating the rotation of the presidency to promote national unity. Nigeria should embrace its multiculturalism, religious diversity, and ethnic variety as sources of strength for the nation. Nigeria, with its diverse Christian and Muslim leadership, is expected to be more developed than homogeneous nations. However, Nigerian leaders must recognize the unique composition of the nation, characterized by religious and ethnic diversity. Drawing parallels with countries like America, Dubai, or Saudi Arabia may not be fully applicable to Nigeria due to its multi-religious and multi-ethnic nature. Therefore, a deep understanding of Nigeria's unique formation as a nation is essential to promote national integration.

## References

Adamolekun, T. (2012). "Christian-Muslim conflict in Nigeria. A historical perspective. *African Studies Review 1, 2, 235-237.*

Aderibigbe, I.S. & Aiyeboyin, D. (1997). *Religion Study and Practice*. Ijebu-Ode: Almasek Press.

Afigbo, A. (1987). Federal Character: Its meaning and History.Quoted In I. Ukwu, *Federal Character and National Integration in Nigeria NIPS Conference proceeding*

Ajayi, F.(2000).*The foundation of religious intolerance in Nigeria*.

http.Nigeria world.comm\columor/Ajayi / Intolerance.

Akah, J.N. (2018). Religion and ethnicity: The need for national integration in Nigerian.

 *African Journal of Multidisciplinary Research,* 3 (1), 12-23.

Aminu, J. (2006). *Religionalism and national integration in democratic policy.* Annual distinguished lecture delivered at the National Institute for Policy and Strategic

Studies (NIPSS) on Friday, November 25 to mark the
     annual graduating ceremony of the institute.

Asemota, H. (May 2, 2013). Issues of religion, politics and
     socio-economic violence in Nigeria: A Catholic
     response. *Shara Reporter.*

Bouquet, A.C. (1941), *Comparative religion*, Middlesex:
     Penguin Book.

Deutch, K. and Foltz, W. (1963) .*Nation building.* New
     York: Atherton Press.

Duverger, M. (1980). *The study of politics*.New York:
     Nelson.

Ejikeme, J. (2016), *Nigerian peoples, and cultures*. Enugu:
     Parakeletos.

Ezenwa, U. (1987). *Participatory politics: The socio-
     economicdimension.* NIPSS Conference
     Proceeding.

Feuerbach, L. (1957). *The essence of Christianity*.  New
     York: Harper and Row.

George, T.O, & Amusan, T.A. (2016). Religion and acts of
     worship among the Ingrain People: Implications for
     development and national unity. In Gegede A.S.
     Olutayo, O.A. Omololu,

O.O. Owumi B.E (ed.), *People and culture of
     Nigerians.*Ibadan: University of Ibadan.


Ikejiani, O., and Ikejiani, M. (1986). *Political imperative
     desiderata for nationhood and stability.* Enugu:
     Fourth Dimension Publisher.

Jehanzeh, S.P. (2003). Challenges and policy options to
     national integration in Pakistan: A comparative
     analysis.*Journal of Law and Society*, 44,64.

Kukah, M. H. (2002). *Democracy and civil society.* Ibadan:
     Spectrum Books.

Lenin, V.I. (1979). *Socialism and religion*. Moscow: Free
     Press.

Lowell, G. (2016). *Big history and religion: The ties that
     bind.* A paper presented at the International Big

History Association Conference held between July 14 and 17 2016 at the. University of Amsterdam.

Mark, D. (February 10, 2014). Don't destroy Nigeria in the name of politics. *Sunday Times.*

Muhammed, G.D. (May 16, 2010).Yarima vulture pepper soup is lawful too. *Sunday Sun.*

Nnoli, O. (1978) .*Ethnic politics in Nigeria.* Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publisher.

Nnoli, O. (1986). *.Introduction to politics*. London: Longman Co. Ltd.

Roseline, M.O.& Boroll, A.M. (2015). Religion and politics in Nigeria. *International Journal of Politics and Good Governance*, 4 (6).

Sen, A. (2006). *Identity and violence. The illusion of destiny*. New York: Norton.

Talih, A. (1987). *Keynote address of the NIPSS conference on federal character and national integration.* NIPSS Conference Proceedings.

Wilbard, K. (1970). *The Cameroon federation*. New Jersey: Princeton.