

VOL. 3 23-29 AUGUST 2020

THE ILLUSION OF ENTITLEMENT

OHANAEZE NDIGBO: A BELEAGUERED MOTHER ELEPHANT

OUR MBAISE PRESIDENT

WHAT DO THE IGBOS REALLY WANT?

CONTENTS



Stories Around the Globe
 NIGERIA
 AFRICA
 THE REST OF THE WORLD

From the Editor-in-Chief

6. The Illusion of Entitlement

Cover Story

8. Power is not Served on a Platter
11. Our Mbaise President
14. The South-East: No Longer at Ease in Nigeria
18. Ohanaeze Ndigbo: A Beleaguered Mother Elephant

Obverse

21. The Historical Vantage of Nigeria's Problem



www.thejournalnigeria.com

Publisher/Editor-in-Chief Dr. Udu Yakubu

Editorial Board LT. Gen Chikadibia I. Obiakor (rtd) Chief Bisi Ogunjobi Prof. Yima Sen Prof. Mohammed Bhadmus Dr. Niyi Osinowo, Rear Admiral (rtd) Amb. Dr. Chijioke Wigwe Dr. Isaac Mankilik, Commodore (rtd) Prof. Adoyi Onoja Dr. Anthonia Yakubu

Economy

- 25. The New CAMA and the Rules of 'Karma'
- 28. The Imminent Death of the Cinemas

31. How Content Lavy Could Hamper Creativity, Increase Unemployment

Culture and Lifestyle

- **33.** Saving the Book Industry
- 35. Burna Boy Struggles to Rise in Twice as Tall
- 37. Year 2020: Travel Destinations in Nigeria
- 42. Reopening Cinemas in Nigeria
- 44. A Period to Celebrate Women

Health

45. The Hunger Pandemic

International Affairs 47. Akinwunmi Adesina: Struggling with the Image of Nigeria

Great People50. Simon Bako Lalong: Peace and Development in the Plateau

Outstanding Careers 52. Mallam Bello Maccido

HERstory

58. Benedikter Molokwu

Dr. Iwebunor Okwechime Dr. Aminu Umar Dr. Moses Yakubu Dr. Abiodun Bello

Editor Femi Morgan

Creative Director Aduroja Olawale

CORE VALUES Truth

Objectivity Integrity Analytical Reasoning Empirical Research Constructive Criticism Professionalism Website and social media handles

The Journal is a Pan-Nigerian online newspaper that engages all segments of the Nigerian life. The Journal provides objective and professional analysis on national and international issues with a critical and progressive balance. The Journal is published by May University Press Limited.

Address: 51c Gbolahan Awe Close, off Jubril Liadi Street, off Emmanuel Keshi Street, Magodo Phase 2, Lagos.

Contact: Editorial: Femi Morgan Email: editoratthejournal@gmail.com Tel.: 08068108018 | 08174717765

Adverts, Business and Partnership: Gabriel Esemokhai Email: partner_thejournal@gmail.com Tel.: 08087193172 | 09069340828 Instagram—journal news Twitter— thejournal Nigeria; LinkedIn—-thejournal Nigeria

The opinions expressed in the articles published in this newspaper are completely and solely those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent the views and perspectives of persons, groups and organisations associated with The Journal.



STORIES AROUND THE GLOBE

NIGERIA

7 SSCE STUDENTS TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19 IN GOMBE

Dr. Habu Dahiru has announced that seven students WASSCE of Girls' Government Secondary School, Doma, in Gombe State have tested positive to the Corona virus, summing up the total of eight infected students in Nigeria. The commission further said: "we gave preference to students returning from epicentre states like Kaduna, Kano, Yobe and Lagos; places that have registered high cases of the COVID-19". Ihuwa Yahaya, Governor of Gombe State, affirmed that all students found to test positive would receive medical care and would not be allowed to miss their exams.

OONI'S PALACE ON FIRE

Panic filled the air in the ancient city of Ile-Ife as fire razed one of the buildings in the palace of the Ooni of Ife, Oba Adeyeye Ogunwusi. The fire, which was suspected to have emerged from an electric spark, started around 1:14 p.m. and lasted for about 23 minutes. It was later put out by the fire service from the state government. There was no record of casualties.

NIGERIA'S MILITARY KILL ISWAP LEADERS

General Major Iohn Enenche, the Coordinator, Defense Media Operations, has disclosed that the recent air interception missions have led to the elimination of Sayinna, a top commander of the Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWA), also known as Boko Haram. The successful operations of the troops were commended by the military high command who further urged them to maintain the onslaught against enemies of the country.

48M BARRELS OF CRUDE OIL -MISSING OR NOT MISSING

Senator Solomon Adeola of the Lagos-West Senatorial District has raised the issue of alleged missing barrels of crude oil and the unapproved yearly budget of the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). Mele Kyari, the Group Managing Director (GMD) of NNPC, in his response to the allegations, said there were no records of ships that sailed out of the Nigerian shore. He further affirmed that no barrel of crude oil was missing, as falsely alleged. Kyari said that they are ready for investigation.

6 MONTHS MATERNITY LEAVE IN OYO

Dr. WasiuOlatunbosun, the Oyo State Commissioner for information, culture and tourism, has unveiled the 6 months' extension plan for nursing mothers in the state. According to Faosat Sanni, the State's commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Inclusion, the extension of the maternity leave was necessary to ensure that adequate care was given to babies, while their mothers also have the time for proper self-care.

N13 BILLION FOR COMMUNITY POLICING

Laolu the Akande, spokesperson to the country's Vice President, Professor Yemi Osinbajo, has stated that the approval of the 13 billion naira by President Buhari is reflective of his plan to revamp the security system in the country. "At today's Osinbajo NEC. asked Governors, Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Finance Minister, and the Inspector-General of Police (IGP) to work out modalities on how the funds would be well utilised to ensure an effective implementation of community policing in Nigeria, and then report back to NEC," Akande noted.

MAN KILLED BY NAVAL OFFICER OVER N250

Osagie, 34-year-old а mechanical engineer, was brutalised to death for trying to settle a dispute between a Naval Officer and a spare parts seller. The late Osagie, who tried to pay the officer the sum of N250 for a plug that was bought and returned, was beaten to death by the officer who saw the action of the deceased as an embarrassment. Bala Elkana, spokesperson for the Lagos State Police Command, confirmed the incident and said investigation the into incident is ongoing.

AFRICA

MALI PRESIDENT FORCED TO RESIGN

Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, President of Mali, has been forced to step down hours after he and his Prime Minister, Boubou Cisse, were taken to a military camp in Bamako by soldiers, due to a coup that followed months of mass protests against alleged corruption and maladministration of the economy. Israel Wague, Mali's Air Force Deputy Chief of Staff, said that their intent is not to hold on to power, but to work towards the stability of the country.



ECOWAS SANCTIONS MALI

TheEconomicCommunity of West African States (ECOWAS) has suspended Mali from the regional body, following the military coup that forced President Boubacar Keita out of the presidential seat. The regional body also closed the country's land and air borders, and stopped all economic trade and financial transaction flows between ECOWAS member states and Mali, pending the time effective constitutional orders is reinstated in the country.

12 PRISON WARDERS ARRESTED IN SOMALI

Hassan Hussein, Somali Justice Minister, has declared the arrest of nine inmates, six civilians twelve and prison warders, totaling 25, after concluding an investigation trading on illegal of weapons in a prison in Somalia. The weapons smuggled were used in a shootout by prisoners against security officers guarding the prison, in the capital Mogadishu, in an attempt to break out of detention.

SUDAN SACKS FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN

Haidar Badawi, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson for Sudan, has been sacked over recent remarks made on behalf of his country. The remarks were based on normalising relations with Israel. The controversial statement made inferred that Khartoum was engaging in а peace agreement with Israel. Sudan has no diplomatic relations with Isreal. Omar Qamareddin, Sudan's Foreign Minister, disclosed that the government of Sudan never discussed the issue at any point and in any form.

SOUTH AFRICA ELECTRICITY C O M P A N Y C O N T I N U E S POWER CUT

Eskom, the South African electricity company, has extended scheduled power cut as a result of the power system being seriously constrained. The load shedding which had been planned and scheduled was put in place in order to avert total blackout of the overstretched power system of the country.

THE REST OF THE WORLD

RUSSIAN ACTIVIST POISONED

Alexei Navalny, a 44-yearold Russian opposition activist and an outspoken critic of the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, was reported to have been poisoned. It was suspected that he drank the poison in his tea at the airport café in Omsk, on his return flight to Moscow from Omsk in Siberia. He is currently in coma. A mobile video showed medical personnel rushing onboard the plane when Navalny screamed in agony. Vyacheslav Gimadi, a lawyer with Navalny's foundation, attributed the incident to Navalny's political activities.

FORMER CIA OFFICER TRADES US DEFENSE SECRET TO CHINA

Alexander Yuk Ching Ma, a naturalised US citizen born in Hong Kong, was arrested on Friday after being accused by federal prosecutors in the US for sensitive selling highly information about the CIA's personnel and tradecraft to the Chinese government. Ching Ma served as a CIA officer between 1982 and 1989.

MASTERCARD FOUNDATION ON THE CHANGING NATURE OF WORK

А report released by MasterCard Foundation on Secondary Education in Africa stresses the need to groom students for future work. Reeta Roy, MasterCard CEO of Foundation, said findings show that changes in the nature of work have placed a premium on skills that help young people to be adaptable, improve productivity, become resilient and be creative problem solvers. Reeta said that digitalization, automation and technological advancement are changing the nature of work in Africa.

COLOMBIAN EX-PRESIDENT RESIGNS SENATE SEAT

Alvaro Uribe. former Colombian President, has resigned his senate seat after being placed on house arrest as a result of the allegation of witness tampering and fraud raised against him. The 68-yearold ex-President said it was impossible to return to the senate he had served due to the allegation held against him. He is the first former President to be detained in Columbia.



THE ILLUSION OF ENTITLEMENT

Appreciated from its experiential and sociological dimensions, illusion signifies the occurrence of an erroneous or misjudged perception or understanding of an experience. It is the other side of truth or reality, especially a faulty reality that that emanates from poor judgement, prejudice, or a laid back mental attitude. Modern history is replete with examples of countries that had the illusion of becoming prosperous postcolonial climates simply by default. In this utopian frame, it is assumed that some other powers have paid the vicarious price for our development; so we can laze around and hope that the mechanisms of state would produce the prosperity we desire. But history has shown otherwise.

Befuddled by state and systemic failures resulting from miscalculations and, in very many cases, the greed and excesses of political leaders, many African states are paying the price of living in the illusion that postindependence development was a given. In some cases, especially in nations with many ethnic groups, a culture of entitlement had replaced such values as deferred gratification, hence the failure to establish a purposebuilt economy positioned for sustainable growth. While an illusion is a false belief, an entitlement mentality describes a state of mind in which an individual or a people assume that privileges are the same as rights. According to Luanne Ramsey of the Rosen Group, 'workers with an entitlement mentality are characterised by a persistent "What have you done for me lately?" attitude,' such that even when things are out of balance, there is a resounding feeling of expectation for more. Invariably, this creates an overindulgent populace, or an overindulged workforce at the business and organisational levels.

The situation in post-independence Nigeria has not been far-off from these theoretical scenarios. From independence, Nigeria, in terms of her economic fortunes, had prospered, progressed and showed good prospects of a brilliant future, with more than a few new industries either in process of being established,



or already in operation. Perhaps, with the prognosis of these socioeconomic prospects, the nation and its peoples grew slipshod, withdrawing into cocoons of entitlement. Each state of the federation became a close watcher of the economic wealth to access its share of the 'national cake.' This of course is one of the tragic consequences of being a rentier state.

In spite of the ever-present economic challenges of the nation, both the leaders and their peoples are cooped up in collective impatience and alacrity in the competition for the finite resources. The trend of contesting for "rightful shares" of "free money" from the federation account has held sway over the whole nation, and for many decades Nigerians leaders and peoples would rather wait to devour the last pieces of cake that are available at any time, than follow the hard, tortuous path to real development of the economic commonwealth for the sustainable benefit of the nation.



The pendulum of agitation based on entitlement has always oscillated within the Nigerian polity depending on the state or political zone whose "rights and privileges" are threatened. All sections of Nigeria have made an unfortunate and unpleasant contribution to this malaise, even well into recent times.

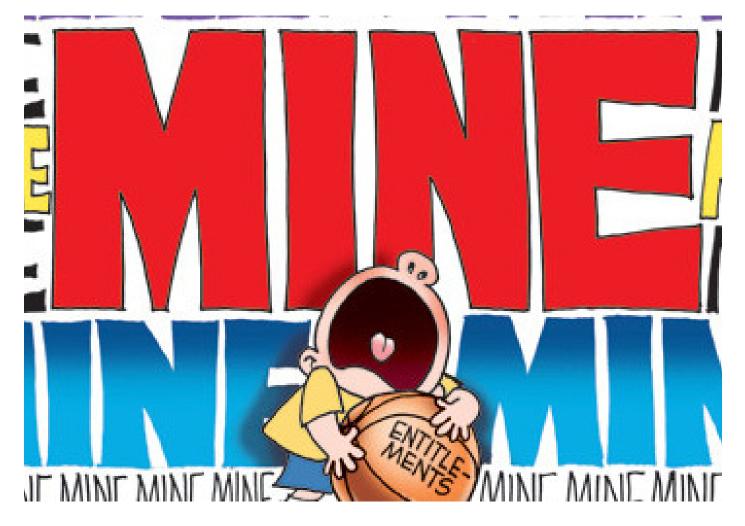
For the Yoruba ethnic group, the reverberations of separatism came in diverse forms and manners. These ranged from both direct and indirect calls for an Oduduwa Republic, to the championing of calls for a Sovereign National Conference with the view to 'decide the fate' of the federating units, and whether Nigeria will continue as one entity or not. The Afenifere, the Oodua People's Congress (OPC), the Yoruba Appraisal Forum, and several others have pursued similar proethnic agendas over many years. The irony has been that when there are bounties of federal entitlements flowing in their direction, the Yoruba political class has adopted a disposition that is more accommodating of the nation's shortcomings and foibles. So the cries for restructuring have become quite feeble, in fact almost dead, in recent years.

The North has itself been a champion of the entitlement syndrome for several decades, and this became so strongly demonstrated upon the untimely demise of President Umaru Musa Yar'adua. President Buhari had himself come to power riding the horse of northern entitlement. The Jonathan presidency was largely unsettled and turbulent because he was perceived by a critical section of the north as an impostor, notwithstanding the provisions of the Nigerian Constitution. That presidency, however, raised the Ijaws to the elevated status of princes and kings in several capital cities in the country.

The Niger Delta has been a hotbed of entitlement discourses and activism in the last twenty years. The illustration would range from the festering idea of a 'Niger Delta Republic' to the demand for 'resource control' and the rise of militancy and insurgency that literally crippled the Nigerian economy. The Federal Government's Amnesty Programme offered some lasting appeasement, and the creation of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) was a development strategy that should have transformed the region into a Dubai. But entitlement has often connoted the pillaging of the commonwealth, not only in the South-south but in all parts of the country. For the Igbos, the quest for entitlement has in recent years metamorphosed into a growing agitation for a Biafran country. The emergence and activities of groups such as the Movement for the Actualisation of the State of Biafra (MASOB) and the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) indicate quite some vigour around the movement. IPOB had adopted violent tactics in pursuing some of its agenda, and its leader, Nnamdi Kanu, was detained – based on charges that included treason and the operation of a pirate Radio Biafra – for two years by the current Buhari government. Though mostly peopled by young Igbo men and women who never experienced the Civil War but are enamoured of Biafra, the group has enjoyed the support of a critical section of the Igbo intelligentsia, the traditional leaders and the political class. This group of leaders offers direction to a huge number of gullible masses. Governors, lawmakers and other political leaders of the Southeast have made significant material and financial contributions to support the activities of IPOB, and invariably the quest for a state of Biafra.

Though proscribed, IPOB has remained active in several ways and has not changed its secessionist agenda. Kanu's claim that the mandate to restore Biafra is from heaven places IPOB on the same trajectory of a false and destructive religious ideology, like Boko Haram. Nnamdi Kanu and his lieutenants keep firing trademark propaganda darts at the Nigerian nation on a daily basis. The apex Igbo socio-cultural group, Ohanaeze Ndigbo, have reportedly settled its differences with the proscribed IPOB, and Chief Nnia Nwodo, leader of Ohanaeze, recently stated publicly that the two groups have agreed to work together. Working together to make the Southeast a haven of real development that would stir the envy of the other geopolitical zones would be a great thing for Nigeria, and indeed for Africa. Or is it work together to access a bigger share of the national cake? Or work together to pursue the one critical idea of an Igbo President in Nigeria? Or work together to break away from Nigeria and become an El Dorado nation? There is a costly alternation between several realities, and some of these centre around existing conditions of entitlement.

Without doubt, there is a widespread feeling of alienation and dissatisfaction among the various constituents within the Nigerian federation, and this derives largely from how much people are able to grab from the centre. We think so much of the centre



that we have refused to develop our states and local governments. The failure to develop the Southeast and to make it as prosperous as Israel or Japan is not because the Igbos are still a part of Nigeria, and have not received as much as they should from the centre. It is because their leaders are just the same as leaders in other parts of the country, south and north. They are, like all of us, the product of the entitlement syndrome that has entrenched a culture of rotational pillaging of the nation's resources. Unfortunately, that pillaging has never translated into real community development in any region of the country.

The growing expression of entitlement today is with the Igbo, and the emerging perceptions may improve or diminish their chances in the current political manoeuvrings and stratagems.

While an entitlement mentality is a despicable syndrome which we as a people must rise above, there are questions that should be answered in the context of festering political realities. The Igbos seem to bear in their hands two swords at the same time – an agitation for a state of Biafran on the right, and the quest for an Igbo presidency on the left. How are the nuances of ethics and the vagaries of entitlement coloured by the contradictions of a secessionist agenda? Or could all of these at best be symptomatic of just an entitlement syndrome, and the illusion of it in a clear sense? Understandably, in the absence of a true referendum, it may be difficult to ascertain whether the 'talking leaders' of an ethnic group actually stand for the true yearnings of the people they claim to represent. But the signals are good enough for the question, what exactly do the Igbos want?

Uduyakubu

Dr Udu Yakubu



Cover Story

POWER IS NOT SERVED ON A PLATTER

Abiodun Bello

Political players and their proteges, both in Nigeria and the world over, never forget to remember that, in politics, there are no permanent enemies; only permanent interests. In the instance of Nigeria, the political wheels have always been driven and oiled, before and after Independence, by a metaphorical lubricant of alliance. The political history, context and climate of Nigeria have been shaped and reshaped often by constant alignments and realignments, depending on what side one belongs and what the crystal ball of political permutations is dictating at a particular point in time in any political dispensation.

Many political scientists and social critics tend to agree on the view that the establishment of alliances is one of the perpetual characteristics of the political landscape in many multi-ethnic states. In the Nigerian example, the federal nature of the nation provides the basis of competition for natural resources and economic opportunities, which makes certain dimensions of ethnic rivalry to play out among the federating units. In the view of some political scientists, a slant of competition is frequently observed in how factors such as ethnicity and competition for the control of the structural frameworks of the state as well as reward system, often prevent the existence of national or nation-wide political associations and the emergence of nationally acknowledged political leaders. This is not to say that a country such as Nigeria has not, at some point or the other, created histories of alliances in its political matrix. However, alliances are always made with the consciousness and guiding intention of guarding against the domination of one group by another. It is to this effect that the legal structures or constitutions of many multi-ethnic states usually provide that the central governments must be formed by the parties or candidates with the overall majority of either parliamentary seats or total votes cast in general elections.

In a political arrangement like Nigeria, the importance of political alliances at party levels and the formation of alliance-governments at both state and national levels, cannot be over-emphasised. While constructing alliances across ethnic and regional divides, lots of political plotting, manoeuvrings and intrigues often take place. Political coalitions often take the form of consensual



agreements and the formal cooperation of two or more ethnic groups or political parties with the aim of reaching political objectives, which include the short-term aim of winning elections and mid- and long-term objective of controlling state resources and reward systems. Most often, these political covenants and arrangements have consequences that shape the direction not only of the fates of political actors, but of the federation as a whole.

Historically, Nigeria's First Republic was widely characterised by the regional dominance of political parties. Political parties mostly won elections based on their popularity among the people of a region, rather than by the formation of alliances. The unity of Nigeria appeared quite vulnerable as a newly independent country and young democracy. In 1964, two dominant political alliances, which reflected the country's regional arrangement, contested the federal parliament seats in the country's first national elections. The large Northern region which was clearly the stronghold of the National Nigerian Alliance (NNA), contended with the three smaller southern constituents, apparently a stronghold of the opposition United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA). As with any political calculations, the stakes were high for the region that had control of the federal parliament. There were the prospects of job patronage, industrial and trade contracts, and the lobbying for the location of new industries in the constituencies of political stalwarts.

It was understandable that the Northern region, which was less economically advanced, had maintained the control of political power due to its size and large population, while the three regions of the south with a supposedly extensive contact with Western civilisation, had unsuccessfully attempted to make political inroads to the centre. The Northern Region's NNA, with a majority in the federal parliament, formed the government at the centre under Prime Minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa.

These political intrigues highlight the stiffness of competition among political actors when the contest for power and state resources is in question. However, in the current political dispensation of Nigeria's Fourth Republic, lessons seem to have been learnt that no one region has singlehandedly helped itself to the nation's presidency except through a well thought-out, formidable and workable alliance with other groups or parties, as well as tactical inter-ethnic 'handshakes across

the Niger.' The merger of a number of political parties in Nigeria into one party – the All Progressive Congress (APC) – in 2013 ahead of the 2015 presidential election re-awakened an already recurring tendency and trend in the Nigerian polity.

In view of Nigeria's political history, it would seem that there have been more instances of formation of alliances between the Northern and South-western sections of the country than between any other two sections. Unlike the People's Democratic Party (PDP) which had laid constant claim to being a national party on account of its national spread, the emergent APC of 2013 was an amalgam of all major opposition political parties before the 2015 elections. The political alignments and alliances that preceded the 2015 election are an archetypal reference on how the confluence of national spread and strategic ethnic, regional and party alliances can determine the pendulum of an election in Nigeria.

To these ends and in view of the current political atmosphere in which there are rising calls in certain quarters for a possible Igbo President, it is important to ask to what extent the Igbo are willing to go into making alliances, just as the South-west and a large section of the north did in the recent past. What are there obstacles, complications or other factors that may prevent the South-east from achieving this feat? Could the acephalous nature of the Igbo as an ethnic group be a debilitating factor? Contemporary history has shown that a major challenge for the Igbo has been the inability to have a common front and direct all energies and synergies of money, materials and alliances towards a shared goal.

In the annals of Nigeria's history, power has always been contested, rather than served á la carte. The regions that have hitherto got the presidency had contested for it. Even when, upon the death of President Umaru Musa Yar'adua in 2010, there were positions and counterpositions about the legality of a 'doctrine of necessity' and the constitutional logic of having a Vice President succeed the late President, the succession process was yet subject to contestations of different kinds, preceding the subsequent emergence of Goodluck Jonathan. The massive support by the Igbo for President Goodluck Jonathan in the 2015 presidential elections did not produce the needed result, majorly because of the negative indices in the economic and developmental graphs of the country at the time.



q

However, in the run-up to the 2019 presidential elections, the Igbo section of the country was yet found to have had about three of their own contesting for positions related to the country's presidency – Oby Ezekwesili and Kingsley Moghalu were presidential candidates, while Peter Obi was a running mate to the PDP's presidential candidate, Atiku Abubakar. This had the strategic implication that bloc voting was made impossible for the Igbo. Also, the possibility of a wellfashioned alliance with other regions of the country, politically and ethnically, was completely upset! In 2019 as in 2015, the Igbo did not play their cards well, going by the results of the elections.

Whether the South-East has learnt any lessons about their past failed attempts at the presidency, or whether they have reasons to count their political-cum-electoral losses and fashioned new directions for actualising this political ideal, remains for time to reveal. Not too long ago, a faction of the Ohanaeze Ndigbo, led by Uche Okwukwu, had come forward to apologise for enlisting their support for Peter Obi in the last elections. In another vein, another Igbo group, the Centre for Equity and Justice, recently released a list of nineteen possible Igbo candidates for the 2023 presidential election, with six potential Northern vice-presidential candidates. The Igbo Leadership Development Foundation (ILDF) also recently released its own list of potential Igbo candidates for the 2023 presidential elections.

With these intriguing developments from political and socio-cultural groups, it yet remains a vital questions whether the Igbo are actually doing the required hard groundwork of constructing a common dominant front towards pursuing the kind of politics they want to play. Importantly, the Nigerian presidency is not an á la carte menu, and is never served on a platter. How much have the Igbos given for it, especially in recent years? And are the Igbos ready to give all it takes to build the required ethnic and political bridges that may take them to the presidency anytime in the near or distant future?



Cover Story

OUR MBAISE PRESIDENT

Mark Nwagwu

The Journal

I was told by a source I consider reliable that the call has gone out: send us your curriculum vitae, every Igbo man or woman who wants to contest to be president of Nigeria in 2023. He assured me that the two major parties, APC and PDP, have zoned the office of the president to the Igbo people. Another person, not far from reliable, told me I should not mind him, that it is all a ruse, a scam; that the issue has not been considered for even a second by the two top parties and no serious consideration would be given to such an ambition.

Well, I told the latter that there would be national conventions at which the flag-bearers of both parties would be nominated and that the Igbo might as well get into the affray and fight to a finish. He smiled and said that these matters are settled long before the conventions and everyone knows already the party's anointed candidate. The Igbo can contest but it would be a futile effort and no Igbo man of worth would engage in such a desultory debacle. The question for me becomes not where the president comes from but will he be our shepherd who will watch over us, shelter us, and keep us in safety in our kens not exposed to the wolves? If he is from my place, Mbaise, I am certain he will take care of Mbaise people and in the process take care of me. Aso Rock will have Mbaise professors, engineers, lawyers, artisans, etc. walking the corridors of power. Stockfish sales in Abuja will hit the roof as the president dines his guests on ugba and stockfish. The next Federal university, University of Culture and Citizenship will be in Mbaise and the world will come to know my people better. My mind now runs to the immortal poem, The Bridge and the Wall, by the inimitable spoken word and performance artist, Dike Chukwumerije

'If it's okay to say it's not okay to marry someone /Just because they are Kalabari That every tribe should have its own tide /Are we not



practicing...Apartheid?

If you cannot buy land unless you are native,/And cannot find work unless you are native,

And cannot feel safe unless you are native/How can we then say we are not primitive?'

Indeed, we are primitive. If my shepherd is from Mbaise will he shepherd me as efficiently when I go to Ogbomosho to visit my in-laws? If he does not, I shall persuade him please to mount full proof security for all Mbaise people married to fine Ogbomosho girls. And when I visit the University of Ibadan the Vice-Chancellor will give me letters to Aso Rock. To demonstrate to him my powers I shall call the president when I am in his office and ask him to have a word with the Vice Chancellor. Mark Nwagwu would, all of a sudden, become a powerful player in Government and I shall be sought after by anyone seeking a favour from the president. This is the government that will be my shepherd, mine only. When you tell me, what is good for the goose is good for gander, I shall tell you what is good for the goose is for the goose; the gander should run off and go seek its own good. This is what happens in Nigeria today: we choose our presidents on the basis of WIIFM - 'What's in it for Me?' Are we not primitive?

Obviously, no society can hope to make any progress in this manner. One problem with Nigeria is that, no matter what you say, someone else will come with some counter-motive, selfish and sinister. When you call a man a thief, he tells you I am not alone. When it is alleged that the NDDC has wasted the nation's resources, they say no, the lawmakers have the money. You know they make the laws and receive contracts for good work they do in the national assembly. And they claim to be our shepherds! If you ask WAEC to account for missing sums of money, they tell you the pile was eaten by rats; that the money was all smeared in suya and egusi soup. You ask a suspected criminal what is your name and he faints seeking immediate medical assistance. His name, when sought by the police, sets up a blood clot in his aorta; suddenly he cannot breathe. Here I am, an Mbiase man, whose president is also an Mbaise man and all I get out of it is to grow fat, build houses on lagoons and sea shores so there is no land left in Bayelsa State and I shall not live in any of them! No, sir, all I need is the rent from the oil companies who must pay or be in danger of being blacklisted for illegal oil lifting. I might even secure a number of off-shore drilling licences and then sell them to my partners in Pretoria, who have partners

in Monrovia who have partners in Slovenia. Is this not primitive?

Who is our shepherd? Let us ask, what do the flock want? First is safety from the wolves. We are the flock, how safe are we? I am eighty-three years old and have lived most of my life in Nigeria at the campus of the University of Ibadan. There are several cogent reasons for a university campus of which safety is the primary concern. Feeling secure, we could do our work for our country unperturbed totally committed to our research. There was a time, I think in the eighties, when robbery was rampant on campus and the staff volunteered to keep watch over their homes continually patrolling the streets. We kept a roster and chose nights when we did not have early-morning lectures the following day. We became our own shepherds. We were the flock; we were the shepherds.

What do we have in Nigeria today? Travels are treacherous and we are being seized for a ransom or worse still killed. Boko Haram keeps fighting and killing and we hear stories of this or that governor as their field marshal. Christians are being killed for no other reason than for their faith and the government appears nonchalant. My goodness, where is our shepherd? We have many; we elected a president, the governors, members of the national assembly, members of state assemblies, local government council chairmen, and members. I cannot believe we have this army of people and we the flock roam aimlessly like sheep without a shepherd. We did not elect them, they were appointed - the army, the police, the navy, the air force, national defence corps, etc. How do they make a difference in the life of Nigerians?

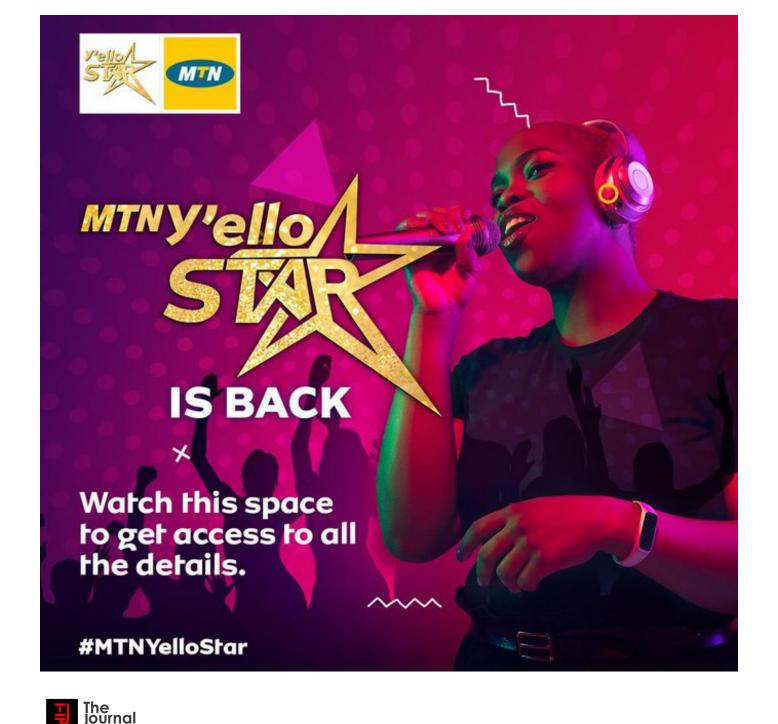
A police man dies on duty in the attempt to save lives and months, even years after, he is not paid any compensation, nor pension and his family may even be forcibly ejected from their quarters. The same applies to soldiers who have died on duty combating the evil forces of Boko Haram. How much are we spending battling the enemy? We hear of funds meant for weapons being diverted to personal accounts. I guess the bank vaults are all loaded with the latest in armoury and the defence chiefs can just go there and collect their weapons. During this COVID-19 pandemic, when school children were at home, I read that we spent billions on free lunch for the children. Am I a fool? If I am, are we all fools? If our president is an Mbaise man, will it make a difference to our safety and security in this country? If it does, is it owed to the fact that he is an Mbaise man and not Yoruba or Ijaw? Do honesty, justice and equity ride on the back of certain tribes or ethnic groups? For that matter, does corruption have tribal or ethnic preferences as to its choicest bed mates of evil? We are indeed primitive.

We are dealing with complex issues. A dear friend of mine once told me the North will never let an Igbo man be the president of this country because the Igbo killed The Sardauna. I could only reply, have the Igbo not suffered enough for their errors, real or perceived? Thus, an Mbaise man or any other Igbo man cannot be nominated by the major political parties to contest for the office of president, whatever may be his personal merits, because of the perceived guilt of the Igbo. I go again to Dike Chukwumerije

The fire we are quenching will only keep burning / Which nation can stand dividing its people?/How can one build on foundation so brittle? /If we cannot see ourselves in each other/The journey ends here we are going no further.

Are we not primitive? But we must go further and further yet. Our children and grandchildren will see to that. I can feel it in my bones. They act differently.

Mark Nwagwu is a professor of Zoology at the University of Ibadan, he lives in Obetiti, Nguru, in Aboh-Mbaise, Imo State



Cover

THE SOUTH-EAST NO LONGER AT EASE IN NIGERIA?

Jude Nwabuokei

Journal

Since Nigeria's transition into Democratic rule in 1999, it was evident that there was some form of agreement between the six geo-political zones of Nigeria to rotate power. This process, which has been described as the zoning formula, was supposed to be the basis for determining the ethnic group that would produce the head of the executive arm of government as well as be in charge of the centre. However, in a country where the 'centre cannot hold,' do the citizens wait for anarchy to be loosed on them?

One ethnic group that has been constantly lost in the labyrinth of this zoning formula happens to be the Igbo, initially disadvantaged by the Nigerian Civil War of 1967 to 1970, before rising to become the economic stalwarts of Nigeria's informal sector. The question yet remains, is democracy working for the South-Eastern States of Nigeria? In addressing this question, it would be needful to trace the historical trajectory of two concepts, the Igbo idea of governance and the position of the Igbos in Nigeria's political landscape. Due to the disparities in the pre-colonial Igbo system of governance and the present-day system of governance that has witnessed the emergence of autonomous communities in those parts of the South-East without traditional rulers.

Hence, the Igbo political system could be better described as an idea. This idea, in some sense can be equated with

the notion of Igbo Presidency which has continued to be a matter of contention in the nation's body polity.

In order to navigate the political topography of South-Eastern Nigeria, one may need to delve into the concept of federalism as it relates to revenue allocation. Among the numerous definitions of federalism that exist, this treatise will focus on the one that refers to it as a system of government that divides the powers of government between the national or federal government and state and local government. A close examination of this definition will reveal that the Igbos, like most Nigerians, constantly look to the federal government rather than focus most of their attention on their state government. In a country where the centre wields so much influence in terms of revenue allocation to the other component units, it is only natural that governance will be determined by centrifugal forces. This phenomenon has unfortunately affected the Igbos who constantly blame the North for their woes instead of holding their state and local governments accountable. At this juncture, one should critically examine the concept of revenue allocation and how this can translate into the "dividends of democracy" as most Nigerians are wont to call it.

Revenue Allocation and its impact on Nigeria's economic development have captured the attention of scholars and public affairs analysts in and out of the country. Looking



beyond the politics of Nigeria's fiscal federalism one cannot but wonder what is being done with the allocation that is sent to the South-Eastern States. For so long many Nigerians, Igbos inclusive, have been swimming in the murky waters of ethnic competition for public resources. This has blurred and prevented them from focusing their lenses on their State Governments. This is evident in the comments of Nigerian citizens of Igbo extraction in relation to governance in Nigeria. Most of these comments make constant reference to Igbo marginalization at the political and economic level. It should be made clear that this discourse does not attempt to discountenance the Igbo agitation for political relevance at the federal level, rather it attempts to shift their binoculars from Aso Rock to their respective State Houses. When the people of the South-Eastern States of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo realize that the real power to make democracy work lies in their hands, they will apply the same level of tenacity to their politics as they do to their business enterprise.

Democracy as a system of government has its procedures. These procedures are oftentimes too abstract for the average Nigerian on the street. So when it comes to measuring the performance of the South-Eastern States, most Nigerians view it in strictly economic terms. Hence, economic factors must be considered when it comes to assessing the performance of these states. In a recently released report on Nigeria's level of poverty by the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the South Eastern States were mentioned with Ebonyi State ranking as the worst with eighty percent of her citizens been described as poor. The state with the least amount of poor people according to the report is Anambra with the percentage of the poor rated as fifteen (15%), Enugu ranks number two with about sixty percent (60%) poverty level, Abia comes third with about thirty-one percent (31%) and Imo State at twenty-nine percent (29%). On the average, the poverty level of the South-East was pegged at forty-three percent (43%)

These figures from the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics arguably portray the impact of governance on the citizens. When one ties this to the agitation of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), one is only left to wonder if the people of the South-Eastern States possess the capacity to demand for better governance from their political leaders. The point is that democracy can work for the people of the South-East if they can get more involved with the leadership of their state and local governments. The protests and hullaballoo on marginalization all point to the issue of effective management and distribution of resources as seen in tangible things like good infrastructure and welfare.

A critical analysis of the ethnic democracy of the Igbo people will reveal that the concept of leadership as reflected in their politics is one that is tied to achievement especially at the socio-economic level. The popular Ozo title and the ascribing of chieftaincy titles to people with certain levels of wealth and influence is a perfect example. The Igbos are known for their high sense of industry and contribution to Nigeria's informal sector. The success of most of their enterprise has been ascribed to their apprenticeship system, which is highly infused with a strong sense of community and solidarity. If this can be adapted at the political level, the people will consciously look out for leaders that have made a significant level of achievement either in business, academics or other endeavours. Rather than voting a leader who panders to the dictates of some political godfather, let them seek for someone who represents their ideals of grit, determination, hard work and a genuine interest in the well being of people.

Igbo perception of democratic governance in the South-East is also fuelled by the embers of relative deprivation. In a broad sense, relative deprivation refers to feelings of deprivation or entitlement that stems from comparison. Most citizens of the South-Eastern States of Nigeria are mainly preoccupied with comparing their state of affairs with that of other regions. The media, particularly Radio Biafra, has been used to sell the widely held narrative of political marginalization. Rather than proffer solutions, it has focused on secession and all the attendant emotions that go with it. This also brings one to the wider question of ethnic politics in Nigeria and how this has affected the Igbos. Nigerian Scholars like Okwudiba Nnoli who have written extensively on the subject of ethnic politics in Nigeria have argued that ethnic groups strive to have access to state power in order to control and dominate the state. This scramble for state power emanates from the primordial sentiments that are common to all the ethnic groups in Nigeria. Rather than approach ethnicity from a negative and divisive standpoint, it should be used to encourage healthy competition in terms of political and economic resourcefulness. Hence, the Igbos should focus on their resourcefulness, get their political strategies right and strive to join political parties based on ideology and geographic spread rather than primordial inclinations.

Political parties play a huge role in determining the kind of leaders that emerge at the Federal, State and Local Government level. As long as Igbos continue to join parties solely on primordial leanings, their chance of representation at the centre will be slim. Democracy in Nigeria includes having effective representation in all the geo-political zones. This is especially the case with the Legislature where bills become laws that can make or mar the polity. If democracy must work for the Igbo, they must learn the Aristotelian concept of the primacy of politics. They must learn the art and science of politics in the same way in which they have mastered the dynamics of trade and commerce. The South-East needs a political leadership that is informed by their collective ethics and ethos which will in turn yield the dividends they desire.

Oftentimes in talking about the impact of democracy in the South-East, the media's role is barely mentioned. The role of a radio station, in the Rwandan genocide of 1994, points to the power that the media, through Radio and Television, can wield in terms political education and participation in the South-Eastern States. While other media platforms like newspapers, online and social media are equally relevant, the Radio and Television, through talk shows and robust political content can begin to stir up the minds of the citizens to engage their public office holders. In those parts of the South-East where the poverty level is reportedly higher, this can be achieved. Still on the media, online and social media can be used to engage those other parts of the South-East, possibly the urban areas, where mobile technology holds sway.

In recent times, online media platforms have begun to use Fact-Checking tools to verify information or claims made in public discourse. This can also be deployed to Fact-Check and keep track of electoral promises made through the manifestoes of politicians and their parties. When prospective or incumbent governors campaign during elections, the South-Eastern electorate, with the help of these media platforms, should be made to follow up on the progress made by their Governors, Commissioners, Local Government Chairman and Councillors. While doing this, they should be keenly aware of the activities of the legislative arm of their respective states. This is where the State Broadcasting Services and well-funded media establishments in these states can step in by covering some, if not all, of the sessions of the State Houses of Assembly. All these are summed up in the concept of Democratic Accountability as defined by the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) which says that 'citizens

expect their government to deliver public services in a way that responds to their needs and recognizes their human rights.'

South-Eastern Nigeria needs to understand the nexus between development and democracy. There is need for more transparency in budgetary allocations in the South-Eastern States. These budgets must be available to the public and the process that produces it must be devoid of secrecy. Budgeting is an integral part of good governance and it must be consultative and open. Due to the peculiarity of the poverty level of the South-East, there should be a forum where the people at the grassroots can monitor and report on projects. The youths of the South East must begin to learn the science of governance and become informed of government projects. Public Advocacy through naming and shaming of corrupt government officials is another means of strengthening good governance in the South-East. Civil Society groups, like the media, should assist in documenting abuse of governance processes.

One overlooked means of making democracy work in the South-East lies in revisiting the tripodal relationship that exists between religion, culture and the politics of development. Religion has been rightfully described as the opium of the masses by Marx and Engels. Opium is known globally for its narcotic and medicinal uses but there is more publicity on its narcotic use. In medicine, it acts as an analgesic, a pain-relieving substance. The journey to development for the South-East will be fraught with pain. Religion can be positively used to ease the pain and build their resilience in the face of challenges they will face. Nigeria is a country where religion thrives. It occupies an important part in the hearts of most Nigerians. In the world of religion, the premise and the conclusion may not relate, yet it is accepted as true and certain. Scholars, atheists and agnostics may be dismissive of it yet it has the potential to be used as a vehicle for development.

Igbo culture and tradition can also be used to (re)sensitize the people of the South-East. There is an urgent need to revisit the Igbo folklore that was, and still is, an assemblage of the collective wisdom of the people. The relevance of moral instruction as taught in folktales should be imbibed in children and teens that will later become the youths who will be the vanguards of change. A greater part of the Igbo epistemology can be transmitted via the tools available through multimedia platforms. The politics of development within the context of the damaged democracy of the South-East is about examining the effect of political factors on economic development in the region. There is a lot of focus on the economic factors, which is good, but it would be better if the people began to pay more attention to the politics because it plays a huge role in human development. Professor B.K. Barber of the Centre for the Study of Youth and Political Conflict at the University of Tennessee explains that the power of politics lies in the values associated with governing. These values are the most fundamental of human values. Barber describes this value as control or regulation of access, opportunity, freedom, rights, self determination and self expression. When these values are tied to the Igbo political landscape, one discovers that even the agitations for Biafra are tied to control and regulation of resources, a desire for self-determination and self-expression. If these ideals can be genuinely pursued, the quest for secession will die a natural death. Subsumed within the agitations for Biafra is a call for identity, national pride and a strong collective narrative created by the civil war and its aftermath.

Democracy as a system of government gives room for freedom of expression. In the midst of so much talk, which is necessary for national cohesion, it will take lots of political will to ensure that economic development goes beyond the bureaucratic fortress of documents tucked into file cabinets or computer storage systems. The individual well being of any Igbo man, woman, boy or girl is centred on conditions. This could be the election of a governor who will turn things around for the good of the state, better representation at the federal level or any other goal they decide to attain. Like the main character, Obi Okonkwo in Chinua Achebe's novel No Longer At Ease who goes against his principles and takes a bribe to solve personal problems, the Igbos have been boxed into going against the norms of their rich culture and tradition to accept handouts from their leaders instead of good governance.

Jude Nwabuokei writes from the United Kingdom



Opportunity is your future



Cover Story

OHANAEZE NDIGBO A BELEAGUERED MOTHER ELEPHANT

Femi Morgan

The Journal

Ohanaeze Ndigbo is the apex socio-political pressure group of the Igbos. It was formed after the Biafrian war to unify the third largest ethnic group in Nigeria and to harness the potentials of the Igbos-in-Diaspora to present a common socio-political front. Dr Akanu Ibiam and other prominent Igbos saw the need for the unity of the Igbo after the civil war. It was also an attempt to bring back the unity of the Igbo, which was enjoyed during the brief years of the Igbo Federal Union (IU)and the the Igbo National Assembly (INA).

The first unifying platform was the Igbo Federal Union, an unofficial collective of the Ndigbo which saddled itself with the social and infrastructural development of Eastern Nigeria. The Igbo Union was established in 1944 before the civil war and was led by Chief Z. C. Obi, and later Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe (1948-1952), Dr. Amanze, among others. The IU and all ethnic unions across the country were banned after the successful coup of January 1966 for fear of working against the federation. The January 1966 violent coup had set the stage for a chain of events that were precursors to the Nigerian Civil War. With the crises that preceded the war came the need for solidarity amongst the Igbos, and a rallying point was the resurgence of the group called the Igbo National Assembly (INA). But the INA was also banned by the Federal Government for fear that the Igbos may be plotting a grand agenda to disrupt the federation.

In 1976, there was 'The meeting of Igbo Elders and Chiefs' where the idea of a socio-cultural group which would rebuild communities was mooted. Sir Francis Akanu Ibiam, Governor of the Old Eastern Region subsequently formed the Ohanaeze Ndigbo with the support of prominent Igbo leaders including Dr. Micheal Opara, Dr. K.O. Mbadiwe, Chief M.N. Ugochukwu, Dr. Pius Okigbo, Prof. Ben Nwabueze, and Sir Onyensoh Nwachukwu. Sir Akanu Ibiam became President-General of the group.

The Ohanaeze Ndigbo have members in all the states of Eastern Nigeria, and in Rivers and Delta States, among other places. However, its primary financial contributors are the eastern states. Its core objective was not wound around any ideological context. It was set to unify all Igbos to be better represented in the Nigerian political space.



By 1984, The Ohanaeze Ndigbo had become torn because of choosing sides between the NPN and the NPP. Subsequently, however, Prof. Ben Nwabueze, one of the founding fathers and the Executive Secretary at the time tried to resuscitate the group. But it did not gain much traction largely because the Igbos were traditionally disinclined to any semblance of monarchy and they saw the group as a subtle monarchical system which reminded them of warrant chiefs, who used their positions to negotiate wealth for themselves during the colonial era. There was an admixture of suspicion and disinterest from various quarters.

During the years of military rule, the Ohanaeze Ndigbo, like many pressure groups, had to become a mere social group without any political contribution. It was the obvious thing to do at that phase as the country was no longer governed by any semblance of the rule of law. A scholar, Ebenezer Oluwole, had noted in his paper, "June 12 Saga and the Re-visitation of Igbo-Yoruba Cold War in Nigeria," that the Igbos did not participate in the fight for the return to democracy through any sociocultural group or group activism because of the cold war it had with the Yorubas who they believed were in the good books of the Northern ruling class. Only a few of their leaders engaged in some pro-democracy activities on their own volition.

As soon as democracy returned, the Ohanaeze Ndigbo restructured itself for political relevance and power. It gained a lot of traction during the first four years of President Obasanjo because many politicians in Igboland were striving for political power at the centre and in the states through the PDP, and later through the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA), a party that was almost exclusively controlled by the Igbos. The nature of APGA gave credence to the 'elder' status that the Ohanaeze Ndigbo needed to plot political direction. However, neither APGA nor the Ohanaeze became successful at the centre. Things began to fall apart again as many rich Igbos began to assert themselves without any recourse to the reconciliation of the elders. The Ohanaeze Ndigbo began to have factions that made many Igbos in the city disregard them. This is the reality of the current Lagos State Branch of the Ohanaeze Ndigbo. Their leaders have lamented that the seeming egalitarian posture of the Igbo seem to go against the collectivism that it needs to present a strong sociopolitical force. The organisation through its Chapter President, Solomon Ogbonna Aguene, in an article, noted that some 'modern Igbos' renege against collective decisions of the group and disregard their 'elders' based on the fact that the Ohanaeze do not pay their bills, therefore cannot have control over them.

Many Igbos who hold on to the dark nostalgia of the Nigerian Civil War, who constantly educate their wards on their own version of events and who assert marginalisation within the polity remain resolute about the prospects of the Sovereign State of Biafra. These organisations, The Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and the Indigineous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) have always expressed suspicion, disgust and vitriol against the Ohanaeze Ndigbo. They believe that the Ohanaeze constitutes a stumbling block to the unity needed to secede from Nigeria. While the MASSOB had taken the Nigerian government to the International Court of Justice over Biafra, and the IPOB had ordered the boycott of elections and shutdown of commercial centres in the eastern part of Nigeria during the 2019 elections, the Ohanaeze had on many times shifted goalposts in support of MASSOB, and had been silent on many of the actions and inactions of IPOB.

Many media reports show that the MASSOB and the IPOB had accused the Ohanaeze Ndigbo of greed, doublespeak and underhand dealings, especially as relates to political support and the proscription of IPOB in 2017. They had alleged that it helped the Federal Government push out Nnamdi Kanu, leader of the IPOB, into exile. Recently, the leader of IPOB had accused Ohanaeze Ndigbo of collaborating with the Miyetti Allah to bring the culture, people and safety of the Igbos to great risk.

'When the history of Fulani terrorist conquest of Igboland is written in the next 100 years, it will be recalled that a certain group of men called Ohanaeze Ndigbo and a band of traitors working for the Caliphate sadly referred to as Igbo governors plotted the Islamic takeover of the land of their ancestors... Apparently, all the Fulani terrorists did was to promise each South-East state governor the same unrealisable slot of Vice President of the Nigerian Republic.... For this token promise, each governor is now falling over themselves to please the Caliphate by ceding our ancestral lands to the Fulani. These are the workers of iniquity some misguided people want us to regard as elders worthy of

respect.' Nnamdi Kanu had said.

With this, it is evident that the Ohanaeze Ndigbo do not share the same objective with the secessionist pressure groups. As much as they may have meeting points concerning issues of access to the commonwealth, they are all unwilling to shift grounds on the fundamental objectives of their groups for the Ohanaeze Ndigbo to have full authority. Recently, Chief Nnia John Nwodo met with the leaders of the IPOB to discuss matters relating to restructuring and the 2023 Presidency. Chief Nwodo came out of that meeting to say that Ohanaeze and IPOB are on the same page, but none of these groups have yet to submit its objective to the suzerainty of Ohanaeze Ndigbo. These groups therefore do not see the Ohanaeze as the apex socio-cultural organisation of the Igbo; they see it as a parallel group and are open to negotiations depending on the temperament of the leaders per time. Recently, the Director of Information in MASSOB had asserted that the Ohanaeze Ndigbo are not doing the will of the Igbos regarding the 2023 elections. He accused them of greed and selfish intentions. He said that instead of collaborating with the choice of the generality of Igbos for the sovereign state of Biafra, they are busy selling their souls for a possibility of having a shot at Aso Rock.

Chief Nnia John Nwodo, the current President-General of the Ohanaeze Ndigbo had gone through the throes of politicking to keep his red cap as the leader of the group. During the 2019 elections, a faction within his organisation claimed to have suspended him. This constant bickering within the group exposes it to disrespect and external intrusion. During election years, it seems like a trend for the Igbos to be divided across several political allegiances. It played out in 1984 and wreaked havoc on the Ohanaeze Ndigbo when the Igbo leaders were torn between the Presidential Candidate of the National Party of Nigeria, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, and Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe of the Nigerian People's Party. It has played out again after then, and it seems like a vicious circle.

Since 2016, there has been an upsurge of factions in the Ohanaeze Ndigbo. In February 2016, Governor Rochas Okorocha had to intervene in brokering peace and unity between the two factions of the group led by Gray Enwo-Igariwey and Dr. Ralph Obioha. Meanwhile, the Ohanaeze in Enugu rubbished the reconciliation claiming that the Governor had no authority to reconcile or reposition Ohanaeze Ndigbo. It also asserted that it was the turn of Enugu to produce the president of the group.

Fast-forward to 2019 and a faction of Ohanaeze Ndigbo led by Uche Okwukwu, the Secretary General of the Ohanaeze Ndigbo, apologised to President Buhari for endorsing the Atiku/Obi presidential ticket for the 2019 elections. The apology followed comments credited to the President-General of Ohanaeze Ndigbo, Chief Nwodo, who they claimed was suspended by a nine-man panel for 'acts of misconduct and abuse of office as well as bringing Ohanaeze to public disgrace'. It was only reasonable that the Igbo socio-cultural group backed one of their sons as Vice-President on a strong platform, and as prelude to seriously contest for the presidency at the expiration of that ticket. But this did not gain the traction and acceptance of some Igbos.

Another faction of the Ohanaeze emerged recently. The Ndigbo General Assembly emerged to pursue the same objectives as the established Ohanaeze Ndigbo. It rose on the back of internal rancour expressed by Mazi Okechukwu Isiguzoro, who accused leaders of the Ohanaeze Ndigbo of 'using their positions to advance for a failed 2019 Presidential Candidate.' Recently also, a new Ohanaeze Ndigbo Movement emerged to assert itself as the apex body. It took great efforts of Chief John Nwodo to bring a semblance of peace and reconciliation back to the fold.

Perhaps, the Ohanaeze Ndigbo embodies the notion of the 'elders' of a group who are cautious enough to remember the carnage of the war, and pragmatic enough to navigate political turbulence and negotiate political power for the Igbo. This should mark out the 'mainstream' Ohanaeze Ndigbo as different from the other groups that try to engulf the nation with hate speeches and violence. Though divided and wounded, the Ohanaeze Ndigbo continues to bear the brunt of its belligerent children, and the mother elephant seems perpetually beleaguered.



The Journal

THE HISTORICAL VANTAGE OF NIGERIA'S PROBLEM

Michael Chiedoziem Chukwudera

It is something which gives one a kick in the teeth to watch how, over the last 50 years, Nigeria has gone round and round in circles without making any true progress as a nation. In the first five years after Nigeria got Independence from Britain in 1960, things swung back and forth enough to cause much political division in the country which eventually led to a coup in 1966, a counter-coup, secession and a war whose resultant bile can still be tasted in various factions of the country. When one takes the time to go through the Nigerian history, indeed, one sees that there are a lot of unanswered questions - a lot of unresolved conflicts. Nigeria has been plagued by a lot of problems which has kept the nation in the rather sorry state in which we find it today. This problem is being looked at from many perspectives. It has been given many names, the most common of which are tribalism and corruption. Most people will agree that majority of Nigeria's problem fall into these two major categories. But then, there is a blatant attempt, from the Nigerian mainstream political sphere and intelligentsia, it seems, to not talk about these problems from the vantage of history.

When one goes to the books in search of the history of Nigeria, particularly from the early 1920s when the major struggles for Independence began with the formation of Nigerian National Democratic Party in 1923, to the first cross-carpeting led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo in 1951, to Independence in 1960, one finds that the issues of ethnicism currently plaguing the country are far from new. When one goes further to study post-colonial Nigeria from 1960 to 1966, one begins to see where the seeds of ethnicism, cluelessness and the lack of common national spirit culminated in breeding the saga, whose resultant problems Nigeria is yet to recover from 54 years after. Ever since then, it has been a 'running around in circles' with no definitive course of action taken to stir the country in the right direction.

History is the study of the course of the timeline of human development across all spheres. And although it seems to move in a straight line because time never moves back, it is actually more cyclical. And part of history's relevance is in how the circumstances which led to the major conflicts in the past always find a way to replicate



themselves in the present. In some quarters, people will say history repeats itself. Events happening across eras or epochs, though bearing similarity in cause and effects, always maintain their unique differences. But yes, it is a very valid assertion to say that history repeats itself. This is because part of history's relevance lies in the fact that, in studying the past, we can understand the present and be better equipped for facing the future. Nigeria's case is not an exception to this thumb rule.

When one establishes and accepts that the circumstances which led to the formation of Nigeria were not one of deliberate cohesion and agreement between those who we might refer to as the founding fathers, one begins to understand certain things. Nigeria was formed in 1914 when the British Messenger, Lord Frederick Lugard, amalgamated what was then known as the Southern Soudan and Northern Soudan and his mistress, Flora Shaw Lugard, chose a name, Niger area, for the amalgamated region. It was both names which were joined together to arrive at Nigeria, the current name of the country today. The chain reactions leading to the colonialists invading Africa and by extension West Africa and the numerous regions and Kingdoms which now make up Nigeria were as a result of the 1884/5 Conference at Berlin. It was where European politicians and diplomats had gathered and shared Africa among themselves.

In 1914, when Nigeria was amalgamated, it is safe to say that the regions at the time did not have sufficient educated peoples of their own or independent thinkers well-groomed in the ways of the white man who could stand-in for what their people represented. It often begs the question: who were the people who agreed with the British to amalgamate these two distant regions with little or no cultural and ideological similarities into a single state?! The first sign that Nigeria might have been an error of Colonialism was around 1956 when the Northerners first expressed their disinterest in a separate country from the Colonial contraption against the Southern consensus at the time. It is important to note here that while Lugard's amalgamation might have created a unified expression of the Northern and Southern protectorates, he did not create a nation off them. Obafemi Awolowo is quoted to have disagreed with the concept of Nigeria when he said in 1947, 'Nigeria is not a nation. It is a mere geographical expression. There are no 'Nigerians' in the same sense as there are 'English,' 'Welsh,' or 'French.' The word 'Nigerian' is merely a distinctive appellation to distinguish those who live within the boundaries of Nigeria from those who do not.' At one point or another in Nigeria's history, every major faction of Nigeria has fought to be free from the Nigerian contraption. There are a lot of inferences which could be made from why this is so. The last real struggle, however, and which was the most brutal, was the Nigeria-Biafra war, which resulted from the Eastern Wing of the country breaking off, after the agreement at the Aburi accord was not honoured by the Nigerian side.

The Aburi accord which was an agreement between General Yakubu Gowon and Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu was necessitated after the Igbo people and her neighbours suffered multiple progroms in 1966 following the counter-coup which ousted General Aguiyi Ironsi as Nigeria's head of state. It was an agreement which was meant to address the strategic inequalities in the distribution of resources in Nigeria and the positioning of the military which became the order of the day, as a result of Aguiyi Ironsi's unitary government — a system which he installed to appease the Northern faction of the country, aggrieved at the time over the first coup which was infamously tagged an Igbo coup.

But then, Gowon returned to Nigeria and decided that this agreement which was reached by both parties was for some reason, no longer worthy of honour. Nigeria has proven to be a country whose rulers prefer to sweep history under the carpet and prefer to not interrogate the motives of the past. If not, there ought to be questions asked and a national discussion on what could have been the reason why General Yakubu Gowon who until that time, had vociferously spoken up against the concept of One Nigeria took such a U-turn as to renege on an agreement, led Nigeria to war against Biafra and support a blockade strategy in the war which led to the death of about two million Biafran children.

The timeline of the country since the supposed end of that war on January 15th 1970 to this date leaves a lot of questions unanswered. Since 1970, Nigeria has gone from being one of the world's highest producers of groundnut, cocoa and palm oil to one whose agricultural sector is in shambles. The research institutes built in respect to these crops are all in a sorry state. Nigeria has also become the poverty capital of the world, a country where insecurity and terrorism take up about fifty percent of the headlines on the news, and where it has become normal to see pictures of beheaded people on the news. It has become a country where there has been no development in science and technology. It begs the question of the Nigeria-Biafra War and the question indeed is, what need really was there for that war? What was the need to keep a country that has gone through such a monumental regression in the past fifty years, and what is the need of keeping it now?

At the end of the Nigeria-Biafra war, General Gowon did a very interesting thing. The Nigerian soldiers who fought the war were not given any medals. The Biafrans were given, as it was portrayed on international media, a brother's welcome. A promise was made to reconstruct, rehabilitate and reconcile with the Biafran region (3Rs)which is yet to be fulfilled till this day. And then, in addition to all of these, as though Nigeria was too eager to move on, everything about the war was swept under the carpet, and the causes and the mode in which it was fought have never made it to National TV till this day. This is so much that at some point, when enough literature about the war had surfaced, history was removed from the Nigerian curriculum. The result of this is that many young Nigerians, even those with high educational qualifications, are unable to see Nigeria's problem from the vantage of the major events of its pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial history. Young people of these days were born into the difficulty of being a Nigerian as in the case of an absurdity which one grows trying to make sense of. Everything is seen from a vantage of the present. And most of them have been fooled into believing Nigeria's problem is corruption as was touted by the present government before they assumed power in 2015. Things have been rationalised as though to present a picture that Nigeria's problem can be fixed by continuous rolling of the electoral dice till it turns and produces a messiah who would make 1\$ equal NI or perform some Midas touches on the economy.

What would history have revealed to young Nigerians? Fundamentally, it would, at the very least, bring into form, the cause of the perpetual ethnic disagreements in various factions of the country and how it is not new. It would make the structural problem of the country evident. It would bring into perspective, the problem of neocolonialism which the Nigerian elites would rather talk about from the sides of their mouth without proper interrogation of the problems posed by the issue. It would make us realise that the Southern Kaduna killings and every other form of killings based on ethnic bile are not new to Nigeria because far back as the 1940s, there have been ethnic progroms in Nigeria. History would present Nigeria's problems for the cycle that it is and the recurrent form, which it occurs, and it would lead to the appropriate questions being asked. Nigeria remains as it is till this day because the appropriate questions have not yet been asked. It is almost as though there is among the Nigerian intelligentsia, a consensus to create boundaries in how far they should go in trying to discuss these issues. They talk about ethnic problems, but never talk about the historical and focal points of the problem, they talk about neocolonialism but never talk about how to decolonise, they talk about Black Lives Matter, but they turn around and attend literary festivals funded by a murderous politician, they talk about Nigeria's perpetual backwardness, but will never be caught questioning the basis of the existence of the country. They try to treat nationalism on the basis of ethnicism as evil, not because in the real sense they are against ethnic bigotry, but because they work for a system which does not want to address the issues of ethnicism plaguing Nigeria.

Today in Nigeria, political positions or appointments are not got based on qualification or merit, but mostly on the basis of ethnicism. In the social sphere, it is mostly through the corrupt version of elitism called connection. As 2023 approaches, the Igbo elites are touting the rhetoric of Igbo Presidency. The argument is that fifty years after the war ended, an Igbo man has never been at the helm of affairs and that the problem of Nigeria's unity will be solved when an Igbo man ascends the presidency, because Igbo people being the most sociable of Nigerians will not stir the country in the way of ethnic bigotry. This is an agenda being pursued by Igbo elites; the same Igbo elites who for the past decade, have been dishing out one of the worst brands of leadership in Nigeria. The same people who have been unable to encourage the education of their people in the history which the country strives to deprive them of because they are still interested in how Nigeria, as it is, benefits them. These are yet the same people who are quiet in the face of their people being persecuted in Nigeria. One needs not look far to ascertain the invalidity of their claims of having the magic wand to stir Nigeria away from the path of the bad wind of ethnocentricism. In truth, neither the Igbo man nor the Igbo elite is innocent of the ethnicism and elitism which

plagues the country. If Nigeria were okay, it wouldn't matter much if the Presidents ruling since 1999 were Fulani or Yoruba or Igbo. Terms like 'Igbo presidency' or 'Hausa presidency' would sound ridiculous because the goal would be about the progression of the country. How then do the Igbo elites think they can solve an ethnic problem by administering more ethnic doses?

Whenever there is a political problem in the country, the politician's biggest tool is ethnocentrism, and he knows it. Nigerian politicians are by the day, perfecting the art of turning one group against the other. And because it is such an effective tool, it is not likely to be done away with any time soon. During the elections, the ethnocentric tools are based on the ethnic divides. The ordinary citizens put their lives on the line for the sake of politicians who have promised them a better life. When the politicians get into office, if they continued that ethnocentric fight or pursued a cause for the interest of their people, it might have made more sense. But when they get to Aso Rock or House of Assembly, the people who they tricked into fighting for them with the ethnic propaganda no longer matter. Another form of ethnicism assumes the mantle-the ethnicism of the rich and the poor.

In the House of Assembly, both the Hausa, the Ijo, the Igbo, the Nupe, the Yoruba, the Efik come together, and they steal the blind citizens dry, even as they keep the propaganda which gives them power alive. One may, of course, look at this picture and say the embezzlement of money and misappropriation of funds are Nigeria's biggest problems and not ethnicism and it might make a fair argument. But if we cast our minds to the bigger picture, we would realise that the biggest problem is always the primary problem. The talks about Igbo presidency, Yoruba presidency, Hausa presidency and all which causes a division in the country every four years is an ethnic problem. The tools which the politicians use in dividing his people from the people of the other politicians to prevent them from coming together to wrestle against the common thief is an ethnic problem. The Nigeria-Biafra War which the country has not yet recovered from, and for which history was wiped out from the curriculum, is an ethnic problem – the reason for which developmental infrastructures; international airports, seaports, etc., have not been put in place in some regions of the country is an ethnic problem. The 1999 Constitution was put in place and created a centralised government, and this centralised government has made

it difficult for the people of a local jurisdiction to hold their legislators to account, and for judicial reforms to be put in place. Because of the rot in the judiciary and the upper and lower houses of assembly, the executive has gone largely unchecked.

This problem of ethnicism and even the much-touted corruption has a root in history. The reason why the various factions of the country cannot agree and have for years been unable to come together to demand accountability of their leaders is that there is no shared interest among the people. While the people from one region want a different country, the people from the other want a president from their region and so on. And how did these people who are so different ideologically come to be stuck in one country under a centralised system? Why does each region not have enough autonomy to develop at its own pace? Why is the North not having this talk of restructuring? These are questions that only history can answer. Whether or not the people on both ethnic biases of the argument are consciously talking from the historical point, the one true building block of a people's psychology is history.

It is history which has the power to bring Nigeria's problem into the most lucid perspective. To show the cycle for what it really is, and why in the 21-years of supposed democracy, the people continue to find themselves in the same place every four years. Trying to solve a problem deeply rooted in history by ignoring that same history is akin to trying to escape from one's shadow. Trying to solve a problem of ethnicity by focusing on corruption as the Buhari-led government has supposedly done in the past five years is akin to solving a problem best suited to a sickle with a cutlass. A house which stands is one that is not divided against itself. There is a lot of hypocrisy concerning the country's real problem. Every contraption comes sooner or later to its breaking point. Nigeria could prevent a most tragic outcome if and only if, the issue of history is addressed.

Michael Chiedoziem Chukwudera is a Writer, journalist, and editor and can be reached on Twitter @Chukwuderaedozi



THE NEW CAMA AND THE RULES OF 'KARMA'

Babatunde Odubanwo

The Journal

In the wake of the easing of lockdown on the economy as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, President Muhammadu Buhari took a crucial step by vetoing the Companies and Allied Matters Act, 2020 (CAMA 2020) Act Cap C20 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria. The presidential assent to the amended act repeals the Companies and Allied Matters Act (1990) (1) (the 'Repealed Act'). The Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) of Nigeria, established in 1990, is headed by the Registrar-General who is charged with the daily operations of business activities in the country. Before CAMA came into being, operating businesses in the country were coordinated by Companies Act (1968).

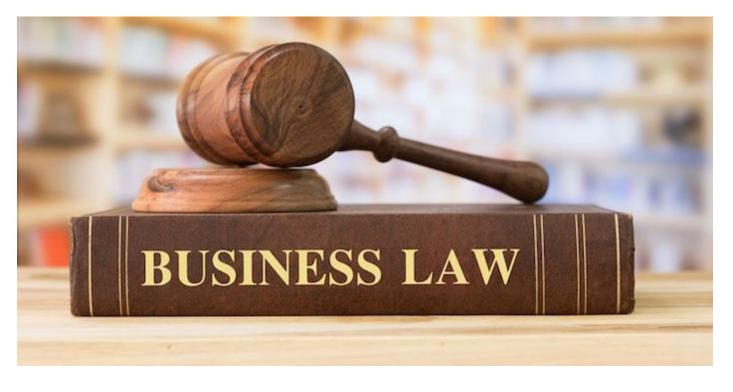
Since it was passed into law by the 9th Assembly of the Nigerian Senate, the 870 sections contained in 604 pages has received knocks and kudos from all sections of concerned citizens. The ensuing arguments of both sides of the divide is directed at the rationale behind some of the key changes in the newly introduced CAMA. On one hand, the 'antagonists' question the veracity of the unmistakable traps in the voluminous and newlyintroduced Nigerian business legislation. Ideally, one will wonder at the interrelation between the new Nigerian CAMA law and the ancient Hindus 'Karma': one is a mortal reality while the other is a body of philosophy backed by the world of Spiritism. A closer observation at some of the 12 laws of the Karmic teachings establishes to certain extents the commendations and condemnation of the new company law signed in August, 2020.

According to the Karma laws, life is closely linked to the cause and effects phenomenon. The perception of one school of thought as relating to the new CAMA legislation is based on their inferences, experiences and biases. This will in turn influence decision to be made by such individuals or association. Take for instance, one of the largely contended section of the new CAMA law is the section 839 which states thus:

839 (1) The Commission may by order suspend the trustees of an association and appoint an interim manager to manage the affairs of an association where it reasonably believes that –

(a) there is or has been any misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of the association;

(b) it is necessarily or desirable for the purpose of –



(i) protecting the property of the association
(ii) securing a proper application for the property of the association towards achieving the objects of the association, the purposes of the association of that property or of the property coming to the association
(iii) public interest; or

(c) the affairs of the association are being run fraudulently. From the above quoted section of the C20, the grievance of the opposing party is sincerely understood. The current administration in matters concerning public policies has not really gone down well with a good number of the populace.

This coincides with the third Law of Karma - the Law of Humility, 'One must accept something in order to change it. If all one sees is an enemy or a negative character trait, then they are not and cannot be focused on a higher level of existence.' If the newly-introduced law which is by far more flexible than the previous one is geared towards making business running in the country easy, the needed publicised 'change!' mantra must begin with some of those in government. For those against the law, the perceived law seems as a faux pas, an easier passage to further oppress the masses.

Similarly, the outright criminalisation of unregistered business entities in the country pouts at the finesse of the CAMA 2020 legislation. By relevant statistics, the informal sector contributes a significant part of the annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to the growth of the Nigerian economy. As Economists will concur, the informal sector is the life wire of every economy. In one of the reports by the Bank of Industry, the informal sector contributes up to '65 percent of the country's GDP.' In real terms, the informal sector is comprised of rural smallscale farmers, urban small-scale retailers, artisans and freelancers.

The section reads:

The

863. (1) A person or association of person shall not carry on business in Nigeria shall not carry on business in Nigeria as a company, Limited Liability partnership, Limited partnership or under a business name without being registered under the act.

(2) If an individual, corporation or association or persons required under this Act to be registered carries on business without registration or under a name registration of which has been refused or cancelled under this Act, the individual, corporation or every partner in the firm commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine prescribed in the commission's regulation from time to time, of N 200.00 for every day during which the default continues, and the court shall order a statement of the required particulars for the registration of the business to be furnished to the Commission for registration within such time as may be specified in the order.

By implication, over 21 million Nigerians who fall within the bracket at the risk of 'a fine prescribed in the Commission's regulations from time to time'. In a way, the section will help the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) ascertain the total number of businesses actively operating in the country. Before enforcing the new legislation, the government may like to answer these questions: What facilities have regulatory bodies provided to companies? What are the support systems provided to small industries, businesses and corporate bodies? What steps are taken by the CAC to salvage a nearly bankrupt company? Are there any projections aimed at the growth of the private sector in the next five years?

In the Karmic Fourth Law of Growth: Wherever you go, there you are. It is we who must change and not the people, places or things... All we are given is ourselves. That is the only thing we have control over. When we change who and what we are within our hearts, our lives follow suit and change too. The government should understand that there is need to look inwards by implementing pragmatic policies that will support the existing registered firms before enforcing section 863 of the new CAMA law. Rather than arm twist smaller businesses in the Informal sector, government should work at improving on the business operating standards in the country.

Does the new CAMA Law take cognizance of the 'NGO Bill'? Let us revisit Section 839 of the CAMA law:

(1) The Commission may by order suspend the trustees of an association and appoint an interim manager to manage the affairs of an association where it reasonably believes that –

(a) there is or has been any misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of the association;

(b) it is necessarily or desirable for the purpose of –

(i) protecting the property of the association

(ii) securing a proper application for the property of the association towards achieving the objects of the association, the purposes of the association of that property or of the property coming to the association

26

(c) the affairs of the association are being run fraudulently.

It is infamously purported that this is an attempt by the government to foist the disregarded NGO bill on Nigerians by inserting certain sections of that bill into the new CAMA legislation. This is untrue. In the Karmaic ninth Law of Here & Now: 'One cannot be in the here and now if they are looking backward to examine what was or forward to worry about the future. Old thoughts, old patterns of behavior, and old dreams prevent us from having new ones.' Even though it is evidently clear that there are no significant similarities between CAMA 2020 and the rejected NGO Bill, the government at all tiers usually fail to usually fail to engage all major stakeholders before drafting bills or formulating policies that affects a sector of the economy. This breeds suspicion and resistance due to the gulf in communication.

In reaction to Section 839 (1) of (CAMA 2020) Act cap C20 Laws of federation of Nigeria, some leading church leaders have publicly decried the new legislation as a scheme aimed at gagging the church. The Spiritual leader of INRI Evangelical Spiritual Church, Primate Ayodele aired his disproval of the new legislation noting that, 'Nobody can shut down my account, no one can get a trustee for me. The government needs to be cautioned; they don't have anything to do with the church.' Similarly, Bishop David Oyedepo of the Living Faith Church was quoted as saying, 'The church works on the pattern delivered by God not the pattern of man. The government has no power to appoint people over churches. This is a secular nation. The church is the greatest asset of God in this country. Please be warned. Judgment is coming. The Lord says I have been still but now I will arise. Anybody that is in this deal is taking poison. This will never work. I am waiting for a day when anybody will appoint a trustee over this church... You can't gag anybody ...'

The Section 839 (2) provides for the procedure of the earlier mentioned subsection 1 of Section 839. For the given condition of the commission to sufficiently order the 'suspension of the trustees of any association', the erring trustees of the association shall be on order of Court upon petition by the Commission or one-fifth membership of any of such embattled association. From the look of things, this section follows a democratically crafted procedure. Under Subsection 3 of the Section 839, the 'appointment of interim managers' shall be aided by a duly constituted judicial process. This lay to rest insinuation by the clergymen. This is echoed by the second Karmaic Law of Creation: 'Life requires our participation to happen. It does not happen by itself. We are one with the Universe, both inside and out. Whatever surrounds us gives us clues to our inner state. Surround yourself with what you want to have in your life and be yourself.'

On a brighter side, the CAMA 2020 Law is cognizant of technological advancement with Section 861 and Section 176 (1) respectively approving the filing of certified true copies (CTC), other documents, shares transfer through electronic means. The new CAMA in accordance with Articles of Association of any company provides for virtual general meetings.

In the same light, S.223 (12) of CAMA 2020, the fees for filing to CAC has been reduced to 0.35% of the value of the charge. In accordance to S.98 with the new company regulatory Act, company's seal is no longer compulsory while S.307 (1) of the Act prohibits a single individual from being a director in more than five (5) public companies.

For the purpose of flexibility and undue bureaucratic bottlenecks in the administration of private companies, S.402 of the new company law exempts any organisation with a shareholder from appointing auditors for their financial records at the end of a fiscal year. Similarly, Section 330 (1) of the CAMA 2020 law states that the appointment of company secretaries is no longer a requisite perquisite requirement. Interestingly, distressed companies can now be rescued with regards to the provisions in S.443, S.549, S.718 and S.721.

Finally is the sixth law of the Karmic Law of connection: The smallest or seemingly least important of things must be done because everything in the Universe is connected. Each step leads to the next step, and so forth and so on. Someone must do the initial work to get a job done. Neither the first step nor the last are of greater significance. They are both needed to accomplish the task. Past, Present, and Future are all connected.

Babatunde Odubanwo is a media professional and writer with a background in Economics and History.



Economy

THE IMMINENT DEATH OF THE CINEMAS

Chisom Nnachi



August 17th, 2020, took a monumental turn as Nigerian actors, producers, singers, and the general populace began an online protest, seeking the reopening of cinemas.

The online protest, which was tagged #SaveCinemas, gained massive attention from the streets of Instagram down to Twitter with top entertainment influencers like Falz the Bahd Guy and Omotola Jalade Ekeinde taking the lead.

These entertainment giants flooded their timelines, airing their opinion, expressing their grievances on the effect of Covid-19, and the damage that an extended lockdown of the industry will cause the entertainment sector.

Nigerian Songwriter, Rapper and actor, Falz Folarin Falana wrote on Twitter: 'Right now, we don't see anything but a government that contributes little or nothing to its creative sector and continues to attempt to stifle the sector in every way.

Thousands of People have been left without any way to earn for several months. Restaurants have opened, airlines have been operating, places of worship have also been permitted to reopen. Let's not even start to talk about all the videos that have surfaced of political rallies happening, clearly neglecting all safety precautions. The entertainment industry must be allowed to gradually get back in Business!!

Let's start with cinemas reopening with all safety precautions in place!!' Seasoned actress, Omotola Jalade Ekeinde wasn't left out in the campaign, as she took to Instagram, sharing her lament: 'I believe cinemas are easier to monitor and regulate. If other indoor places are open, why not the cinema? Temperature checks, masks,



distancing, etc. We need to work together to ensure safer ways to keep the arts going. Many livelihoods depend on this. It can and must be done as safely as possible.'

Nigerian filmmaker, Steve Guska, buttressed on the importance of the entertainment to the society and how bad the extended shutdown will affect their revenue. He wrote: 'The ability of the film industry to grow and sustain itself is gradually linked to how much money films earn in various windows. The cinema is a very important revenue source. Keeping them shut has dire consequences for the industry.'

Rita Dominic, Osas Ighodari, Toyin Abraham, Bellindal Effah, all threw in their support for the campaign. With texts and videos, they communicated the imminent death of the entertainment industry if the government doesn't intervene.

The national lockdown, however, began in Nigeria on 30th March 2020 placing major cities like Lagos, Abuja, and Ogun on lockdown. Today makes it exactly 143 days cinemas have been closed, leaving over 5,000 entertainment inclined jobs empty, displacing millions of Nigerians.

Nollywood is recognised as the second-largest employer in Nigeria aside Agriculture, second largest film producer in the world, with a production rate of about 50 movies per week and 5% contribution to the nation's GDP.

Lockdown and Locked Down

The beautiful rays of hope shone on the year 2020 for the industry. Between 17th - 19th of January 2020, cinemas generated about 75.9 million naira. However, the advent of the pandemic knocked the sector so hard to near crumble. The industry's revenue dropped by 20.8% from 75.9 million naira to 60.1 million naira by the first weekend of February and a further drop to 54.9 million naira at the beginning of March, crashing further to 45 million naira at the second weekend in March.

The industry's revenue keeps moving down the slope with each month of the extended lockdown. Tragically, as each month passes by, we wouldn't know what will be left of Nigeria's entertainment industry. Nigeria currently has only 45 cinemas, all of which have been shut down following NCDC policy on social Distancing and restricted on social gatherings. The restriction has brought Zero Patronage to cinema establishments.

Diverse means have been tried to keep movies and songs afloat but efforts keep hitting the rocks.

Netflix streams of movies would have been an alternative saviour for Nigerian Film distributors as they could earn and market their art on these platforms, but the cost of expenditure makes it an expensive option. Netflix comes with monthly subscription plans; Basic, Standard, and Premium which cost \$8.99, \$12.99, \$15.99. With the high rate of dollar pegged at 1 dollar to 382.69 naira, a Nigerian Netflix user will be spending an average of 3438 - 6116 naira every month, and about 57,324 naira yearly.

The lockdown really affected the performance and the general acceptance of movies by the audience. Movies that were expected to gain global recognition and accolades have been drowned in the waves of Covid-19.

The glamour attached to popular Nollywood movie 'Sugar Rush' has been snuffed out, 'Living in Bondage', 'Merry Men' and its likes—the producers of these movies wail for their losses just as cinema owners are in anguish over accumulated rent which they will have to pay for occupying halls they didn't use.

According to Nairametrics, Mercy Johnson's The Legend of Inikpi which was premiered on Silverbird Cinema on 24th January 2020 generated 7.4 million at its first show. With the pandemic threatening activities, its revenue dropped to 973 thousand naira by February with an estimate of 801 viewers. In the early days of March viewership reduced to 269, and later a loud fall to 126 viewers in the last weekend of March.

Hope and Relief

The dawn of every day brings pain to cinema operators as they watch their investments waste away. According to the Cinema Exhibitors Association of Nigeria CEAN, the entertainment sector has lost over 22.5 billion naira during these past 5 months.



The public outcry of investors, stakeholders, and consumers of the industry seem to be meeting deaf ears as the government of Nigeria is yet to give a direct response to their lamentations.

It could be recorded that Hadi Sirika, the minister of Aviation announced on Monday 17th, 2020 that international flights will begin operations from the 29th of August, 2020. Markets and religious centres have kicked off fully, the educational sector has not been left out as exit classes are already in session – WAEC exams and First School Leaving exams ongoing, with JUPEB and Post-UTME to kick off from September 7th - 17th, 2020.

It wouldn't be a bad option if the federal government gives the entertainment sector an opportunity to function again with adequate safety measures put in place; mandatory temperature checks, use of facemasks and hand sanitizers, coordinated social distancing in the cinemas, and top-notch hygiene practices. A delay in the reopening of these theatres poses adverse effects on the economy. Entertainment staff who have been out of jobs for 5 months might resort to diverse and questionable means for survival.

However, it is necessary that proper health analysis is carried out before the reopening of cinemas, as hasty decisions will place the lives of Nigerians at the risk of getting infected by the virus.

Until proper strategies are mapped out, reopening of cinemas will still remain another pending national issue.

Chisom Nnachi is a young and ambitious Tech analyst, a Content Writer with skills on SEO and original articles, geared with the intent of seeing a better Nigeria and a great Africa.



HOW CONTENT LEVY COULD HAMPER CREATIVITY, INCREASE UNEMPLOYMENT

Dorcas Omotayo



The notice issued by the Lagos State Film and Video Censors Board (LSFVCB), stating that all audio and visual contents produced and sold within Lagos State shall attract the payment of 5% levy on each item comes at a time when the country records an all-time high in the rate of unemployment, not to mention the current dip in the economy occasioned by the global pandemic. The LSFVCB Board Executive Secretary, Mr. Bamidele Balogun, gave the notice while unveiling a platform by the Performing Musicians Employers Association (PMAN) and Lafrique Promedia, to track and generate revenue for the entertainers. He said, 'The board will advise practitioners involved in production, sale, distribution of audio and visual products to register their products through the board's authorised agent within 30 days.'

'Practitioners and stakeholders are also informed that henceforth, all audio and visual contents produced and sold within Lagos State shall attract the payment of five per cent levy on each item. This exercise will, however, assist the Lagos State Government in policy formulation, with regard to planning and funding for the sector. All practitioners and stakeholders in the entertainment sector within the state are advised to comply with this directive and cooperate with the authorised agent of the board,' he added.

How will this improve creativity and help the teeming youths who make up a large number of the creatives in Lagos?

According to a report by the National Bureau of Statistics, it was revealed that Nigeria's unemployment rate as of the second quarter of 2020 is 27.1%, showing that about 21.7 million Nigerians are unemployed. However, Nigeria's unemployment and underemployment rate stands at 28.6%. This means that the total number of Nigerians who are unemployed or underemployed is 55.7%. The report also revealed that the Nigerian youths are the worst hit with over 13.9 million currently unemployed.

In reaction to the current situation and challenges, former Director General of the National Film Video Censors Board Mr. Emeka Mba, stated in an interview





that the tax imposed on content creators was not well thought out, highlighting that it was simply a 'revenue-driven idea.' He also mentioned that the new development may give rise to a review meeting between the government and stakeholders. Mr. Mba however expects the Government to think of ways to assist the sector flourish and grow. He concluded that implementation of policies is key to industry sustainability.

Meanwhile some creatives took to social media to express their displeasure at the unprecedented notice. Celebrities like Kate Henshaw and Adeyemi Okanlawon declared that they could as well move to states that are progressive and 'non-predatory.' These are the declarations made public, what about those left unspoken? Could Lagos be faced with a looming brain drain in the creative sector as a result of this levy and several taxes? Already some investors in the manufacturing sector would pick neighboring states over Lagos due to the ease of running a business in those states.

However, it is to be noted that the Nigeria's Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, recently inaugurated a Committee for the implementation of COVID-19 palliatives to Nigeria's creative industry and design a Policy Framework for Tax Relief for the various sectors in the Creative Industry. He also stated categorically that Nigeria's creative industry is the second major creator of employment in the country after agriculture. 'The film industry accounts for about N140 billion, the music industry revenue is over N300 billion while the comedy industry accounts for about N17 billion,' he said.

As creativity becomes a pivotal feature of urban development, impactful investment in the sector is a sure way of boosting the economy of the state and country at large. In an attempt to balancing the creative sector with economic competitiveness, social inclusion and sustainability post-COVID, there is a need for financial commitment from private investors as well as the Government. Putting that in place will create more employment, boost productivity and creativity.

Undoubtedly, the Lagos state policy may yield positive result in terms of curbing piracy, enhancing distribution and providing a structured platform. Notwithstanding, the inclusion of 5% levy at a time like this time is quite unnecessary as the Federal Government is currently making moves to cushion the impact of COVID-19 on the creative industry. Amid the increase in inflation rate, creating an enabling and thriving environment should be paramount because the creatives also need to breathe.



Culture & Lifestyle

SAVING THE BOOK INDUSTRY THE NIBF LAUNCHES NIGERIA'S FIRST VIRTUAL EXHIBITION

Femi Morgan



The Nigerian Book Industry has been a major driver of literacy, public liberty through self-awareness and education. It has done a lot of developmental projects that have produced books and media materials which serve as materials for the Nigerian children. Therefore, the Nigerian Book industry has been in the forefront of shaping young and old mind, bringing minds closer to national and global discourses. The Nigeria International Book Fair is at the forefront of engaging stakeholders in the industry. The organisation has helped gear robust conversations on the survival of the book culture, created a platform for interaction and partnerships between international and national publishing firms, and has put forward a competitive representation as one of Africa's major book exhibitions.

The National Bureau of Statistics in Nigeria noted that the adult literacy rate is 56.9%. The disparity between states like Lagos (92.0%) and Borno (14.5%) is glaring. It also noted that, while there are literates in the urban areas (74.6%), it begins to slide down into illiteracy in rural areas at 48.7%. The statistics also revealed the changes of literacy between males (65.1%) and female (48.6%).

Aware of these grim statistics amongst many other issues, the Nigerian International Book Fair 2020 will also gather stakeholders in the book industry to discuss the prevalent realities of doing business at this time and try to brainstorm on ways to resolve lingering business challenges. The NIBF usually heralds a new publishing year in Nigeria, it is often held at the University of Lagos, Nigeria. This year, the event has also gone virtual like other culture, literacy projects, arts festivals, and events in accordance to the COVID-19 rules.

Gbadebo Adedapo, the chairman of the Nigeria International Book Fair, said that 'This will be Nigeria's First Virtual Book Fair and it is a free-to-exhibit and freeto-attend event with the theme 'Information Technology



as a Panacea for the Book Industry Sustainability Amidst COVID-19 Pandemic.' The event is scheduled to hold from 1st to 7th September, 2020, with embedded and interesting programs such as the book fair conference, panellists' discussion, exhibition, book sales, children programmes, buying and selling of rights, networking and several mind-blowing webinar sessions organised by various key stakeholders such as Authors, Publishers, Printers, Booksellers and Librarians, Nigerian Copyright Commission (NCC), Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) amongst others.'

In a Press release made available to the media, organisers of the Nigerian International Book Fair asked 'what is the state of mind of the originator of book content or writers? What have the publishers been doing to survive? What is the state of the businesses (Publishers) that help package good contents that they deliver to the intended readers, either for examination purposes or others like leisure reading or entertainment, amusement, enlightenment, etc? What has been the state of libraries? When will they ever be open to the public in this era of partial lockdown? If, in spite of the challenges, good content gets packaged into books, where is the financial capacity to take them to printers who publish them to the physical copies Nigerian end-users largely prefer? Even, when the books are printed, what is the state of the booksellers, who by default, should showcase these books and get them delivered to the readers? Or better still, are the readers willing to pay, at an unprecedented period such as this, when attention has largely been shifted from books to food and health?

The conference keynote address would be delivered by Huago Setzer, President of International Publishers Association, Switzerland. According to the organisers, 'We have confirmed his availability for the event and other special guests and speakers. The event would be opened for over 10,000 participants.'

The Nigeria International Book Fair hopes to shift the current national discourse by making the exhibition platform www.nigeriabookfair.com free for all stakeholders in the publishing industry, as well as digitally open to all prospective buyers, readers, agents, authors, researchers, culture enthusiasts and book lovers.



ulture & Lifestyle

35

Album Review

BURNA BOY STRUGGLES IN TWICE AS TALL

Jerry Chiemeke



Burna Boy has always been self-aware.

In the first verse of 'Tonight,' one of his earliest singles released in 2012, he affirms his alpha-maleness, singing along the lines of 'see, I dey see your woman, and I dey hold my woman, and I be real magician, I fit to get your woman'.

This machismo, cockiness, and self-assuredness has been a mainstay in Burna Boy's music career, within and away from the studio. It is why he walked out of the arena when he lost out at the Headies in 2013. It is what has made him an enigma of sorts, and it is the reason he attracts divided opinion in the Nigerian music-consuming community. Detractors are quick to point out his 'arrogance', but the quality of his craft has spoken even louder for him over the years. Barely a year after the release of African Giant – which had a critical and commercial success, and which earned the Port Harcourt-born star a Grammy nomination – Burna Boy put out another album, Twice as Tall, made available with much fanfare to the public on August 14. On this new project, he enlists the help of his mother Bose Ogulu and American media mogul P. Diddy as executive producers. He also reaches out to longtime collaborator Leriq and the sound-weaving Rexxie to anchor the direction of the sound.

Things get off to a flyer with 'Level Up,' whose opening sequence features a sample of Pat Boone's 'Twice as Tall' refrain. Here, Burna Boy, admits to the hurt occasioned by narrowly missing out on the 2020 Grammy for Best World Music, as evidenced in the lyrics 'I remember when I couldn't level up/'cause the Grammys had me feeling sick as f***/throwing up and shit/asking questions like 'why it wasn't us'?' This is the pathos on which the album rides, and while the chemistry is debatable, Youssour N'Dour's vocals serve up the atmosphere needed for a 53-minute-long musical journey.

'Alarm Clock' could be compared to a muezzin's cry of sorts, with P. Diddy supplying ad-libs that hint at unity and Black love. The tempo goes up three notches higher with 'Way Too Big,' where Burna Boy in all his braggadocio asserts his status as a top dog amidst clever references like 'I bring the thunder like Muri' and 'used to roll with the Shank just like Julie/still Pop can because I'm unruly/took my place as the shine shine bobo of the Nigerian brewery'.

Damini Ogulu loves drinks and laughter, and that's the general idea of 'Bebo'. He is also about working hard and musical appreciation, and in 'Wonderful' he namedrops Nigerian investment banker. Adebayo Ogunlesi with festive percussions in the background. 'Onyeka' is a romantic-themed highlife tune whose title is drawn from the name of one of the country's music legends, and while the lyrics are somewhat cheesy, the song



would fit into a playlist that includes Phyno's 'Iwa' and Flavour's 'Baby Oku'.

Burna Boy idolised Naughty By Nature while growing up, and on the song that goes by the name of the group, he succeeds in getting all three members on one track while singing about mischief from his younger years, sampling their 'Jamboree' classic. There is a huge sense of rhythm in 'Comma,' a pacy song whose lyric 'with your fake breast, with the silicon, I dey see comma there/ your booty/and your leg so slim/I dey see comma there' may be viewed as sexist by more than a few.

'No Fit Vex' is an ode to friendship, hustle and getting by in spite of difficult conditions. In an album that is largely rendered in first-person, this rings differently. It is tinged with a little introspection, and it is one of this project's strongest points. '23' has Burna Boy using Michael Jordan as a metaphor for his own greatness, and is probably the track that bears testimony of Leriq's sound-mixing prowess. Sauti Sol hands in a decent contribution on 'Time Flies,' a song that attempts to blend the sonics of Sade's 'Sweetest Taboo' and Marc Anthony's 'I Need You,' and where vocals take priority over penmanship.

Burna Boy's politics has always been subjected to scrutiny, and he was almost chided for 'victim-blaming' when, in 'Collateral Giant' – off last year's effort – he suggested that Nigerians were their own problems with the lyrics 'my people sef dey fear too much/we fear the thing we no see'. Thirteen months down the line, he makes a U-turn with his rhetoric, acknowledging on 'Monsters You Made,' whose hook is delivered by Coldplay frontman Chris Martin, that 'the heads of state ain't comprehending the hate/that the oppressed generate/when they've been working like slaves to get some minimum wage/you turn around and you blame them for their anger and rage...'

There will be controversy with 'Wetin Dey Sup,' whose opening lyrics 'I no be one of those men wey dear fear toto f**k nyansh' hints at homophobia, though the expression is part of colloquial verbiage in South-South Nigeria and represents a metaphor for being unafraid. The track itself is gritty in nature and, amidst gunshots and sirens. It is heavily reminiscent of 'Run My Race' – off Burna Boy's first album L.I.F.E. With emphasis on being ready for danger, it could pass for a street anthem.

Stormzy is content with singing the hook in 'Real Life,'

which emphasises on self-belief and focus on what's important. The album closes out in style with 'Bank on It,' wherein Burna Boy admits to being vulnerable and prays for protection from enemies.

The ambition of Twice as Tall, particularly with respect to award aspirations and a wider acceptance of Afrofusion, is apparent from the moment the album's listening time begins to run. The collaborations are intentional, the musical arrangement is deliberate, and the lyricism provides 'space' for the sonics to find expression and thrive, compared to the density of 'African Giant.'

While it should be acknowledged that Burna Boy does a good job in balancing the musical needs of his Nigerian – while widening his genre for Western – audiences, it needs to be said, however, that the artistry of his music may have taken a tiny step back. The production is stellar in all respects, but his writing may have suffered a little, with a few songs having to accommodate a little corniness to fit into the general narrative. The themes are clear enough, but the storytelling of the album struggles for coherence at some point. His previous albums 'Outside' and 'African Giant' were pretty fluid in terms of creative direction; that is not the case here.

Twice as Tall is not without its flaws, but it does not fail in its overall objective. It is less fun and will have fewer hits compared to its predecessor. But it is a memorable body of work, nonetheless. In the opening track, Burna Boy claims to be a 'motherf****ng legend', and while he still has his work cut out in doing justice to that assertion, he is no longer far off.

Rating: 7.5/10

Jerry Chiemeke is an award winning writer, culture and lawyer



Culture & Lifestyle

YEAR 2020 TRAVEL DESTINATIONS IN NIGERIA

Ameenah Oke

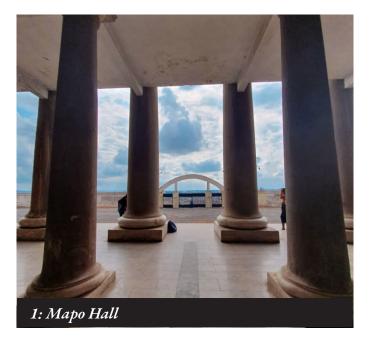
After several months of being confined to our personal spaces, and not being able to travel more than a few kilometres in many directions, life is finally getting back to the new normal. The new normal requires face masks everywhere, hand sanitizers being utilised like a lifeline, and a 10pm curfew. But it's better than being cooped up indoors for months. Our new normal now includes roads and airspace being declared open, so we can TRAVEL.

Believe me, there is no better time to travel than now. The time to explore the world around you, and appreciate the beauty of usual things, places and spaces – we have all been reminded that life is precious and moments are meant to be seized. Recovering from a global pandemic is sure to make anyone think twice about having fun. And so, we've curated some of the most wonderful places for you to visit right here in Nigeria.

Nigeria is a land of vast beauty and abundant resources. Rich in land, culture and natural beauty, this country is one of the most under explored places ever, but all that is changing with the breed of 21st century Nigerians taking an interest in exploring the country that is theirs. Changing the narrative one state at a time, these thrill seekers and travel lovers are bringing attention to the forgotten treasures of our country and making us see them in a new light. So, if you're planning a trip, why not plan one for within the country?

1. Ibadan: Pack your travel bags and let's head out to the 3rd most populous city in Nigeria. Ibadan is the capital of Oyo state, and is the home of many of Nigeria's firsts; including Nigeria's first university, first stadium, first TV station, first skyscraper, first teaching hospital, and many more. Not only is Ibadan the home of firsts, it is also one of the richest Nigerian cities in terms of culture and heritage as it is attached to a seat of great power in Yorubaland.

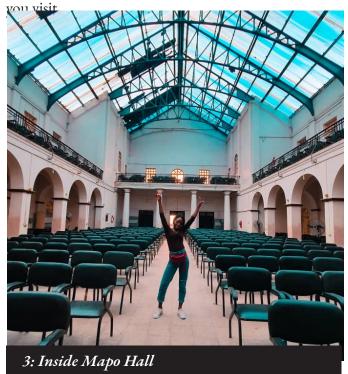
According to local historians, Ibadan was founded by Lagelu, who was a warrior, and was intended as a war



camp for other Yoruba warriors. It grew into a sprawling urban city and was well known for the prowess of its warriors, and its large economic strength. It became a British protectorate in 1893, and was developed even further to become the large trading centre it still is today. Ibadan is a place that is blessed with water bodies,



with the city laying claim to several rivers like the Ogunpa river, Kudeti river, among others. It is also a city that is revered for its many landmarks like Mapo Hall, a colonial-style city hall perched on a hill; the Cocoa House, which is Nigeria's first skyscraper; Agodi Gardens, a zoological and botanical garden combo, the Bower Memorial Tower; the colonial tower which can be seen from almost any point in the city, and many more landmarks. If you're looking to connect with the richness of Yoruba culture, then Ibadan is the place for



2. Badagry: This town is one that needs no introduction. It is a key reference point in Nigeria's history when it comes to the transatlantic slavery. But it is a town that must be schowcased for more than its history. It is also a seat of rich culture and heritage. While Badagry is truly linked to slave trade during the nineteenth century, it is a town whose stories cannot be truly understood until you see it for yourself. Home to the Aworis and Ogu people, the town is recorded to have been a settlement of these people when they were displaced at the time.

It is a town that is on the bank of inland lagoons which have a large and diverse population of fish, and so the people of Badagry are widely fishermen, farmers, basket and mat weavers, among other things. It is also a town that celebrates its rich cultural heritage with festivals like the Igunnuko festival.

As a result of its proximity to the sea, Badagry is also populated with beautiful beaches, and is well known for its historical landmarks as well. Badagry is home to the first storey building in Nigeria, the Badagry Heritage Museum, the first Christian Mission in Nigeria, the Slave Port, and a whole lot more.

It is definitely worth braving the bad roads that lead to the town to enjoy its rich cultural heritage, as well as some sun and fresh fish.



4: First Storey Building in Nigeria Badagry



5: Beaches in BadagryBadagry



6: Sites at Badagry



3. Obudu Mountain Resort, Calabar: Formerly known as Obudu Cattle Ranch, this tourism 'Makkah' was discovered in 1951 by the Scotsman who first explored the mountain ranges. His name was M. McCaughley. Obudu is located in the Northeastern part of Cross Rivers state, and is quite close to the Cameroonian border. It sits atop the Obudu Plateau, which gives it a beautiful view of the surrounding forests, and a wonderful refreshing feeling of mountain air. It also houses what is called the Holy Mountain, which is said to make you feel like you can almost touch the sky.

Its scenery is heavenly and the weather is temperate, making you feel like you've stepped onto heaven on earth. The abundance of mountains and rises makes this destination a favorite for hiking trails and communing with nature. The resort is also quite famous for being the only destination with a cable car in Nigeria. This same cable car has been described as the longest of its kind on the African continent. Way to go, right? Wouldn't you want to be a part of making history?



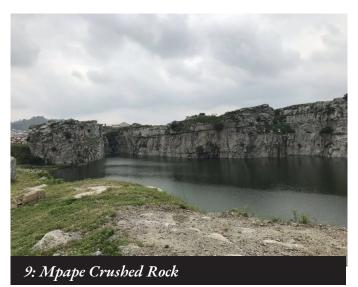
You can also enjoy activities like swimming, horseback riding, and golfing if you're more in the mood for some laid-back relaxation. The resort also holds the Obudu Mountain Race every year in November, and that would definitely be something to look forward to and plan your trip around. Do you feel like hopping on the next available flight to Calabar yet? Make sure to go with some friends so you create wonderful memories.

4. Mpape Crushed Rock, Abuja: If sporting vacations are more your speed, then you definitely have to check out one of Nigeria's latest tourism hotspots. The Mpape Crushed Rock is an old abandoned quarry that has been in existence for quite a number of years. According to locals, it is the quarry where the stones used to transform

The

Abuja into its current state of glory was mined. While it is a man-made destination, it is breathtaking in its beauty, and definitely bears some exploration.





Great for those who love to hike, it is also a great picnic spot as its three-tiered formation which gives a beautiful view of the lake below. Pictures of this destination first appeared on Twitter at the beginning of August this year, and the place has become a must-see destination since then. Get in on the fun, and don't forget to take lots of pictures.

5. Odere Hills: Located at Idere Town, in the Ibarapa Local Government Area of Oyo state, Odere Hills make a place of beauty and awe, culture and history. It is said that it was once a settlement for people seeking protection during inter-tribal wars. This protection was made possible because there were only a few entry points into this town-on-the-rock. The Hills are very much part of the landscape as plants like cocoa, and tomatoes,

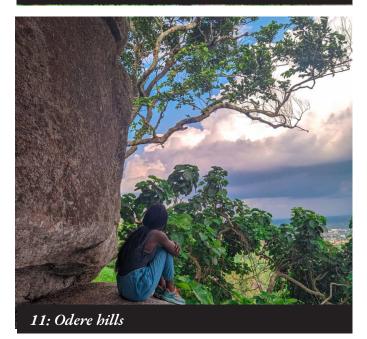
39

among others grow around the undulating structures. With its multilayered rock formations, hidden caves and natural water pool, this destination will call to your explorer. It also has some fascinating names for parts of the Hills like Yara; which means room in Yoruba, Isoku-Iruku, literally meaning to drop the corpse and pick it back up, as well as other fascinating names with folklore attached to them.



10: Odere bills

Journal



Go learn some more history about this beautiful country of ours, discover new places, and take amazing pictures as you experience Nigeria with a group of people just like you.

Ameenah Oke is an adventurer, teacher and art lover Photos courtesy: @wehmie on Instagram and @PostHumanBoy on Twitter



40'



Chair So Good. You Feel Like A CEO

We believe in your personal goals, the road to attaining them and much more.

Here's why>>>

Little Sam is 8 years old. Within him lies yearnings and aspirations you too had as a kid to be a boss at the top.

Times may have changed, and you have grown up, but the hunger for more that wakes you up every morning to head to work remains.

Smooth seas never made good sailors. Your journey to the peak of your career may be bumpy but you will get there.

The desire to succeed in your endeavours will keep you up, working late at night, be it at home, in the office or the hotel.

At Bedmate, we believe that the right piece of furniture provides the necessary balance and support for improved work and better living.

This is evident in our use of materials, in making our chairs and sofas, which are tension-resistant, yet comforting to your body, especially your back and shoulders— giving you a relaxing feel.

In many homes and offices right now, there's a hardworking you— that was once like Little Sam with huge dreams of living the boss life one day— and this is why we provide you with incredibly, relaxing Bedmate chairs that are always there for you.

Even during the slightest discomfort at work.

If you're already at the top, congratulations to you as you keep building your empire with our executive chairs.

And if you're still working your way up, we encourage you to do so with our chairs that's so good, you feel like a CEO!

Call us now on 0907-878-8888, 0905-676-0888, 0908-023-1888.

Or walk into our showrooms in Lagos, Port Harcourt, Abuja online @bedmatefurnitureng or our website and take the full advantage of owning a piece of furniture that understands your desire for more, for yourself and for your teammates.

Bedmate Furniture...Makes Your Living Better

www.bedmatefurniture.com

IG/FB: @bedmatefurnitureng



BEDMATE

Culture & Lifestyle

REOPENING CINEMAS IN NIGERIA

Ameenah Oke



On the 24th of March 2020, cinemas in Nigeria shut their doors for what everyone had assumed would be a short period of time. Little did we know that the usually improbable would become our new normal. For weeks and weeks, the country practically shut down as we tried to combat the deadly coronavirus pandemic being faced globally; and so a lot of industries remained understandably closed.

After about a month of running the country like a skeletal crew operation, various state governments started to ease up on lockdown procedures, allowing citizens to move about freely while ensuring proper safety precautions were being taken. This also applied to businesses as nationwide safety measures and precautionary practices were mandated before they could open their doors.

It has however come as a surprise that, while other industries like transportation, aviation, places of worship, clubs and bars have been allowed to open, cinemas are still prevented from doing so. Let us keep in mind that this is an industry that serves as a bridge between filmmakers and moviegoers. It is also a big part of the revenue generated by the entertainment industry. If clubs can be open by Federal Government directive, it is quite perplexing that cinemas have not been given the same consideration.

In light of this, the Cinema Exhibitors Association of Nigeria (CEAN) recently launched the #SaveCinemas campaign on social media and this campaign has been taken up by various filmmakers, actors and stakeholders across the country. The campaign seeks to bring awareness to what is considered an injustice against the industry, and to get everybody speaking about it in the hopes that the power of social media can sway the legislative decision-making process.

We have seen filmmakers and actors also being vocal and voicing their displeasure at the state of events,





Oloye Akin Alabi @akinalabi

I am surprised that the film stars and producers who have benefited from the box office phenomenon haven't lent their support the opening of cinemas opening with their huge social media presence and relationship with those in high places. They should do more.

2:38 pm · 14 Aug 20 · Twitter for iPhone



Tweet



Oloye Akin Alabi @akinalabi

I can imagine owning a cinema and my rent/ lease keeps running but I'm not allowed to operate when practically all sectors of the economy have opened.

2:32 pm · 14 Aug 20 · Twitter for iPhone

51 Retweets 142 Likes 1 Quote

as this affects not only the cinemas but the filmmakers who had movies at Box Office before the shutdown, actors whose movie screenings have been pushed back, and even workers at these places as well as events whose earnings have been reduced across the board. There are also videos being circulated that show the safety measures that have been put in place to reduce the risk of contagion. And in light of this, film lovers and moviegoers are also starting to question the government's decision to have cinemas closed.

When asked, about 9 out of 10 moviegoers stated that they would love to see cinemas open as they are not just a place to sit and watch movies, but a place to connect with friends, build new relationships and just relax with family. They mentioned that they would not mind taking appropriate precautions as put in place by cinemas if it meant that they could indulge in something that is a favourite pastime for Nigerians.

The authority to reopen cinemas, however, still lies with the government but we reserve the right to ask why cinemas are still closed. What other measures need to be put in place? Should we look forward to hanging out at the cinemas soon? We hope these questions are answered soon, and favourably too.

But while we wait for the government to come to a decision, let's do a quick run through of the changes you should expect when cinemas eventually open.

1. Temperature Check at first point of entry: You might be prevented from entering if you're just a little sick. So, take note of that and help keep us all safe by staying home if you don't feel well.

2. Sterilisation at the lobby entrance with spray sanitizer: If you make it through the first check, then you must be decontaminated still. Just close your eyes and pretend it's free perfume.

> The Iournal

Tweet



 \leftarrow

Oloye Akin Alabi @akinalabi

The cinema industry will die if we do not allow them to open. The economy is practically opened. Malls, places of worship etc are opened. These new cinemas practically re-created the industry. They are not there yet. They need support. It's unfair to them.

2:37 pm · 14 Aug 20 · Twitter for iPhone

97 Retweets 164 Likes 6 Quotes

3. Social distancing floor stickers: These stickers have been placed 2 meters apart, and are very large and easy to see. Help yourself to help everyone by sticking on your sticker please. Let's be orderly.

4. No face mask, no entry: This should go without saying, but we do need to reiterate it for those that still haven't gotten with the program. Use your face masks please.

5. Contactless urinary systems and wash hand sinks: You don't have to touch anything in the toilet except the door. The urinary systems have been fitted with sensors that do the flushing for you. The same applies to washing your hands afterwards.

6. Several metres of distance between seats: I wonder if this means that those who go to the cinema on a date will be separated. That would be a shame, but safety first.

7. Cinemas will only take customers at 50% capacity: This means that there won't be the usual crush of people jostling for space and the same air. It's a good thing.

Pro Tip: The first few weeks of reopening cinemas will be packed with everybody that has missed the taste of cinema popcorn. Try to hold off on going to the cinema till the first wave has passed.

Ameenah Oke is an adventurer, teacher and art lover Photos courtesy: @wehmie on Instagram and @PostHumanBoy on Twitter

Culture & Lifestyle

A PERIOD TO CELEBRATE WOMEN

Suleiman Galadima



Kehinde Imole Ayo's short film, Period is both a boxoffice movie and a docu-drama. While it tells the story of Adunni, a young girl who experiencing her menstrual cycle for the first time due to the fact that she has reached adolescence, the film also leverages on the subject to educate young girls about the subject of femininity and public health.

The movie is foregrounded by the use of orality and nostalgia. The Yoruba teacher who uses poetic renditions to impress knowledge on the students without losing touch with the real and imagined realities of their lives, is exemplary of the director's desire to return education to the times when it was not just a science of preparing youngsters for the future, but a platform for them to discover the humane values of oneness, love, charity, friendship and respect.

Period also raises the alarm that we are neglecting our young girls as a society. It reveals that we are leaving the awareness of our young girls to wolves instead of having mothers and fathers who should have time to explain to them their bodily changes. It also noted that many young girls in Nigeria today do not have full awareness of their reproductive health status. They do not know how to take good care of themselves during their period and they do not have the ample financial support to constantly buy sanitary pads to contend with the monthly flow. The film is also a subtle eulogy to womanhood. Despite the myriad of challenges and oppression facing women in Africa, they remain the spiritual and emotional pillars that creates the binary balances for our world. He uses orality and poetry to achieve this seance in the short film.

In private conversations with the director, Kehinde Imole -Ayo, He said that women should be cherished in our society because they are the only ones who shed blood through a private part because of the urgent engineering of reproduction and continuity of the race. HE also said that contrary to oppressive views, the kinds of pain women go through every month, coupled with the social realities that almost make them buckle into submission, they remain resilient and responsive to their responsibilities.

Period is a well thought about movie. It is also a social project that hopes to start a conversation on womanhood in ways that destroys every pillars of chauvinism from its meaning-making foundations.

Watch Trailer on https://youtu.be/-GK6fcrnR3w



Health

FEATURE STORY

THE HUNGER PANDEMIC

Adebowale Bello



As of August 20, 2020, the global number of confirmed cases of the coronavirus disease stood at more than 22.5 million with slightly less than 800,000 thousand deaths. Albeit, the distribution of cases and deaths is relatively uneven across the globe, with some continents and countries more hit than others. In the midst of all this, concerted efforts are continually being made to evaluate and review treatment protocols, and develop an acceptable vaccine. With increasing knowledge, there is a positive outlook that the disease will eventually be contained.

In view of the resources that have been deployed in the fight to contain – and probably eradicate – the coronavirus disease, many a concerned expert and lay citizen have raised the matter of other public health problems which continue to claim lives year in year out, but have received less defined action plans and resources to stamp them out. Some have suggested a lack of sincerity of purpose while others have noted the general economic malaise. Ranking high among these public health concerns is malnutrition in children. This has been a major scourge in low- and middle-income nations.

The United Nations has the goal number two (2) of its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as zero hunger to be achieved by 2030. Goal number 3 is the need to achieve good health and wellbeing. It is not surprising that these two goals come immediately after each other. It underscores the importance of good nutrition to total wellbeing. Recent estimates, according to the United Nations, have it that 690 million people were hungry.

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), nearly half of all deaths in children under 5 are attributable to undernutrition. Data released by UNICEF and the World Bank Group shows that 38 per cent of child malnutrition cases are in sub-Saharan Africa. Nigeria has been said to be the second country



with the highest burden of stunted growth in children with about 2 million children suffering from acute malnutrition.

To help address this problem, the Nigerian federal government in 2016 launched the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme. Though not novel, it is quite laudable. The programme, in its different modifications, had been launched in countries like Chile, Ghana, South Africa, Cape Verde and Mexico before Nigeria leveraged on its existing knowledge. At its launch, the country's Vice President, Professor Yemi Osinbajo, stated that the programme was part of the National Social Investment Programme (N-SIP), designed to help the poor and vulnerable. Among other things, he stated that the programme was designed to improve child nutrition and health, mentioning that poor nutrition had resulted in worrying health status.

However, recent happenings in the light of the coronavirus pandemic have thrown up quite some questions as to the effectiveness of the programme. Many have praised the intention behind it but question its execution. The programme, which now runs in more than two-thirds of states of the federation, at the inception of it, was to drive some financing from a 500-billion-naira fund allocated to schemes under the National Social Investment Programme, N-SIP. There seems, however, a lack of any harmonised data on the spending so far. Beyond putting in the funds, and signing on to conventions and agreements, are the various stakeholders truly committed to wiping out this scourge? What are the impact-measuring indices, if any? Is the programme really addressing the problem of malnutrition?

Matters came to a high with the programme as the coronavirus disease ravaged the world. The federal government, as part of its response to the corona pandemic rolled out a number of palliative measures to help cushion the effects of the lockdown on its citizens. As part of her duties, the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, Hajiya Sadiya Farouk, whose ministry is primarily involved in the school feeding, came under heavy criticisms for planning to go ahead with the feeding programme, even when the schools were shut. There were accusations as to the amount spent during the lockdown and the effectiveness of the programme, which included meeting the pupils with quality meals in their respective homes, was bloated and fraudulent. At the recently held virtual conference on nutrition jointly organised by the Aisha Buhari Foundation, the Federal Ministry of Health, Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning, and the Nigerian Health Watch, the vice president of the country once again brought up the exigency of tackling malnutrition in the country. In his words, 'The journey to ending malnutrition need not be a long one. We can, with effective collaboration, sincerity of purpose and creativity, reach our goals quickly. Funding will always be key but so also is reducing bureaucracy with common sense approaches and solutions.' With regards to the unsettling realities of malnutrition he said, 'With malnutrition, we are confronted with a scourge. It is capable of defeating aspirations and jeopardising the physical and mental abilities of future generations since children are its vulnerable victims."

As we begin to look into the future, it becomes imperative to have a quick assessment and, as may be necessary, a retooling of this programme vis-à-vis its intended purposes to make certain that it is getting something done, particularly with the issue of malnutrition. Doing this will help ensure that the children of today who are said to be tomorrow's future, barring any other serious impediments, will actually be there when the future comes.

Adebowale Bello is a trained physiologist, public health writer and keen observer of global trends.

International Affairs

AKINWUNMI ADESINA STRUGGLING WITH THE IMAGE OF NIGERIA

Babatunde Odubanwo



The Independent review reports submitted to the Head of the Bureau of the Board of Governors of the Board of Directors of the African Development Bank, Hon. Ms. Niale Kaba by the Ethics Committee constituted Mary Robinson-led investigative panel vindicating the nation's representative, a reputable compatriot who currently heads the African Development Bank (AfDB) - Dr. Akinwunmi Adesina - is a silver lining amidst dark clouds. A High-powered delegation which included Chief Justice of Gambia, Justice Hassan Jallow, retired Irish Supreme Court Judge Nial Fennelly, World Bank Integrity Vice President, Leonard F McCarthy, after their thorough independent findings against the 60-year-old Economic Juggernaut, acquitted him of any corruption charges or high-handedness as alleged by the whistleblowers. The panel met virtually not less than 6 times to x-ray the sixteen charges brought against the Ethic Committee of the African Development Bank (AfDB) by anonymous whistleblowers on 19 January, 2020.

Akinwunmi is one of the few Nigerians within the towers of governance who have earned blemish-free and unalloyed respect in the last decade. Having bagged a Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Economics from the prestigious University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife) in 1981 with distinction, he continues as a shining star. The Ogun State-born continued on the ladder of progress, furthering his education at Purdue University in Indiana, USA and eventually came out on top of his PhD class in 1988. It is on record that his high commendable Thesis research earned him the class at Purdue University, Indiana, USA.

His records of good stewardship at West African Rice Development (WARDA) in Bouaké, Ivory Coast and the Rockefeller Foundation prepared him for the smooth transition for the post of a Federal Minister for Agriculture (2010-2015) during the Dr. Goodluck Jonathan's presidency. During his five-year stint at the presidency, a sizeable number of policies were introduced and implemented in salvaging the Agricultural sector in the country. I should not fail to mention that he was amongst the 17 global leaders appointed to 'spearhead the Millennium Development Goals'. Dr. Akinwunmi Adesina was elected as the President of the African Development Bank (AfDB) on 28 May 2015 and assumed office on 1st September 2015.



To the naysayers and so-called Whistleblowers, Adesina was just like 'every Nigerian' who must have bribed their way up the rung of the ladder. He was considered to be a self-serving, tyrannical, back-biting, despotic leader that must be shown the way out of the door by every possible means. They must have for a moment thought aloud, why should he, a Nigerian, be in such a position? This 'group of concerned employees of the AfDB' in line with the January 2007 Whistleblowing policy of AfDB which was meant to serve the purpose of 'strengthening the bank's integrity and fighting against corruption and similar practices' wanted to be sure that Adesina is not another 'hushpuppy' of some sort.

The establishment of the African Development Bank was signed on 4 August 1963 and became operational on 10 September 1964. As a continental financial institution, the Bank is meant to 'contribute to the sustainable economic development and social progress of the regional members individually and jointly,' focusing on financing Health, Agriculture, Energy, Education, Transport and Development – short-, medium- and long-term projects. In order to ensure transparency and separation of powers, Article 29 (1) of the Agreement., vested requisite powers in the Board of Governors to act accordingly.

According to the group of concerned employees of the AfDB, the president of the AfDB is guilty of the following: non -respect of Internal Rules and Regulations in recruitment; appointment of a named staff member; appointment and promotion of a named person; alleged mismanagement of a named Agricultural Technology Programme; appointments and promotions of a named person; direct contracting and appointment of a named person; contracting of a named person, appointment of a named individual preferential treatment for Nigeria and Nigerians; awards received by The President; settlements for staff separations; resignation of a named staff member; the appointment of a named individual to a Senior Position in the Bank; disregard of Rules Concerning Leave of Absence of Vice Presidents or Travel of Management and political lobbying of Heads Of State.

The oversight by the whistle-blowers seems to have gone a bit overboard, unmindful of the Bank's purpose and vision for the Black continent when they shot the salvo of baseless accusations. Stating in their reply on 7 February, they claimed that they could not provide evidence of their allegations against Adesina on two grounds:

i. That 'most of them,' presumably meaning evidence in support of

the allegations 'would expose their identity.'

ii. They added that they feared that the validity of such evidence would ultimately be contested because they were 'obtained illegally.'

Defending the reports submitted by the Committee of the complaints, the accused President of AfDB, Dr. Adesina had, on 8 April 2020, presented a report to the Ethics Committee, where he contended the unjustified allegations by the 'Unidentified Concerned Staff' of the Bank. In one of his several responses to the Whistleblowers' allegations, Dr. Adesina made a pointed remark when he said: 'Following the wobbly logic of whistleblowers, one could deduce that I bribed all 55 African presidents. This allegation shows a degrading contempt for Africa, Africans and African leaders.'

On the preferential treatment for Nigeria as shown in the newly introduced organisational chart of the AfDB, the President of AfDB declared that 'The decision to open a country department in Nigeria was taken by the Board of Directors under the leadership of President Kaberuka, my predecessor. I cannot have violated the Code of Ethics for implementing a decision of the Board taken before I took office. Such an allegation bears the deepest marks of gratuitousness.'

Reading beyond the letters of the whistleblowers, it is possible to see and perceive that the whistleblowers know Nigeria and Nigerians for one thing only: fraud, crime, misrule and a circus of misconceptions. It is clear that Akinwunmi Adesina's luxuriant dress sense was mistaken for looting of public funds and extravagance for pride. His mild-mannered persona is misconstrued for a character that loves power, lobbies to top government functionaries and one who diverts other people's resources for selfish ends. Do these qualities sound familiar? The reader's answer may be as good as any observer's.

It is true that the 27 July 2020 is one of the best things that have happened to Nigerians on the global scene in a long while. Aside the flourishing efforts of Nigerian entertainers who brought home international awards, taking the world by storm and introducing





some fashionable styles, dance patterns, and making applaudable visuals for international audience, the Nigerian political elite has made little or no contributions to promoting Nigeria in good light. Would anyone have blamed the said whistleblowers for their erroneous perception of this Nigerian fine gentleman?

Just a few months ago, the country was writhing in pains at the loss of her compatriots in South Africa's Xenophobic attacks. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs made frantic efforts to airlift some of the affected Nigerians in xenophobic South Africa. Out of high regard for the 'Big Brother', apologising President Cyril Ramaphosa jetted in to meet his Nigerian counterpart in Aso Rock to avert a diplomatic row. As many would comment, it was not enough to close one's eyes to the many able-bodied men and women of Nigerian origin whose lives were snuffed out in the South African attacks. Like Dr. Adesina, many innocent Nigerians suffer equal maltreatment in the hands of foreigners either at different embassies, High Commissions, port of entries and international business transactions. In fact, some of them have lost their lives and integrity in the process. It is good that Dr. Adesina has scaled this hurdle, thereby bringing home good honour and pedigree. He has also written off some of the negativities recorded against the country.

The Nigerian State must embark on a journey to redeem her image. If this is partly or fully achieved, there would be a leeway for her citizens to ride upon. With the likes of Dr. Adesina, Nigeria is on the sure way to selfredemption. Before anything could be done, we have to undertake ethical revolution which will snowball into an all-round forward march to the land of paradise.



Great People

SIMON BAKO LALONG PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE PLATEAU

Suleiman Galadima



Plateau State held sweet memories for many Nigerians as far back as the years before Nigeria's independence till the 1980s and 90s. It housed many multinational food and beverage firms; it was a great getaway with an atmosphere that afforded tranquillity and oneness with nature. Its undulating landscapes, pre-independence history, festivals, and lush greenery thrilled foreigners and Nigerians. It was Nigeria's tourism haven. It was also one of Nigeria's agricultural bases, without leaving the thriving and controlled mining sector which served as a viable contributor to the country's economic prosperity.

Jos was a thriving hub of business and leisure. It also housed the friendly and warm peoples of Plateau, and of other ethnic groups from various parts of the country. But a lot of the attraction and goodwill of the state became lost to untrammelled clashes, killings, insecurity and general deterioration in the last 20 years. Plateau became a hotbed of crises, and the situation persisted for many years. The Government of Simon Lalong was welcomed into the State House at a time when the cloud of despondency was pervasive in the state. The state had made headlines for stories of banditry, ethnic clashes, farmer-herder clashes, etc. On assumption of office in 2015, the Governor decided to redirect the wheel that was driving the state to self-destruction, and restore the lost glory of the Plateau. Governance for Simon Lalong is more than a mere stream of public consciousness; it has been an active disposition of leadership that reconciles differences and creates structures for development. He intensely sought to promote peaceful co-existence and foster development by creating an enabling environment for the people to aspire to the good life, stemming from the depths of their potential.

A lawyer with many years of experience at the bar, Mr. Lalong had represented the Shendam Constituency at the Plateau House of Assembly in 1999. His leadership skills and critical developmental engagements took him from being a member to the position of Speaker



of the House. He served in the position of Speaker till 2006, and has thus far held the record of been in that office longer than anyone else in the history of the State. He was elected Chairman of the Conference of Speakers in Nigeria in 2001. In 2015, he contested for the Governorship of Plateau State, and was elected into office by the people of the state. He is currently serving a second term largely because the people can reflect and assert the changes in their lives, especially the peace and development that has returned to the state.

Soon after he assumed office, the government decided to reengineer the security framework of the state through several meetings of the security agencies, religious, political and traditional leaders, and other stakeholders. There was a constant engagement with all parties concerned. The government released funds to facilitate high-level security operations like Operation Safe Haven and Operation Rainbow. The state also involved the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), the Department of State Security (DSS), and vigilante groups in its quest for peace, and gave them access to resources that enabled them to unite in nipping the security challenges in the state in the bud. Conflicts in the Mangu and Bokkos areas, among other hotbeds were soon resolved. Bandits in the Langtang area also voluntarily surrender their arms, and there was relative calm in the Plateau again.

Journal

Cornelius Shiolbial, a Permanent Secretary in charge of Cabinet and Special Services in the state recalled that he was saddled with overseeing Operation Rainbow, a state project that was implemented in collaboration with the United Nation Development Fund. The focus was on developing and implementing programme that would generate such alarms that would alert the authorities in the event of brewing trouble. The project included a sift process that was proactive to internal and external threats. The Governor also mobilised and motivated the security personnel in Operation Rainbow, and they were provided with four functional Armoured Personnel Carriers to enhanced police patrols and ensure peace in the state. The government also organised a programme to enable warring groups to make peace among themselves. The "Day of Forgiveness and Reconciliation" offered farmers and herders, and the various ethnic groups the opportunity to drop their grievances and embrace one another.

It would not enough to take the guns from the hands of the youths in the state. Governor Simon Lalong set up the Plateau Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (PLASMEDA) to engender creativity, skill acquisition, financial literacy, and to combat unemployment and poverty. PLASMEDA has so far trained 30,000 young people in various trades, and have backed these skilled men and women up





with the much-needed technical support and advisory. This initiative made Plateau State earn the MSME National Award in 2017, for its sterling performance in empowering entrepreneurship in Nigeria. Students from Jos also won four awards at the 1st National Competition of Student Entrepreneurship Activity, SEA-HUB, a project organised by the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ).

Simon Lalong understood the dynamics of conflict management, and the need to be proactive in dealing with potential conflicts situations and not wait for them to snowball in violence and bloodshed. Through Operation Rainbow, the government identified 20 flashpoints of violence in the state. With this knowledge, the Governor commissioned surveillance outposts to serve as security bases, and these also became spaces for dialogue, cooperation and solidarity with the inhabitants of the areas. One of such outposts is the imposing Security Watchtower at Dutse Uku, in Jos North Senatorial District. The result has been a safe state that protects the human and business potential of the state.

Peace in the Plateau would never have been achieved without the collaboration of the security agencies who

found in Governor Simon Lalong a leader with effective communication skills and a clear vision on security and development in the state. The relationship between the security agencies in Plateau State is also remarkable. There is an unprecedented degree of information sharing among all the agencies. These agencies also work hand in hand with the Vigilante, the Man O' War, the Peace Corps, the Hunters Association, and the Neighbourhood Watch. The element of collaboration among the security agencies and groups has enhanced the quality of surveillance, strategy formation and unity of purpose in the state. Also, citizens' participation platforms have helped to ease the community intervention initiatives of the police.

At some strategic level, Governor Lalong appreciates the fact that Plateau has been home to various ethnic groups and peoples, and this understanding affords him an insight into the complex mix of cultures and orientations in the state. Aware that the feeling of being short-changed, rejected, or displaced in any way may spur violence, he does not uphold sentiments about indigeneship when it comes to driving peace in the state. His message is always one of unity and togetherness among the people, and transparency in governance. It was in this context that he constituted a technical

The Journal Committee headed by Mr. Chris Ahmadu, the State's Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, to put in place a credible and functional framework for the implementation of community policing in the state. The idea is to offer necessary human power support to the security agencies in the state, while underscoring the role of the youth in securing their communities.

For Lalong, "Peace without development is like attacking the symptoms without addressing the root causes." Thus, when he took up the mantle of leadership in Plateau State, he settled for a five-point agenda that would restore the Plateau to its lost place as one of the industrial, commercial and tourism hubs in Nigeria. He called it the Rescue Mission. The 5 pillars of engagement in his administration are Peace, Security and Governance; Human Capital Development and Social Welfare; Agriculture and Rural Development; Entrepreneurship and Industrialisation; and Physical Infrastructure and Environment. Though he faced great difficulties, he decided to address accountability leakages by subscribing to the Treasury Single Account (TSA). He also created the Efficiency Unit, Liquidity Committee, and Project Monitoring and Result Delivery Unit in order to achieve best practices in governance. This soon yielded results as the 2nd Corruption Survey Report of the National Bureau of Statistics ranks Plateau State as the second least corrupt state in Nigeria.

Governor Simon Lalong awarded new road contracts and ensured that they were no abandoned projects in the state. Among successfully completed and outstanding road projects are the Maraban Jama'a Road and the Secretariat Junction Flyover. The Kalong Bridge in Shendam has enhanced access to the hinterlands of Plateau State. These were meant not only for the transportation of people and goods, but to restore the broken sense of pride amongst the people of the state. The Governor did not stop at building new roads; he also ordered the installation of street lights in most parts of Jos-Bukuru metropolis, while the Operation Zero Potholes ensures the regular maintenance of roads in the hinterlands.

Agriculture, which used to be one of the buoyant resources of the state has gradually regained its place of





prominence through the Agricultural Transformational Agenda Support Programme. This programme assists farmers in the hinterlands in various ways. Many of them have begun to enjoy the presence of government in terms of technical support, storage, and the preservation and distribution of their crops. The Programme provides various leverages from the farmland to the marketplace, and is supported by the African Development Bank. A major beneficiary of the Programme is the Potato Value Chain Support Project, which makes it easier for farmers to access fertilizers, pesticides, technology and technical support for a good yield. The state also made available to farmers 400 units of tractors for the community-based Tractorization Programme under a Private-Public-Partnership arrangement. The state has also encouraged the concept of ranching in order to ensure the security of livestock and to foster a sense of belonging in the state. This has helped a long way to reduce the incessant farmers-herders clashes in the Plateau.

Governor Lalong has been as interested in building healthy minds and bodies as he is in roads and farms. Total well-being, for him, is "an engagement of the physical health of persons in the state as well as the intellectual structures put in place to stimulate positivity, creativity, critical analysis and inventive problem solving." His contribution in the health sector of the state include the complete conversation of the Riyom Cottage Hospital into a world-class Trauma Centre; the renovation and upgrade of the Jos Specialist Hospital, and the distribution of 2.5 million durable and treated mosquito nets across the state. He has also made a statement in health education by installing a modern e-library facility in the College of Health, Zawan.

He further breached the global education gap in Africa, by investing heavily in the education infrastructure in the state. Some of the results include the accreditation of 17 courses in the Plateau State University; the recruitment of over 4,800 new primary school teachers to improve the standard of primary education in the state; and state government scholarship to students to learn at the Egyptian Maritime Academy in Alexandria; among others. In 2019, Favour Movel, a Plateau-born Nigerian, emerged the best candidate in the year's West African Senior School Certificate Examination. That was a product of the government's legacy of developing the younger generation. The Governor has also invested in the establishment and upgrade of Government Technical Colleges in Pankshin, Shendam and Bukuru towards expanding human power in the education sector in particular.

In a little over five years in the saddle, Governor Lalong has reversed the lost fortunes of one of the country's leading tourism and agriculture havens. Driven by a sense of people-oriented leadership and responsiveness in governance, he continues to stir the hearts of the people of Plateau State with strategies, policies and programmes that continue to impact positively on the peace and development of the state.



Oustanding Careers

MALLAM BELLO MACCIDO



Mallam Bello Maccido, a Prince of the Sokoto Caliphate is a brilliant and accomplished investment banker with over three decades of experience at the top echelon of the profession in Nigeria. Appointed in 2015 as the pioneer Chairman of the FBNQuest Merchant Bank Limited—a subsidiary investment and asset management arm of the FBN Holdings Plc—he has helped to define the industry's landscape in significant ways. A good part of his career has been devoted to the development and growth of the First Bank Group, and lately to the FBN Merchant Bank Limited. In just over four years of his tenure, the bank experienced changes of revolutionary proportions in terms of earnings, quality of leadership, and the mapping and implementation of strategies.

Under his leadership, businesses were diversified and a synergy between the FBNQuest Asset Management and FBNQuest Securities was actualized. This initiative marked a significant achievement in the bank's history, contributing to the expansion of asset for the group from N37.2 billion in 2016 to N140.701 billion in early 2018.

With an academic background in Law, Maccido started his banking career at Ecobank Nigeria Plc, as an officer. Through hard work and diligence, he earned himself the position of manager when in 1992 he moved to the New Africa Merchant Bank Limited. Four years later, he was appointed Senior Manager and Group Head of Corporate Finance at FSB International Bank.

By 2004, Maccido had risen steadily through the ranks to become Acting Managing Director at FSB International Bank. However, he soon took a break from banking to establish Legacy Pension Managers Limited, a pension administration company where he was pioneer Chief Executive Officer. He built the company that later became FCMB Pension from scratch to outstanding profitability, with assets estimated at over N75 billion and over 182,000 registered Retired Savings Accounts (RSA) holders.

Having sufficiently weaned the company by breaking even within the first three years, and taking it through another two consecutive years of profitability, he returned to the banking industry in 2011 as an Executive Director at First Bank of Nigeria Plc. In his new role, he directed and oversaw all retail banking services in the north to meet the growing daily demands of customers. So impressive was his performance that within two years in this position, he was charged with the task of restructuring First Bank of Nigeria Plc into a financial





holding company. He subsequently assumed the role of the pioneer Group Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of the new FBN Holdings Plc.

Mallam Maccido embarked on a re-branding process of the bank that lasted three years, effecting a systemic change that completely overhauled the old order. He organized and coordinated the development of a new framework that currently defines the modus operandi of all the Group's subsidiaries. He remained in the saddle until 2015 when he assumed his current role at the FBN Merchant Bank Limited.

The depth, relevance, and diversity of Maccido's experience in financial management is evident in the varied nature of the assignments that he has had to undertake across the broad spectrum of private and public enterprise. He has been Chairman of Pension Funds Operators Association in Nigeria, a Non-Executive Director of First Bank of Nigeria Ltd, and a Council Member of the Nigerian Stock Exchange.

His other roles include membership of the Finance Committee, National Council on Privatization; the Implementation Committee, Financial System Strategy (FSS) 2020; and the Presidential Monitoring Committee on Niger Delta Development Commission. Currently, he serves as a member of the Board of Directors for the Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority, and as an Independent Director of Development Bank of Nigeria Plc. He is also a director of Babban Gona, a leading agriculture solutions enterprise in Nigeria.

Mallam Maccido is a Fellow of both the Chartered Institute of Stockbrokers and the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria. He was called to the Nigerian Bar in 1985, having completed his Bachelor of Law degree at the Ahmadu Bello University in 1984, and Barrister at Law at the Nigerian Law School, Lagos in 1985. He bagged a Master's degree in Managerial Finance from the Wayne State University, Detroit, USA, in 1988, and has attended many executive development programmes at reputable institutions like the Harvard Business School, the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, INSEAD Business School in France, and the International Institute for Management Development (IMD), Lausanne, Switzerland.

A devoted family man and community leader, Mallam Maccido holds the traditional title of Wakilin Sokoto.



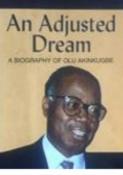


Are your legacies Professionally Documented?

We offer helpful pathways to the past and future

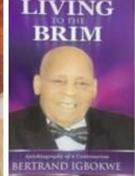


Tel: 09099547013 / 080103072762 Email: maybiography@gmail.com www.mayeducational.com.ng

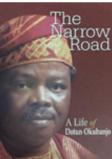












HERstory

BENNEDIKTER MOLOKWU

LAWYER, BANKER AND ADMINISTRATOR



Bennedikter had a dream childhood. She was the last child in a loving family and enjoyed her growing-up days. Her first major challenge, like many a youngster, came in the form of making a career decision. Her instincts led her to law, where she blossomed, taking up appointments in blue-chip organisations as a top executive. Today, she is CEO of the financial service company, Credit Swift Ltd.

BAPTISM OF FIRE

'Are you sure you are qualified? Are you already a lawyer? You look so young!'

'Yes, my Lord. If I were not qualified, the Ministry of Justice would not have sent me here to represent it as the prosecuting counsel in this case!'

The judge stormed out, unknown to us, to call the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) to complain. By the look on his face, when he returned a few minutes later, we knew that the DPP's answer must have angered him even more. That was the first day I appeared in court before Justice Abimbola. I stood tall and proud in my wig and gown. But when the case was called and I stood with my friend and colleague, Patricia Odumodu (now Ofili), to announce our appearance on behalf of the State, the judge threw bombshell questions at me. I refused to be cowed. I responded courageously, but soon sat down with wobbly legs.

I was observing my National Youth Service Corps in the Ministry of Justice, Ogun State, Nigeria. The case files we handled covered two extremes of prosecutions in the High Court - road traffic offences/accidents and ritual killings - with little in between. In fact, I only recall three theft cases and a sprinkling of Indian Hemp hauls in the entire year. Writing up the legal opinions after evaluating the evidence was quite a unique experience for me, it was soon to be capped by actual courtroom exposure. And now this! We were even only in court to take judgement.



At a closing gong ceremony at the NSE.

I looked up to see the judge glaring at me steadily. 'You see, you do not even know what to say,' he said. I rose in self-defence again: 'My Lord, if only I and other senior lawyers here knew when you stopped delivering the judgement and started addressing me, we would have responded appropriately.' Of course, he didn't like that and he left the court. The entire court burst into laughter, truly, he had been so unsettled by these two girls in his territory that no one actually heard the judgement. We would have echoed, 'As His Lordship pleases' with others!

The lighter mood put paid to my embarrassment. It was a thoroughly scary but enjoyable experience, although my colleagues were apprehensive on my behalf and felt I should have said nothing. I told them that it was better I did; otherwise, he would continue to treat "freshers" or was it the gender (?) like secondary school students. Through the Ranks

After my youth service year, I went to Europe for my master's degree in International and Comparative Law with specialisation in Regional Cooperation in Investment and Commerce. Before returning to Nigeria, I worked with ITT-Europe, Belgium, on a six-month attachment as an assistant to the Director of Planning, studying European Laws, regulations and directives, to assess their impact on the business of the company.

It was challenging but interesting. For instance, we spent one week at the European Economic Commission, now the European Union, then another In parliament and then at the courts in Strassbourg. However, my stay in Europe was short-lived as my parents mounted pressure on me to come back home. I persuaded my office to request ITT-Nigeria to interview me and my boss subsequently recommended me to ITT-N. I was first deployed to the Contract Administration Department, liaising between the company and the Ministry of Communications. From there I went to the Legal Department. ITT-Nigeria was the biggest player in the telecommunications sector in Nigeria at the time. I met quite a number of people in the almost five years that I worked there. This was because it was my duty to ensure that ITT-Nigeria complied with the intricate details of contracts with the Ministry of Communications and other main or sub-contractors. I made payment submissions and accompanied my Managing Director and the Chairman to the Senate to defend ITT-N's presentations and contract performance.

I gained substantial experience at ITT-N working in all the three vital departments. It was a company with



varied operations and international subcontractors that employed 2,500 staff, many of whom were expatriates. Later, they became my responsibility – personnel, welfare, human relations, and other related aspects of company administration.

A FIRST AT FIRST CITY

Subsequently, I became a serial entrepreneur importing children's toys from Hong Kong, crystal stem and tableware from France and implementing contracts. With this interest in business, I thought it would help to work with a bank first so that I could gain some commercial experience, initially, I thought two or three years would be it, but then I have ended up spending a lifetime in banking and financial services.

I was a pioneer staff member of First City Merchant Bank Limited (now First City Monument Bank Plc), I was employed as the Company Secretary and Legal Adviser. Although I had little experience in banking and had been interviewed with senior bankers from Union Bank, NAL etc., my knowledge of company law and international legal contract documentation, as well as confidence stood me in good stead. I had to quickly network and make friends with my counterparts in First Bank, Union Bank, UBA, and the few banks then, as well as teach myself in order to acquire the necessary expertise. My efforts paid off and although I am not an accountant, I had prepared the bank's first budget! We were only 11 on the staff list of the bank at the time so everyone had to be supportive in every way possible, not only to keep the bank growing but also to keep it ahead of its pack. Everybody was a marketing officer as well as an administrator. From the tenacity of that initial pool of workers, FCMB grew substantially. So many momentous events happened in the bank, the sector and the economy in the period.

My portfolio expanded to include strategic planning, corporate affairs and administration. I was later assigned the responsibility of managing the Treasury and Financial Services Department and I had really good people who worked very well with me. I was Associate Director for one year, before I became a substantive Executive Director in 1991, the first staff of the bank to be made one.

I encouraged the recruitment of more women whom we found to be the sustaining force of the organisation. They were productive, trustworthy, loyal and served much longer than the men, who craving accelerated promotion, usually spent one or three years there and then moved to other places.

A ROBUST BACKGROUND

Most importantly, my background as a girl growing up among men contributed greatly to what I would describe as my robust development. The last in a family



of eight children, I had only one sister, fondly called Aunty Maggie. My immediate older brother, Josef, was very protective of me, being his only younger sister. The story has it that, at my birth, he refused to go to school simply because his mother had just had a new daughter! My earliest years were spent in a storey building in G.R.A.Benin City where my brother, Josef, had tumbled down the steps one day, clutching me in his arms and proclaiming with great pride, "I will always save Benny." Besides the image of the Emotan Statue in the city's central square, I really do not remember much about Benin. This is because my father, P.N.C. Molokwu, MBE, then a Provincial Education Officer, had been transferred so we relocated to Lagos and I was only a few years old.

In Lagos in the late 1950s and early 1960s, we lived in a quiet residential area. Pius, my eldest brother, and his immediate younger one, Louis, a retired banker, no longer lived at home when I was a child. Left at home with us (during school holidays) were Christopher (ABC), George, and Josef. My third brother, Henry, now President of the Agbalanze Society in Onitsha, had travelled to Italy to study Geology and my sister Aunty Maggie had married in the early 60s. In spite of that, there were quite a number of other people living with us that I had thought were my brothers and sisters then. Among the people in our home was an uncle, and former Rector of the IMT, Enugu, Dr. Akosa Amechi, whom we thought was a biological brother. We loved him.

Ours was a home where love reigned. My mother, (Anna) Odoziaku, welcomed almost everybody to the house, offering something to eat from her bottomless pot. We also had some domestic staff, although it was difficult to differentiate between a member of the family and someone who was not. It was a home with strict discipline. It was impressed on us at an early age to appreciate other people. My mother, who died in 1997, was a practising Catholic with a very high sense of morality and propriety. The result was that our upbringing followed a system of do's and don'ts that has remained a part of us till date. We have a strong sense of family and respect for hard work. I have tried to impart these to my son.

I had a childhood that I believe was the best I could have. We never longed to live in any other person's home or have their things and were happy with the environment in our home. There were people in the neighbourhood for whom we cared for, that did not have the kinds of things we had, as my mother ordered most things (crockery, cutlery, bedsheets etc.) from U.K. catalogues. There were also those who, although living in bigger houses, came to share our meals. It was an interesting childhood, full of engaging activities.

My father was a teacher and school administrator. Before we moved to Lagos, he had worked first in primary then secondary schools across the old Mid-Western Region. He was the first Nigerian school headmaster of Edo College, a position he maintained until he was deployed to the Federal Ministry of Education. Professor Taiwo, now in his 90s, took over from him. Parliamentary Secretary to the Federal Scholarship and Advisory Board. He was the Permanent Secretary in the East Central State in 1970.

My mother also had some teaching experience before becoming a seamstress, baker, and most importantly the manager of the family! Later on in life she became a textile merchant. She brought home to us a sense of commerce, an ability which our father, who was strictly a civil servant, lacked though he had great vision. Father was strict and perhaps domineering. He fondly called me "Benny, Benny O", especially when he was happy with my performance at school. Whenever he called me "Bennedikter,", I knew he had information about some mischief I had got into. He took pleasure in reading and shared many of his books with me. He had a positive influence on me. So I grew up with a passion for reading. He shared his experiences in the schools where he taught, like the self-sustenance agricultural policies he introduced into Edo College, where he had been headmaster in the 1940s into the early 1950s. My father's bark could be worse than his bite while my mother was reserved but firm and businesslike. She used her lovely eyes and we understood her body language. Positive and forgiving,

I never heard her raise her voice at or say bad words about anyone. She took time to appreciate other people's point of view and made them understand why she did what she did. She taught us how to be honest, care for ourselves, our neighbours, pets (we had lots of cats), tend gardens, sew, bake, to listen, to pray, enjoy sports, to do positive things. She also taught us to work hard and of course to stand proud and tall! We always looked forward to eating the notoriously delicious Sunday curry at Ikoyi Hotel,



visiting family friends like the Abebes, Okwusogwus, Agusiobos, Mbanefos, Cardosos, Ezekwes, Azikiwes, Ibekwes, Egbunas, Ofodilis etc or family shopping during the Christmas season. Family Shopping was led by our father, we went to Lennards, Bata, UTC and Kingsway stores, which had shoes and clothes for young people. We were usually left to make our choices while our father would go for a haircut at the famous barber's shop inside Kingsway stores. Thereafter, he came back to decide on what we could purchases based on our lists. Although we were encouraged to be expressive, there had to be good justification for whatever requests we were making. Whatever we needed was spelt out in a list supported by reasons for it and the estimated cost. Looking back, I would say that was a tested method of teaching children the science of budgeting. Father took our good grades for granted, although we dared not make poor ones. His main concern was our conduct as he insisted on maintaining a balance between brilliant academic performance and character/ behaviour. It was the correct attitude to life at that time.

GROWING TO MATURITY

I had my primary education briefly at Grange School. Ikeja and then at Our Lady of Apostles Private School, Yaba, from where I gained admission Into Holy Child College, Obalende before taking WAEC school certificate examinations at Holy Child Secondary School, Sharon Hill, Abakaliki. I entered the University of Nigeria from the Lower Sixth Form at St. Gregory's College, Obalende. I cultivated lifelong friendships those years, and there was much healthy competition between my friends and I, with respect to athletics, academic performance and personal behaviour. We took the little things of life rather seriously.

At the Holy Child Schools where I attended, we always looked forward to end of term activities:

traditional dances, popular Nigerian songs, poetry recitals and plays which broadened our horizons and sharpened our perception and taught by Irish and local reverend sisters. The impact of these schools, the nuns, teachers and friends made there in my life is substantial, especially in helping to develop confidence, attention to detail, a keen sense of loyalty, order and organisation. There was no alternative to going to Mass every morning! Since the little things of life added up to what one becomes, the good habits formed under this guidance helped us not only academically but in relationships and every-day life. Stringent though the rules were, we certainly created our own fun. Some of my best friends today are those whose friendship I had developed in those formative years and with whom I have grown to maturity.

I did not complete my secondary education at Holy Child College, Lagos because of the Nigerian Civil War. In 1967 many Igbo women and children were sent back to their home-town as war became imminent, nobody knowing what would happen next. Father, then working with one of the United Nations agencies, stayed back in Lagos with two of my brothers, while Mother and the rest of us headed home to Onitsha in 1967. It was an unexpected split for our very close-knit family. It brought upon us by circumstances no one could control. One hardly anticipated the civil war, let alone that it would last for two and a half years. Providence, however, reunited us all as the war ended in January 1970: we were all safe and healthy! When the war started, it was as if the battleground was right at our doorstep. I wished I were a little older as I would have loved to join the army! I was very much concerned about the state of children during the war. The situation was truly pathetic. We used to go and help out the Catholic Church personnel in the refugee camps close to where we lived, helping to share food and relief materials to displaced and poor people.

THUMBS UP FOR LAW!

I read and fantasised a lot when I was young but then if you do not dream dreams you cannot aim at the skies! At one time, I wanted to be an actress; a model; at another a doctor; an architect and then a lawyer. However, my passion was to be a diplomat in a Frenchspeaking country; so I enrolled to study French at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Before the beginning of the semester I reconsidered my choice in the light of other options and felt that I had not made the best decision, after all.

Why did I choose to simply study a language? I recalled my maternal grandmother's reaction to my older brother's choice of English for his university course. She had disapproved, arguing that he spoke English well enough and would therefore need something else, a profession, to enhance it and not waste time and money! I decided to change.

My attention focused on law. I critically appraised the situation to see if I had the qualities to be successful at

it - I had a more-than-adequate interest in mystery; I was logical; a very good speaker; I loved reading and research and had a keen sense of propriety so I decided to go ahead to study law.

Indeed, knowing the regard my father had for some eminent Onitsha lawyers and judges who dominated the judiciary at the time. I had also read about or two lawyers in practice while still in secondary school (Perry Mason??) I felt really attracted to the law profession. I saw it then as a profession that combined drama, panache, technical knowledge and inquisitiveness.

At that time, I had criminal law and investigative or forensic aspects in mind, hoping to don a wig and be in court!

TIMES HAVE CHANGED!

Placed side by side, the Lagos of the 1960s dwarfs what it is today. It was really fantastic, safe, clean and beautiful. It still had beaches, parks, and libraries. Ikeja, where we lived when I was a child, had people of different nationalities: Indians, Americans and Britons. Children related with each other freely and without any trace of ethnic bias. Nigerians were simply Nigerians not Ibo, Yoruba, Hausa etc. As children, we did not observe ethnic discrimination in the relationship among the adults; so we grew up with a national consciousness: 'We are Nigerians, the others are expatriates.' We had to be the best and do the best we could to emulate the adults, finding our sense of direction in order to get something that would really stand us out as true Africans.

The standard of education up to the 1970s was high. I cannot recall going to a tutorial college to receive extra lessons. Much of what we learnt in Forms 4 and 5 were already familiar to us in Form 3. Extra-curricular activities made up a major part of the primary school system. For example, apart from sports, we went on field trips, an opportunity we used to look for butterflies and hunt for frogs to dissect – I even recall my primary school class visiting the 7-UP factory. Education was not just a matter of reading; it was a part of a full spectrum of events. Honesty and self-reliance were core values inculcated in us. I don't recall any child cheating in examinations during my school days. It would have also been strange to see teachers carrying wares to be sold within the school premises. They were paid fairly (or at least they were content with their salaries) and committed to their duties.

One strategy that helped in the upbringing of children then was the widespread attitude of involvement by friends and neighbours – children were brought up by the entire community. Parents knew one another and their children. For that, children were careful not to get involved in anything that would drag their name into disrepute. Parents had a proprietary interest in the children around them, whether or not they knew where they came from. They could not stand aloof and watch them misbehave. In the school system then, parents were not defensive of their children. These days, one finds parents going to argue with school authorities in defence of an erring ward. It never happened then. Instead, parents gave further punishment in order to instil a sense of discipline into the child.

AN INSPIRATIONAL LIFE

After FCMB, I joined Credit Swift Limited, a nonbank finance company providing loans, services to small and medium sized companies with training and bookkeeping Programmes to ensure that they stay on top of their businesses. I currently offer pre-liquidation services to a failed bank under the auspicies of the Central Bank of Nigeria.

I am on the boards of Dangote Sugar Refinery Plc, CrusaderSterling Pensions Limited and Standard Chartered Bank Limited. Over the years I have served on other boards including the Governing Council of the Financial Institutions Training Centre, The Upper Niger River Basin Authority and participated as a member of task-specific panels at state and federal government levels. In the 1980s I was a member the Legal Advisory Committee of the President of the Federal Republic or Nigeria, the Anambra State Task Force for the Revitalisation of Ailing Government Companies and its Technical Committee on the Privatisation. In the 1990s I served on the Panel for the Reform of NITEL. I am currently on the Panel for the Review of the Code of Corporate Governance set up by the Securities and Exchange Commission to update the existing code for public companies.

Although not a practising lawyer, my legal training and experience continue to shape my contributions to corporates, development organisations, societies I belong to and young people. I deliver law, corporate governance, finance and management papers to promote the continued education of senior management and company directors. I still read and research a lot. I must



With Madam Opral Benson, the Iya Oge of Lagos

admit my keen interest in Corporate Governance, consequently during my tenure as President of the Institute of Directors Nigeria (IoD). I founded the IoD Centre For Corporate Governance in collaboration with the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Corporate Affairs Commission to promote and encourage companies to comply with the Code of Corporate Governance for Nigeria. It is an organisation that will play a key role in shaping corporate performance through corporate governance compliance and become a centre of excellence for corporate governance. I am a member of professional bodies like the Nigerian Association, International Bar Association, Bar International Association of Women Lawyers and the Chartered Institute of Bankers Nigeria. For many years I was an active executive member of the International Women's Society and my town societies have my commitment - I belong to the UmuIkem UMUADAs and the Onitsha Professional Ladies' Circle (OPLC).

People feel inspired by my professional and personal attributes but I consider my leadership role in IoD and other career progression as a tribute to my parents and as my contribution to society. I tend to go over the top when I am serving a cause and I manage to elicit great cooperation from those working with or supporting me: this makes for success. I have accepted only a few awards including the Kwame Nkrumah Leadership Award (2004) and the Trailblazer Award from the Nigerian Bar Association (Women's Forum)(2007).

I do support women issues and believe in the mainstreaming of (not quota for) women! Some programmes I run are of great help to women. Before the last elections, I got involved with an organisation that sought to raise funds to support female politicians in their quest for elective office. Although I am not a politician, I do not rule out participation in governance.

Bennedikter China Molokwu is a fellow of the Institute of Directors, UK. She is the Chief Executive Officer at Credibble LTD. She is on the board of Dangote Sugar Refinery PLC, CrudaderSterling Pensions and Main One Cable CO. Nigeria LTD. She is also a member of the chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria, the International Federation of Women Lawyers, the Nigerian Bar Association and the International Bar Association



instagram—journal news **Twitter**— thejournal Nigeria **LinkedIn**—-thejournal Nigeria

