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HISTORY AND TRAJECTORY OF DEVELOPMENT AND NATION-BUILDING IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The role of history in the development of nations has often been neglected and denounced as irrelevant due to being an arts-oriented subject. However, the history of development of nation-states over the years on the contrary portray the enormous contribution of historical knowledge to their development. These can be seen in building of trust, fostering unity, nationalism and peace, especially in a nation of diverse ethnic, religious and cultural state, which are essential ingredients for nation-building and having a strong and virile state in any clime. Nigeria as a developing nation-state has continued to face the challenge of building a united and a progressive state from the time of political independence from Britain in 1960. This arose partly due to the failure to harness the enormous role of history to sustain her development. This work is an attempt to showcase the roles which history as a subject and as knowledge acquisition could play to bring about the much-desired unity and progress in an ethnically, religiously and politically incensed and divided nation such as Nigeria. The study made use of historical descriptive approach to elucidate on the important roles of history to Nigeria development.

Keywords: History, Trajectory, Development, Nation-building, Nigeria.

Introduction

There is no gain-saying that Nigeria as an indivisible, united and a progressive state is at a cross-road. The Nigerian political space is awash with recurring socio-economic and religious challenges, due to poor political leadership in the country. Since gaining formal independence from Britain in 1960, Nigeria, a growing nation-state, has struggled to create a cohesive and forward-thinking polity. This was partly due to the failure to take advantage of the great potential of history to achieve her develop. These problems tend to hinder Nigeria's progress and call into question the country's basic survival. It is, therefore, at such a challenging time as this, that the important of history in upholding the unity and development of Nigeria become most compelling and relevant. The study is an attempt to examine the roles which

history as a subject and as knowledge acquisition could play to bring about the much-desired unity and progress in an ethnically, religiously and politically incensed and divided nation such as Nigeria.

Exploration of Aspects of Nigerian Political Development

Nigeria is a creation of British imperial adventure in Africa. The nation came into existence in 19th century, following the Berlin Conference of 1884/5, where the leading European nations such as Britain, France, Belgium and Germany, at the instance of German Chancellor, Otto Von Bismarck, drew plans on "effective occupation" of African territories; to be recognized by other contenders, in order to avoid conflict among them. It is pertinent to note that no African was present in this conference; where their fate was decided by others. The conference was what ignited the scramble for African territories, which led to the balkanization of the continent into many spheres of European influence. The result was the carving out of the Niger territory by the British, later named Nigeria by Lady Lugard. Nigeria as a geographical entity is made up of about 250 ethnic groups, with apparent differences in religion, culture and geography features. The country's cultural diversities and differences, which ordinarily should have been its source of pride and strength, unfortunately have been employed negatively to circumvent her unity and development. This negative development has continued to engage and dominate discussions within the nation's academic circles.

The persistence of heightened tension in Nigeria polity over the years is seen by some scholars like Madukwe, C.I. (2014) and Uwakwe, E.E. (2018), partly as a function of the close link in the area of religion, ethnicity and geographic structures of Nigeria. For instance, in Northern Nigeria, the dominant ethnic group is the Hausa-Fulani, who are mostly Muslims. In Eastern Nigeria, the dominant group is the Igbo, who historically were adherents of African Traditional Religion (ATR), until the coming of Christian missionaries in the 19th century, which led to conversion of majority of them to the Christian religion. The Yoruba, who are the dominant group in Western Nigeria, had a mixture of Africa Traditional Religion and Islamic religion until the colonial era, leading to the conversion of many to Christianity. The existence of these fault-lines in Nigerian geo-political configurations, copiously heightened inter-ethnic and religious tensions as they were made the platforms for political and economic enhancement, thereby weakening the polity and its development.

During the colonial era the cultural and geographical diversity of the country was evidently used by the colonist to work against Nigerian unity and development. For instance, some British colonial administrators in Nigeria were of the opinion that the cultural differences found among the people of Nigeria should be widened than abridged through separate administrations: the regional and the indirect systems of government. The colonial system of government was thus, built on the principle of divide and rule. The objective of the system was to keep the people divided based on the fault-lines, so that they, the British, would continue to exploit the human and natural resources of the country unhindered.

Moreover, it was evident that the colonial political system in Nigeria was a convenient means used by the British to address the shortfalls they had in material and manpower resources; due to the vast nature of Nigeria territory, and the need to support the Northern zone. This was in addition to the fact that the colonial system in Nigeria was fundamentally flawed, built on the ideology of maintaining each group's separate identity, a containment and a divisive

ideology, that has all the trappings of imperialism in Africa. Allaying to colonial policy in Nigeria, it was stated by Sir Hugh Clifford, one of the foremost administrators in colonial Nigeria, that the system was meant to secure for the people of Nigeria their age-long differences. Thus, Clifford as the colonial governor of Nigeria in 1920, remarked that the colonial policy in Nigeria was based on securing,

> … each separate people the right to maintain its identity, its individuality and its nationality, its chosen form of government, and the peculiar political and social institution, which have been evolved for it by the wisdom and the accumulated experiences of generation of its forebears (Coleman, 1986: 194).

The British colonial rule in Nigeria was, therefore, a system that made serious efforts to entrench ethnic and religious dichotomy and differences among the people. This gave rise to the unbridled bias and stereotyped attitude exhibited by most Nigerians towards one another. The result of which has been perennial manifestations of disunity. This undoubtedly has contributed to slow down the country's developmental trajectories. The varied manifestations of ethnic, religious and geographical fault-lines in Nigerian's political landscape from the time of the colonial era, has therefore, led to downward slope in the unity and development of the country; as there cannot be development in any clime without the enabling environment.

One of the expected roles of history in a multi-ethnic, cultural and religious entity such as Nigeria stretches beyond highlighting the various structural landmarks that dot the Nigerian landscapes overtime, but to showcase how the structures were important avenues that sustained her past inter-group relations in social, economic, religious and political developments. For instance, the existence of the rivers Niger and Benue, and its tributaries supported flexible trading activities among the Confluence neighbours, such as the Igala, Igbira, Nupe, Idoma and Benin. It was also the major means of their involvement in the Trans Saharan and the Trans-Atlantic trades, with foreign traders like, the Arabs, the Moorish traders and the Europeans, between the 16th and 19th centuries. For others who did not participate in the socio-economic activities in the area under consideration due to proximity, the existence of trade routes which criss-crossed most Nigerian neighbouring communities were avenues for trade and social interaction. While pointing to these early and later historical occurrences in Nigeria, history becomes a means of highlighting her past inter-dependency as a people, which when factored into the current system of government would help to build bridges and support peaceful co-existence; a *sine-qua-non* for development in any clime or country. It is therefore, within the domain of history to dig up, highlight and emphasize the various indices and structures which have existed over time among Nigerians to support her developmental efforts.

What is History?

In a straight and a simple term history, could be said to mean the study of past events in human societies. For E.H. Carr, history is that which "deals with people and the events in human societies, which has continued to show evidence of dynamism over time" (1961:8). The word "history" is derived from the Greek word "*historia*", meaning "knowledge gained as a result of enquiry". To Esedebe (2003:18), history focuses on "verifiable actions, fortunes and misfortunes of human beings." Put another way, history deals with significant events which took place in human development over time. Aristotle cited in RAO (2000) regards history as

a "systematic account of a set of natural phenomena, whether or not chronological ordering was a factor in the account". The term history has now come to be applied to accounts of events that are narrated in a chronological order, and deal with the past of mankind. Besides, Asadu (2013:1) writes,

> History has always provided us with the information of the activities of those that lived in the past. Thus, we come to know what they did; when, why and how it was done, and the impact of their actions on the general public. With this information of the past, we get better equipped for today's action.

History stands for the reconstruction of the past with the surviving evidence in the recent and with an eye on the future (Achunike 1996:41) In another plane, history represents the attempt made by man to expand the horizons of knowledge through understanding of the how, the why and patterns of developments found in a particular social setting. In this regard, the knowledge of history is comparable and similar to other disciplines of humanities like sociology, religion and philosophy, whose interest span human developments over time. History as a discipline has several branches and they include political history, social history, economic history, war history, history of world religion under which is church history, Islamic history and so on. In this sense, the study and teaching of history becomes a tool in the hands of historians to advance human knowledge. In this work, therefore, the application of the two senses of history, that is, as a human experience and knowledge acquisition suffices. The two conceptual applications of history capture the role and place of history in Nigerian development as used in this work.

Concept of Nation-Building

> The reason many nations find it difficult to make real progress is because of disunity. This disunity is not really because of multiple ethnic groupings, diverse cultures, etc., but because of their inability to recognize the potentials and their differences and the need to harness them towards achieving a common end. As long as people are bitterly pitched in opposing camps, and fail to see face to face, there cannot be meaningful progress. (W.F. Kumuyi, 2020:177).

The term nation-building originated from the word nation. It represents both the evolutionary attainment of a people to the status of nation-hood, and the revolutionary process involved in the actualization of a nation's dream of development. However, Carolyn Stephenson's conception of a nation as comprising a conglomeration of people with a "shared history, traditions, and usually language" (2005) on-line, seems to weaken the foundation of Nigeria to fit into the concept of a nation, especially going by the recent colonial experiences. She further stressed that for a people to become a nation, they should have common national identity. Going by this definition of a nation, it would appear that Nigeria as a state actor is yet to attain the hallmark of nation-hood, not to talk of achieving nation-building, after more than five decades of political freedom. As it were, history has some important lessons to pass across to a country like Nigeria, which seems to be wobbling in the art of nation-building and development. In effect, "any meaningful efforts to address the problems of nation-building in Nigeria must be done in the context of our past in particular and the universal experience of humanity in general" (P.O. Esedebe, 2003:18).

What is Development?

Development as a concept has attracted the attention of different schools of thoughts over time. Euro-centric school sees development purely from the point of view of technological advancement. For example, Margery Perham, saw the concept in terms of having stone-houses, wheels and the plough. Those with no such indices of 'development' are termed as 'primitive', 'uncivilized' and 'underdeveloped'. Her postulation:

> The dealings between tropical Africa and the West must be different. Here in place of the large unities of Asia was the multicellular tissue of tribalism: instead of an ancient civilization, the largest area of primitive poverty enduring into the modern age. Until the very recent penetration by Europe the greater part of the continent was without the wheel, the plough or the transport – animal; almost without stone houses or clothes, except for skins; without writing and so without history. (Perham in Coleman, 1986:3)

However, her view seems to be far from the reality. The concept of development as a generic word encompasses other factors beyond the narrow confines of economic and technological achievements. Missing in the said Euro-centric conception of development is its social aspect, which constitutes an important element of development.

The term development has its proper meaning and application when appraised within the context of human society. The concept of development addresses the goals and the aspirations of a people living in a cultural environment, and is also tied to their world view. The term, therefore, could be said to be relative in the sense that human aspirations and world-views differ greatly. Take for instance, when a Muslim who believes that Islam is the final revelation of God to man through its prophet, Mohammed, is questioned about his/her life goals and aspirations. He or she would readily look up to the religious tenets of Islam as a fulfilment in life. Since his religion is an embodiment of not only religious practices, but also socio-economic and political life styles, his focus and goals in life becomes intertwined with that of his religion. In the same vein, similar world view is found among the adherents of African Traditional Religion (ATR). This religion (ATR), also determines the adherent's world view and developmental aspirations. For instance, Tom A. Miachi, in reference to the Igala notes that:

> Like other aspects of Igala society and culture, the production of such materials, whether in terms of the source of the raw materials, patterns and processes of production, decoration, motif and utilization, are all inextricably tied to their cosmology and belief systems. In other words, technology, art and material culture find expression in the way the people view the world around them, their belief systems, social organization, political system; in this case, centered on the monarchy that is headed by the Ata [Attah], as well as in their occupation and even in the physical environment. It also means that this aspect of the life of the people equally, and significantly influence their technology, in terms of quality and quantity of production (2012:82).

Thus, it becomes wrong for an individual to completely deny and rubbish aspects of developments found in other cultures, because they do not conform to one's own perspective. This position however, does not in way condone some earlier obnoxious cultural practices

found in most African cultures where the killing of twins and idolatrous practices were pervasive and accommodated. According to Asadu (2015), a nation's level of development can be judged from the economic, social, cultural, political and spiritual status of such a nation. Above all the individual development of its citizens is paramount, for it is the individual that make up a nation. Rodney (2005:1) notes that:

> Development in human society is a more-sided process. At the level of the individual, it implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being. Some of these are virtually moral categories and are difficult to evaluate depending as they do on the age, in which one lives, one's class origins, and one's personal code of what is right and what is wrong. However what is indisputable is that the achievement of any of these aspects of personal development is very much tied to the state of the society as a whole….

In this work, therefore, the term development is used to capture all indices of achievements found in a given society-in all spheres of human endeavours, like social, economic, political and so on, which may have supported their efforts to achieve their goals of a better life as humans. It is spurned by their conception of life, which supports as well as stirs them to harness their environment in a collaborative effort to conquer and adapt to the challenges of life. Thus, the term development is not an exclusive word, but inclusive, involving areas like, politics, economy, technology and the social life of a people. Though, the term development may have been used by some scholars like Perham, in the narrow sense, however, its holistic approach is what gives perspective and impetus to human development in any given society, and it is in this sense that the term is used in this work.

History and Nigerian Development

> History is the memory of human group experience. If it is forgotten or ignored, we cease in that measure to be human. Without history, we have no knowledge of who we are or how we came to be, like victims of collective amnesia groping in the dark for our identity. It is the events recorded in history that have generated all the emotions, the values, the ideals, that make life meaningful, that have given men something to live for, struggle over, die for. Historical events have created all the basic human grouping - countries, religions, classes – and all the loyalties that attach to these (Daniels, R.V., in Ikime 2006: xii).

The roles which the study and the knowledge of history have played in Nigeria's development trajectory cannot be over-emphasized. Right from the time of agitation for the political emancipation of the country from Great Britain in the 1940s and 1950s, the roles of history were prominent. The British colonialist had through their commissioned Anthropologist like Perham and others, painted a dark picture of Africans and Nigerians in particular, as people without an ingenious development worth celebrating or acknowledging. They claimed that Nigeria's history and development started with the coming of the British colonial rule (Perham in Coleman, 1986:3). But, through the efforts of Nigerian historians, like Prof. Onwuka Dike, these lies and falsehood were countered. The early Nigerian historians cleared this falsehood and lies through the means of oral and archaeological sources. In other words, Nigerian historians were able to demonstrate through history that:

> …our peoples had a history of their own before the coming of our colonial masters; that we had socio-political institutions evolved to meet the challenges of our societies in pre-colonial times; that our societies and kingdoms had complex economic systems, upon which they rested; that we had our own heroes, men and women of eminence in politics, commerce, war, diplomacy and crafts, some of whom laid down their lives in the struggle to keep the British imperialists out of their territories (Ikime, 2006:xiv).

The work of history was therefore, one of the means through which Nigerian nationalist leaders like, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo and others were galvanized to fight for Nigeria's political freedom. They used their knowledge of history to sensitize and raise the tempo of events, and the people's need for freedom from foreign rule and domination. The knowledge they had about their rich past (history) was what inspired their quest to regain their dignity and pride in the comity of nations. This was against the backdrop of attempts made by the colonialist to rubbish their past and dignity as a people.

Another important role of history in the development of Nigeria is in the area of knowledge acquisition, especially when the issue of harmony and unity of the country are the focus. Historical knowledge especially the people's past inter-group relationships and socio-political affinities have been an enviable way of unifying Nigeria's the polity. The multi-ethnic and multi- cultural nature of Nigerian society has been canvassed as a major bane obstructing the nation-building and development process of Nigeria since the achievement of political freedom in 1960. As noted earlier, the British colonial power exploited Nigerian's diversity to achieve the goals of colonial exploitation and manipulation of the people and their resources. This was partly the reason behind the indirect rule system of administration in colonial Nigeria. Indirect rule was a system of ruling the local people through their indigenous system of political administration. In application the system make room for easy administration of the locals, through the supervision of British colonial officials, like the Residents and the Commissioners. The system in the long-run became an instrument used to sow seeds of insipient exclusiveness among the various Nigerian communities and groups. The fear of being dominated by the competing ethnic groups, in political and economic arena heightened, and led to changes in inter-group relationship. In the Northern part of Nigeria, for instance, the government of the Northern region under the Premier, Sir Ahmadu Bello, in 1953 began the Northernization policy of making the civil service an exclusive preserve to be filled by only Northerners; Nigerians from other regions were to be employed on contract basis (Nnoli, 1978:191). It must be noted that at the root of the Northernization policy was the fear of Southern domination.

Subsequently, after the end of Nigerian civil war in 1970, at the 1978/1979 Constitutional Conference in Lagos, the 1979 Constitution was enacted. The constitution came up with some policies that were meant to reflect Nigerian diversity. Also, the Federal Character Principle was introduced at the three tiers of government. This was meant to guide against the fear of ethnic or sectional domination, and to make room for equitable representation and distribution of national wealth and resources. But, it is evident that despite these developments leading to the setting up of federal schools in many parts of Nigeria, National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), in 1973 and so on, the fear of ethnic domination has persisted. The result is the continual manifestation of political instability in contemporary Nigeria. The

occurrence has at times led to agitation for separate nations by groups like the Niger Delta militants, the Biafra agitators, both from the former Eastern region. Other groups in the West and the Middle Belt also clamour for political independence. The need to look at the role which history could play to slow down ethnic tensions in Nigerian politics and development has therefore, become a necessity.

In the first place, it is important to note that prior to our colonial experience, the people of Nigeria did not live in isolation of their neighbours. Intergroup relations among the various Nigerian communities, states and kingdoms, inter-spaced their everyday human experiences. These can be seen even in the area of, "economic relations, marital relation, ritual relations, wars and migrations" (Ikime, 2006: xx). For instance, the composition of some Nigerian communities in pre-colonial time showed evidence of multi-culturalism. Elements from other groups beside the ruling group constituted their polities. Drisu notes that the Igala kingdom at the height of its growth, between the 17th and 18th centuries, during the reign of Attah Om' Idoko, the Attah incorporated some Igboland areas of Nsukka as part of the Attah's suzerain (2015:186). The same scenario played out in the former Sokoto Caliphate of Northern Nigeria, which was composed of groups from different ethnicity (Madukwe, 2019:53). In essence, history by laying emphasis on our common humanity as a people under one nation, which its origin spans beyond our recent colonial experience, by highlighting on our past inter-group relations in commerce, social, political and religious life, becomes an essential means to build a new Nigeria. History shows that interconnectivity and the inter-dependency of our communities in the past were built on harmony, mutual respect, the existence of areas of specializations (Madukwe, 2019:53). The knowledge of our past historical experiences tends to create nostalgia among the people, as it deepens mutual respect of group idiosyncrasies. It also help to create the awareness that mutual understanding was what sustained our people in their past relationships and, what is needed in the present dispensation for enviable development; since distrust incensed by ethnic and religious biases hinders development.

A reoccurring decimal in Nigeria quest to achieve nation-hood since independence in 1960, has been the absence of an enduring political culture. This has led to political instability in the land. This was the catalyst to the Nigerian – Biafran war of 1967 – 1970. Thus, the persistence of political instability in Nigeria after more than 50 years of independence is a clear indication of the absence of a national political culture. This is against the backdrop of governments efforts through the federal character schemes, to create understanding and harmony among the people. Thus, the problem of political instability in Nigeria is partly the result of near absence of trust built between the populace and the government. This scenario emerged due to lack of responsibility exhibited by the political class towards the yearnings and aspirations of the people. The persistence of nonchalant attitude and behaviour to the needs of the people created a kind of gap, between the authorities and the masses, which tend to have deepened unhealthy social relationships. This has at times led to riots and instability, which in some cases take the form of ethnic or religious revolts.

However, history, as it reminiscences on the pre-colonial political authorities in Nigeria, shows that the polities functioned on the foundation built on trust and responsibilities between the people and the rulers. This can even be seen in the form of provision of security, prayers, and support for the well-being, and progress of the people's social and economic interest. The power and the influence which the rulers welded in pre-colonial Nigerian society

were therefore, allied to their cultural norms and values, which in-turn sustained their political culture. The picture of robust and mutual political activism among Nigerians prior to colonial rule, was however, interjected, which brought a slur in indigenous Nigerian political development. With the achievement of Nigeria's political independence in 1960, no serious effort was made on the part of the rulers or the political class to inject indigenous Nigerian political culture into the system in operation. This neglect contributed to persistent hiccups in Nigerian political system, as there was disconnect between the theory and the practice of exemplary leadership in the country. The erstwhile colonial rule in Nigeria had a poor record of responsible governance to address the yearnings of the people, as their goals and the aspirations and those of the people were diametrically opposed. The colonial governance was built on the model of master–servant relations (force), with minimal recognition of the overwhelming interest of the governed. Thus, in terms of proper tutelage to people-oriented governance, the Nigerian political class did not have any training to shoulder the onerous task of nation-building.

But history has a lot to teach us on exemplary leadership in Nigeria. As the country transverses the difficult terrain of development and nation-building, history become the means of securing, teaching and nurturing our past experiences in the area of responsible leadership. The knowledge and the teaching of history, helps to sustain and to secure the political culture of the people, by way of learning and assimilation, since the "political ethos or culture of a people is a product of their history" (Ikime, 2006: xvii). Further, the view of the former United States ambassador to Nigeria, R.R. Sanders, to the responsibility which historical lessons have for Africans and Nigerians in particular is inspiring. The ability to retain and build on past cultural milieu of a people is without doubt indispensable to a nation's development. Sanders quips that,

> It is vital to remember that the past is never far from us, and if we deny its existence, value, and impact on our lives then we miss not only living honestly, but also not contributing to the future. (2011:4)

As it were, history teaches that for an enduring development (stability) to occur in a country like Nigeria, "there has to be a balance between power and authority on the one hand, and responsibility and accountability on the other" (Ikime, 2006: xvii). It was for instance, noted that, the former American president, Barrack Obama, during his tenure relied on the teachings of history to pilot the affairs of American government. It was noted of him that he took time to study the life and the policies of those who served before him in the White House (Okonkwo, 2012:122). Not surprising he made remarkable landmarks during his tenure, to stabilize and to sustain the growth and development of American economy. The achievement which he recorded during his tenure was partly hinged on the informed decisions he took as the president of United States of America by his reliance on the lessons of history.

In a similar vein, the lessons of history to Nigeria's development can be seen in the area of building a good attitude to work among Nigerians. It is an accepted believe that the development of a nation/country, has a lot to do with the attitude and the disposition of the work force, especially among the public sector. The experience of the colonial era was such that civil service was erroneously seen then, as nobody's work, which was partly believed as a form of protest to colonial rule. This wrong attitude to civil service was transferred into the

new dispensation, after gaining of political freedom. This was sustained even after independence, because the political and the military class who took over the mantle of leadership failed to show that the decisions and the policies of government were not self-serving or discriminatory, but in the interest of the public. Nigerian development is thus, dotted with many white elephant projects pursued by political office holders, with little or no relevance to the country's development, as the money for the contract work was embezzled. Litany of such abandoned projects both at the federal and state levels abound in Nigeria; thereby giving wrong signals to civil service and the Nigerian public, that corruption and selfish interest are the norms. The sustenance of wrong attitude to civil service eventually became one of the banes of Nigerian's development as it gave rise to sharp practices (corruption), within the public and private sectors, leading to the circumvention of the ethics of governance.

This wrong attitude which has become conspicuous among most Nigerian leaders and government workers is a negation of what was obtained in the pre-colonial setting, where there was basically selfless service built on communal trust. For instance, during the pre-colonial era, the general attitude or reaction of the people to community work, like the building of markets, clearing of pathway leading to community stream, preparation of farms for farming and so on, had a motivating influence based on the peoples' perception of the local subsisting authority. In other words, since the interest of all were represented in any task to be done in the community, it was not difficult to secure their support. The role of history at this instance is to provide ideological bases for Nigerian development, through the laying of emphasis on the right attitude to work, selfless service and exemplary conduct, without which the country would continue to grope in dark and confusion. But, the building of right attitude to work by the populace would require a strong cultural ideological base. The nature of African communal life-style built on group interest, offers some historical lessons. For instance, during the hey days of Nigerian political instability in the 1960s, which eventually led to the Nigerian civil-war, it was the manifestation of the attitude of communal interest, then personal interest, rooted in Igbo culture and history, that saved the day, and later sustained the Biafran nation within the short period that it existed. The need to drive Nigerian development project based on the historical gains of African communal ideology, has become necessary and paramount, in order to harness the abundant human and material resources in the country.

History further guides us to learn from the experiences of other nations like the United States of America, China and India, with a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural composition; how they made tremendous progress in development despite having similar challenges like Nigeria. Perhaps, their achievements are indications that the history of a people cannot be relegated to the background, while aiming to actualize development. The cultivation and the harnessing of lessons of history of a people obviously inspire patriotism without which their development would remain a mirage.

Conclusion

In his interpretation of the nature of history and its contributions to nation-building, Ani, K.J. opines that,

> …history is not rooted on future knowledge, issues and events but on the act of finding-out vital issues, knowledge and events from the past that would impact on the present and possibly lay transformative foundations for the future life of a nation and mankind in general…. If men would change the institutions of their state, the knowledge of historical discipline is vital for the interpretation of nation building process (2011:7).

Historical knowledge, is therefore, a necessary background information to the contemporary issues, which a nation like Nigeria could lay hold on as a vital ingredient to her development efforts. In summary, the place of history in Nigerian development cannot be contended especially at this time of political, social, economic and religious tensions. The knowledge and the application of history of a people among other things help to create the enabling environment that sustains cordial intergroup relationship among the people, which can lead to peaceful co-existence. It is this very contribution of history that makes development possible in any clime or country. For Nigeria to make strides in her development as a nation, the teaching and the knowledge of Nigerian history remain paramount.

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