

**The Amalgamated Nigeria: An Ontological Search for Contemporary Perspectives to Peaceful and Harmonious Relations**  
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**Abstract**

This paper attempts to examine critically the symbolic matrimonial union of different Nation States with numerous ethnic groups with kaleidoscopic cultures, customs and traditions with the possibility of having a formidable and a united country. Historians and scholars of various fields of academic enterprise in different historical epochs have spotted out through intellectual telescope and investigations that the protracted ailment of Nigeria State started in 1914 on the eve of amalgamation of the North and South Protectorates. It is the aim of this paper to redirect scholars' attention to the major fundamental reasons why Nigeria is becoming an ancient Israel whereof the Northern Kingdom parted way from the Southern Kingdom consequent upon young despotic King who was not diplomatic in managing the affairs of the State probably because of his youthful exuberance. This paper observed that there is a loose tie among the Nation States that formed the entity Nigeria because the various Nations never consented to come together as one country, but rather, it was an imposition of the colonial masters just for an easy administrative purpose to exploit the natives and rob them of their patrimonial rights. This paper will focus mostly on the plethora of reasons that have contributed to the problem of: poor governance, marginalization, ethnicity, nepotism, unequal distribution of national

wealth, poverty, economic bankruptcy, corruption, insecurity, political gerrymandering, poor health system, paper value educational system and visionless leadership.

**Key Words: Peace, Harmony, Polygamy, Amalgamation, and Nation.**

### **Introduction**

Nigeria can best be compared to a polygamous home or family wherein peace is scarce because of jealousy, envy, unhealthy rivalry/competition among the wives, and calumny to win the heart of the husband for more favour and love. Nevertheless, in some years back polygamy was fashionable and pride to prominent men in the society because large families stood as threats to smaller families headed by those considered to be weak men in the society. Nigeria till date even with our emptiness is referred to as the giant of Africa because of its population, human and natural resources. Nigeria as a polygamous husband harboured so many tribes and ethnic groups with multiplicities of customs, traditions and cultural diversities. The British colonialists who solemnized this holy matrimony thought less of the consequences it would later cause the husband (Nigeria), the wives (tribes) and the children (ethnic groups). It was a marriage without consent, but based on political, economic and administrative convenience. Nigeria is in total state of quagmire, political distress, economic shamble, social Erebus, and moral precipice.

For an in-depth survey of this paper, we have to adopt historical, expository, phenomenological and critical-analytic methodology (an eclectic methodology). This type of eclectic methodology suits the task we sent out to undertake in this work. The historical method will assist in exposing the netting gritting behind the amalgamation and its later consequences, while the phenomenological method puts us in a position to assess the events and issues involved in the amalgamation without biases. The critical-analytic method helps us to apply a philosophical approach in presenting the problems involved in logical sequence to avoid contradictions in terms and purpose.

### **A Sketchy Survey of Pre-Amalgamation Era**

There were organized nation states or kingdoms before the arrival of the white man to Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. Those empires and kingdoms were ruled by reputable traditional rulers with galaxies of chiefs and warriors. Onabamiro (1983, 3) observes that, the excavation of the world famous Ife bronze heads and the statuette of the Oni of Ife show that as far as 700 years ago there was a highly organized community in Yoruba-land with thriving commerce and industry, as well as stable system of government with its hierarchy of chiefs and noble men at the head of Oni held both supreme, spiritual and temporal authority. His official regalia epitomized much royal splendor and magnificence. The same was revealed by the study of the bronze art of Benin, one of which was adopted as the national emblem at the Second World Black Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) in 1977. The conglomerations of nation states that were forcefully united to form the entity called Nigeria today were independent nations with their peculiarities and well organized in tandem with their traditions, customs, and cultures.

The early contact of the natives with the Portuguese exacerbated the incessant tribal wars among the independent nation States that were later united to form Nigeria. The Portuguese succeeded in arming the traditional rulers and their chiefs with modern weapons and thereby empowering them to fight other nation States to capture able bodied men and women to be sold to the Portuguese as slaves to work in their plantations in Central America, South America, Brazil and Sao Tome. Onabamiro (1983, 9) asserts that, thus armed with European weapons, the West African slaving kings and chiefs could organize raids among neighbouring tribes to obtain captives whom they would sell to the Portuguese in exchange for more manufactured goods and more guns. Thus the vicious circle of this nefarious trade continued from century to century for a period of 300 years by which time West Africa had been depopulated by about 20 million human beings.

The industrial revolution in Britain led to the abolition of slave trade when the British discovered that they needed raw materials like palm oil, kernels, cocoa and other farm produce to work in their industries and the depopulation of Africa would not be in favour of the industrial revolution. The aforementioned raw materials could be found in abundance in West Africa because of the favourable

climatic condition for such needed raw materials. They thought it wise that the able bodied men and women from West Africa could work in the farms of their respective countries and supply them with the needed raw materials for their industries to function properly. This plan of abolition of slave trade did not go down well with some West African Kings and Chiefs who were the major dealers in the slave trade business. The Portuguese and Spanish were not in support of the abolition of slave trade because of the slave labour requirement in Brazil, Sao Tome and other places they had plantations were insatiable. To counter the activities of these obdurate slavers, Britain on her own, decided to police the seas with her Royal Navy. The Yoruba inter-tribal war in 1821 also aided the Portuguese to get more slaves, a period when Samuel Ajayi Crowther was captured at the age of 15 years and sold to the Portuguese slave traders. Nevertheless, according to Onabamiro (1983, 14) on 7<sup>th</sup> April 1822 Ajayi, along with 164 other slaves was transported in a Portuguese ship named *Esperanza Felix* from the Lagos harbour. But that was the evening slave ship was spotted by the two ships of the Royal Navy. On boarding the ship and finding the slaves beneath the hatches, Captain H.G. Leeke of H.M.S. Myrmidon declared them liberated and put the Portuguese captain and his crew in irons. In June 1822 H.M.S. Myrmidon landed Ajayi and his fellow liberated slaves at Freetown in Sierra Leone.

It should be noted here that before the amalgamation, there were several Kingdoms and Empires in Nigeria that were not culturally or traditionally related. This reason contributed to tribal and expansionists wars for the defense of territorial boundaries. They were strange nation States that existed independently, though they engaged in trading activities with one another. There were domestic slaves in Africa like in other ancient worlds as in Roman Empire, Greece and some others, but not commercially based type of slavery that was later introduced by the Portuguese to the Africans that exacerbated tribal wars among the nation States that later became the country Nigeria. Those nation States before their contact with the white man they were striving independently for development based on their formidable economy and social-political organizations and structures.

The Trans-Atlantic slave trade paved way for the colonization of some African countries including Nigeria to burst the industrialization of first world nations. In

the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Onabamiro (1983, 89) states that Messrs. Beecroft, Glover, Carter and Moor took over Southern Nigeria for Great Britain using Lagos, Opobo and Benin as their bridge-heads. They encountered diverse people who spoke different languages and had different cultures. Indeed, these people were either stranger to one another or at perpetual warfare with one another. He goes further to show how the Fulani Sokoto Caliphate in the Northern part was acquired by Messrs. Goldie, Baikie and Lugard for Great Britain. This component was more populous than the Southern component but the vast majority of the people there spoke the same language, had the same basic culture and adhered to the same religion. The elaborate and effective government structure operated by the Emirates of the defunct Sokoto Caliphate, the written record of their history, their titled nobility, the proud and dignified bearing of defeated Emirs, the refusal of the general populace to emulate the mode of dress and style of living of the British victors and the tenacity with which they adhered to their Islamic religion: these were factors which endeared them to the heart of a man of Frederick Lugard's temperament. As a result of few British officials on ground, it became necessary for Lugard to introduce the 'Indirect Rule System' in the North for administrative convenience. Nevertheless, this system was not favourable to the British Government because of the financial implications.

With the above historical antecedence and analysis it could be deduced that amalgamation of North and South Protectorates was as a result of lack or limited resources to maintain the indirect rule system introduced by Lugard in the North for peace, harmony, and already existing organized government on ground before it was conquered by the British. The British took cognizance of the fact that the South was like Biblical tower Babel where God sent in confusion among the people through multiplicities of languages in order to stop them from building a sky scraper that would take them to heaven and see God. Uniting the South alone as a protectorate was enough problem considering the multiple ethnic groups, different cultures, customs, traditional belief systems and different historical origin, there was no room for such unity, it was like mixing oil and water together and expecting a harmonious blending without a noticeable separation. The incessant tribal wars in the South were fought on ethnic or tribal bases, because there were no common factors uniting them that would have appealed to their conscience that they were fighting their brothers. They were more or less strangers

to themselves, and they were only concerned with the protection of their tribes or ethnic groups, hence they could go at any length to exterminate the weaker ethnic groups or captured and sold them to slavery.

The unification or the amalgamation of the North and South Protectorates was the bedrock or the solid foundation upon which the problems of Nigeria rested as pretentious bed of roses over the years. Even the founding fathers noticed it before the independence and at that early stage they were only interested in gaining political liberty from the British with the hope that in years to come they would settle down for restructuring of the entire system left behind by the colonial masters. The founding fathers knew that the amalgamation was due to economic benefits to the colonizers who had little or no interest on the political and social development of their colonies. Chief Obafemi Awolowo (1961) points out in his lecture, *"Philosophy for Independent Nigeria"*, to Nigerian students at Conway Hall, London, anyone who cares to read his history aright will readily concur that the prime and sole motivation for imperialist predations, conquests, and rule is economic in character. If the imperialist powers can accomplish their economic exploitation of the weaker nations without political control they will much prefer to do it that way. As a matter of historical fact, colonial expansion began with the division of the territories of the weaker peoples into economic spheres of influence. It was when it became clear to the imperialists that economic control would become precarious unless there was political control as well, that the later was imposed.

### **The Colonial Period that culminated to Independent in 1960**

The amalgamation of 1914 by Fredrick Lord Lugard gave birth to the entity called Nigeria as a country/nation, and proper colonization began with full swing. Different ethnic groups with varieties of cultures, customs and traditional belief systems were collapsed together as one indivisible entity. Like in marriage when two become one no matter the different psychological make-up of those involved, the different ethnic groups were fused together as one to make up the entity called Nigeria in 1914 without consultation or consent of the various ethnic groups affected whether the fusion or marriage would be harmonious or not.

In the colonial era proper, Nigerians were facing two battle fronts at the same time. The first battle had arisen from being second class citizens in their father's land, because they have to follow the dictates of their colonial masters. The second battle was a battle of accommodation of other ethnic groups as one in all spheres of life. Cooperation and speaking in one voice was initially difficult in attempt to demand for independent from their colonial oppressors. Virtually all the administrative key positions were occupied by the British, while the natives were subservient to them as clerks, house maids, drivers, cooks, security guards, gardeners, and glorified messengers. Some of the British administrators were not as qualified as the natives who had opportunities to train overseas through the help of the early missionary societies in Africa. The colour of their skin put them in disadvantageous positions to occupy any administrative stool like their white counterparts who had probably studied in the same tertiary institutions and they were even better than them. Some of the whites that were mere technicians in Europe were placed in the position of consulting engineers in Nigeria, while the Nigeria engineers were made to work under them and take instructions from them as consultants. The military was worse off because the Nigerians that were recruited during first and second world wars, no one was a commissioned officer. Obasanjo (1987, 39-40) asserts that before and during the war, Nigerians were recruited in large numbers as rank and file into the regiment, but not one was commissioned as an officer. That notwithstanding, the Nigerian recruits featured prominently in the first and second world war and won laurels for bravery, dedication and loyalty. Their outstanding performance never attracted promotion to cadet officers but only certificate reward that added nothing tangible to their profession.

The colonial masters at no time considered their subjects as people capable and competent to rule themselves, because they thought they were not exposed to modern civilization and not rational enough to maintain their internal affairs. It was an assumption that betrayed the logic of low mentality and ignorance of the colonial masters about the natives, because before the conquering and the amalgamation of North and South Protectorates, there were Emirs, Obas, Crowned Princes and Chiefs managing the affairs of their people based on their laws, rules and regulations drawn from their local customs, cultures, and traditions. It was mere oppression and show of superiority over the colonized

citizens that made the colonial masters to deny them from playing administrative roles in the colonial administration. During the colonial era, some Nigerians were graduates from prestigious universities in Europe and America, and they were well respected in their fields of specializations. The natives resisted the British rule because they were aware what it meant to be colonized, therefore it would be myopic for them to think that the natives were not exposed enough to rule themselves or be in charge of some of the administrative organizations as relate to governance.

Nevertheless, there were developmental strides especially in 1940s to 50s before the independent. Achebe (2012, 39) affirms that the pace of change in Nigeria from the 1940s was incredible. He was not just talking about the rate of development, with villages transforming into towns, or the coming of modern comforts, such as electricity or running water or modes of transportation, but more of a sense that we were standing figuratively and literally at the dawn of new era. There was improvement in educational sector with the collaboration of missionaries who had built mission schools in towns and villages to educate the people. There was an avalanche of exposure and enlightenment which aided the people most especially from the Southern part of Nigeria to start agitating for independent very early even when the Northerners were not yet ready for it because of their backwardness in western education and with few elites. Some astute politicians like Sir. Herbert Macaulay, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Chief Anthony Enahoro from the South were well schooled, enlightened, and exposed like their British counterpart in field of politics with a defined and refined political ideology. While in the North they have Sir. Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto, Alhaji Abubakar Tafewa Balewa and Aminu Kano were very prominent in the Northern politics. The Northerners and their political leaders were in the good book of the British colonialists because they were not involved in aggressive agitation for independent compared to the South. Achebe (2012, 47) points out that initially the British resisted any agitation for independence, often by handing out stiff jail terms for 'sedition' to the disturbers of the peace. They knew the value of their colonies, and the natural resources they possessed-in Nigeria's case oil, coal, gold, tin, columbines, cocoa, palm oil, groundnuts, rubber, as well as human resources and intellectual capital.



Independent was no longer a mirage after the World War II, because Great Britain was financially and politically exhausted and bankrupt. It was a given opportunity for the colonized nations such as India led by Mohandas Gandhi to exploit and agitated for independence. According to Achebe (2012, 48) Nigerian veterans from different theatres of the war had acquired certain skills-important military expertise in organization, movement, strategy, and combat-during their service to the king. Another proficiency that came naturally to this group was the skill of protest, which was quickly absorbed by the Nigerian nationalists. Adediran and Alimi (2017, 1) corroborate with the above fact when they state that, politically, Nigeria gained and learned from the war-time experience. The ego and superiority of the imperial state which had been deflated and demystified during the war boosted and equipped the strength of Nigerian nationalists to challenge the rights of their overlords to perpetuate out-dated colonial rule.

#### **The Post-Colonial Era (1960 to date): A Re-evaluation of Events**

On October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1960, there was a mammoth crowd at Tafewa Balewa Square, Lagos, to witness the long awaited independent of the great nation (Nigeria). There were oratorical and eloquent rendition of endless speeches from both the colonizers and the colonized to mark the end of the long aged colonialism and ushered in a new era of political, economic and social freedom, self-governance and self-determination. For the people of this great nation (Nigeria), it was uhuru hence there was salvo of bravo in thunderous ovation with joyous hullaballos from children of school age that had little idea of independent or freedom. The tapestry of colossal celebrations turned the mood of the entire nation into a frenzy state of hysteria pumped up with hopeful speeches of unprecedented massive progress that would completely wipe away the tears of the citizens that were battered by the oppressive colonial despotic demagogues. The young elegant and determined politicians, who fought the colonial masters through protests and intellectual means to a stand-still, were seen as national heroes who had defeated external enemies and rescued our territorial integrity from them. Those politicians in persons of: Alhaji Abubakar Tafewa Balewa, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Sir Ahmedu Bello, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Chief Anthony Enahoro, Chief S.L. Akintola, and some other galaxies of renowned politicians appeared like Julius Caesar's (Roman General) army returning from a fierce battle at mount Olympus. All these were signs and symbols of hope that the nation (Nigeria) would progress

astronomically within a very short space of time as it recuperates fast from the Maccabean exploitation of the British maladministration. Was this a mere euphoria or a neurotic mental fantasy that would end up in a dream world as an utopic idea? This question would definitely throw us back to the events that took place on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 1960 to address some of the political, economic and social maladies the country “Nigeria” is present navigating in.

As earlier pointed out in this work, the uncontrollable celebration that Nigeria was thrown into on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October, 1960, was a manifestation of an avalanche of hope for good things to descend on the citizens in days ahead. The various existing political parties had detailed manifestoes to demonstrate to the entire world the maturity and readiness of the Nigerian politicians coming up to occupy the political, economic and social theatres previously occupied by the British imperialists. Some of the areas that featured mostly in their manifestoes were: education, agriculture, infrastructural development and social amenities. All the existing political parties work assiduously toward the prescriptions and dictates of their manifestoes. At that early stage there was cooperation, a symbiotic relationship among the different ethnic groups and general consciousness of one united country “Nigeria” with a symphony of brotherhood. The citizens could work in any part of the country and got to the zenith of their careers/professions or retired, and probably settled outside their States after retirement without hostilities.

At the initial stage too, there were several developmental strides in areas of education, agriculture and infrastructures because of the healthy competition among the regions. For the politicians to attain popularity among their people they had to work for it to attract votes during elections. Some of those politicians like Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Anthony Enahoro and few others were after fame and lasting legacy they would leave behind that the country would later built upon. They were fighting for political power to develop the nation and not to amass wealth for themselves and their generation yet unborn. Some of their contemporaries who were into politics with them had ostentatious mentality as they purportedly turned politics to oil wells and wells of wealth to draw and drill a generational wealth for their unborn children. Such greedy ones among the founding fathers of this nation attracted the attention of the military

junta at the early stage of the nation independent; the popular *Nunc dimittis* on the day of independent became esoteric cantata within a short period of time. Without exaggeration, Nigerians at different occasions had witnessed organized carnivals of transferable immortalized corruption of the political class with philosophical equanimity of stupidity. Instead of the Nigerian populace reacting to curb the act of corruption among our politicians they rather reward them with chieftaincy titles.

After the independent the nation was faced with the problem of: ethnic politics, corruption, electoral gerrymandering, tribal sentiments, self-opinionated leaders, and visionless leaders. Achebe (2012, 51) comments that, within six years of this tragic colonial manipulation Nigeria was a cesspool of corruption and misrule. Public servants helped themselves freely to the nation's wealth. Elections were blatantly rigged. The subsequent national census was outrageously staged-managed; judges and magistrates were manipulated by politicians in power. The politicians themselves were pawns of foreign business interests.

The British before their final exit from the Nigerian soil as colonial masters did not prevail and discourage the citizens from forming political parties in tandem with ethnic affiliations. Adediran and Alimi (2017, 1) state that constitutional crises and ethnic politics in the post-independent, Nigeria are firmly rooted in the experience of the country during the colonial period. By 1950, major ethnic groups, the Hausa/Fulani, the Yoruba and the Igbo, had started to contest for political control of Nigeria. Within the first decade of independence, Nigeria had started to harvest the fruit of ethnic politics and political rivalry in electoral crises, military coup, civil war and socio-religious crises. It is assumed that the colonial masters were aware of this and knew the negative implications and consequences it would later have on the country, yet they folded their arms to allow the nation to perish in its own errors. The early political parties were clear signs of the divisive nature of the country, and they later aggravated/exacerbated the problem of nepotism, tribalism and ethnicity in a country that was loosely amalgamated. For instance, the AG (Action Group) party was dominated by the Yoruba; NCNC was dominated by the Igbo, while the NPC (The Northern Peoples Congress) was dominated by the Hausa/Fulani. In such a scenario one cannot expect a formidable and united country, because each of the parties would focus on their ethnic groups. The ethnic

politics that was very vivid among the political class was transferred to the innocent indigenes that were very hospitable to foreigners in their States and infused into them the spirit of discrimination, nepotism, tribalism, segregation and ethnicity. Those working outside the State of their origins were no longer safe in the hands of the sons and daughters of the soil; they were treated like aliens in their own country. In terms of promotion the indigenes of the State were favoured against the non-indigenes; which marked the beginning of retrogression in our political, economic and social system till date.

In 1964, there was a general upheaval throughout the country because of electoral gerrymandering, snatching of ballot boxes, election rigging and wide spread corruption among the politicians and the aristocrats in the country. According to Achebe (2012, 64), Nigeria was rocked by one crisis after another in the years that followed independence. First, the Nigeria census of 1963-64 shook the nation, at that time, the federal election crisis of 1964, which was followed by the Western Nigeria election of 1965- also threatened to split the country at its seams. Obasanjo (1987) points out that it was the mishandling of elections in the Western region, and the subsequent total break-down of law and order which resulted in complete insecurity of life and property, that was the last straw. All these various degrees of events culminated to July 1966 coup by the military junta who thought it was time to carry out a moral and radical surgical operation to heal protracted moral ailment of the nation. The careless and uncalculated execution of the said coup dovetailed to the Nigeria Civil War that shook the very foundation of the nation. It was a war of gladiators that heroism and callousness was recklessly executed in its exactitude without the conscientiousness of unity and oneness as a nation. The three years of war further divided the country and deepen the ethnic political malady. The Igbo people felt betrayed, as they were hated and treated as external aggressors by other parts of the country especially the Yoruba and Hausa/Fulani. Till now, there is a lean cooperation that is very detrimental between the Yoruba and the Igbo, while that of Hausa/Fulani could be described as immortal and cancerous hatred that the Igbo even in centuries to come forgiveness would remain a distance horizon for mental imagination. The suffering of the Igbo race that turned the entire eastern part of the country into a theatre of an open mortuary during the civil war was worse than the talk about Rwanda genocide, because vultures were feeding fat with human carcass and hunger turned some of them to

cannibals. Civilians without arms (Asaba genocide) were killed like wild animals in African thick forest. Elizabeth (2017) points out that in October 1967, early in the Nigerian Civil War, government troops entered Asaba in pursuit of the retreating Biafran army, slaughtering thousands of civilians and leaving the town in ruins. News of the atrocity was suppressed by the Nigerian government, with the complicity of Britain and its significance in the subsequent progress of that conflict was misunderstood. During the civil war, it was historically documented that poor innocent children that were not killed or slaughtered by soldiers' bullets and daggers were left to wonder about and alone in the wilderness of melancholy. It was never a war of unity (to keep Nigeria one is a task that must be done: Gowon's slogan), but rather a malicious war of destruction and an attempt extermination of a particular race that stood out as the most progressive race in areas of education, technology, technocracy, exposure, and dominating in western civilization. The Igbo people were all over the country excelling in all professions of life and heading different ministries in the country. The Igbo people were and still are till date hardworking and risk-taking individuals ready to survival under any condition and any in part of the world where people are found. Without prejudice, they ought to be the pride of the nation based on their historical achievement and antecedents in Nigerian history.

The politicians turned Nigeria into a theatre of vagabonds and destitute who entertain them like Herod and Herodias with hedonistic tendency. They deliberately made the youths unemployed so that they could be used for their political interest. They use them as thugs during electioneering campaigns and dump them after elections like axe heads and wasted products.

### **The Amalgamated Nations in Search for Amalgamation: A Melodramatic Paradox**

Prior to the arrival of the Portuguese and the British colonialists, there were conglomerations of nation States that were well organized with dynamic leaders. Orioso (2017) asserts that by the time of European penetration and subsequent colonization, there were already in existence various political systems, each at different levels of development and sophistication in terms of organization and management. Nevertheless, there were tribal wars fought among the different tribes and ethnic groups to protect their territorial boundaries and what have you.

The Portuguese exacerbated the tribal wars with the advent of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade that lasted for over one hundred years and many able bodied men captured during the wars in slave trade period were sold away to the Portuguese as slaves. The history of the various tribal wars and slave trading are still very fresh in the people's memories and the seed of hatred sowed by the tribal wars among the different tribes is unresolved. Before the amalgamation, if the British colonialists were interested in a united country they would have reconciled the various tribes at war before any meaningful amalgamation. We all know that when enemies are forcefully banded together in an enclosed space the breath of their fury out of anger could trigger off their adrenaline to cause high blood pressure and suffocation because of hatred, sentiments and prejudice. This is exactly the situation of Nigeria as it is today. The different nation States banded together as one united country are not in harmony with one another because of their past history of wars, subjugation by other ethnic groups with superior weapon, stories of betrayal during wars, forceful annexation of land by powerful ethnic groups, and to crown it all, the slave trade saga. Then in recent time, the Nigeria civil war that swept through the entire south east of Nigeria.

The continuous conflicts in Nigeria could be traced to the loose and incomplete amalgamation of the South and the North protectorate of 1914. There were no symbols and signs of unity between the protectorates before the amalgamation even though there were no clear conflicts apart from boundaries settlements. Even after the amalgamation, there is still ethnic consciousness running through the veins of the different ethnic groups than one united and unified country. In Nigeria, ethnicity supersedes the unity of the country because politics are played along ethnicity. Political parties are formed in tandem with ethnicity from the inception of independent. Although the political parties do have members across the States and the six geo-political zones in the country, that is not withstanding; each of them is dominated by a particular ethnic group/tribe. This seemingly political error started from the founding fathers of the country. It is an abysmal error that one would have expected the present new generation politicians to have corrected, but rather they swim in it and carry it further to cause tribal and nepotistic mayhem on the innocent citizens. Some of the politicians deliberately created poverty and illiteracy among their people so that they would remain impoverish and unexposed so that they would be veritable instruments for

election malpractices and political thuggery. The almagiri in the North for instance are very useful to the Northern politicians and Islamic religious leaders, because they could be used as thugs and hoodlums during elections and religious crisis in the same North. They are easy to brainwash and manipulate because of the level of illiteracy and low mentality. An attempt to educate them get the few elites from the North angry because they do not want the children of the poor from low background to compete and challenge their children now and in future to come. They would rather give them Othman Dan Fodio's Qur'anic education where they are indoctrinated with religious doctrines and dogmas to turn them to Islamic religious fanatics who would be ready to die for their faith and slaughter those who refuse to accept their religious views and faith.

The amalgamation was not just an error created by the British colonialists, but a deliberate attempt to create a Biblical tower of Babel and later benefit from the disharmony and internal cataclysm. It could be recalled that the last election they (the colonialists) assisted to organize before their final exit from Nigeria was marked with massive rigging, malpractice and alteration of results in favour of a particular part of the country. Achebe (2012, 50) asserts that later it was discovered a courageous English junior civil servant named Harold Smith had been selected by no other than Sir James Robertson to oversee the rigging of Nigeria's election so that its compliant friend in [Northern Nigeria] would win power, dominate the country, and serve British interests after independence. They left Nigeria in crisis that till now is unresolved, and still recycling and reflecting in the country politics, economy and social life. The first civilian regime led by Alhaji Abubakar Tafawe Balewa never lasted because it was founded on a very weak foundation. The young politicians were inexperienced to detect on time that the British were not ready to relinquish power to them and the ground was not smooth and soft enough for such venture. In a jubilating mood they entered into power without a clear vision for the future of the nation and some of the young politicians were too much in haste to get themselves in corrupt practices that ushered in the military junta who ousted them out of power.

The first military coup was another touching incident that clearly indicated that the level of ethnic politics in this nation would hardly give way to one unified country that the amalgamation intended. There were different interpretations and

colorations given to the coup by the various ethnic groups. For instance, for the Hausa/Fulani the coup was targeted against them to kill their few elites and politicians to pave way to the southerners especially the south-easterners to dominate them in all spheres of life. While some of the southerners from south-east and south-south, the coup was intended to reposition the country that was last drifting to moral precipice because of the blazing inferno of corruption almost consuming the country. Yet for the south-west the coup was a sign of betrayal by the coup plotters who intended to suppress other ethnic groups in favour of their people. It was only few Nigerians from the different parts of the country that were able to assess objectively the reasons behind the coup without bias. These different interpretations and misconception of the intension of the coup led to an appraisal or counter coup led by the Northern extract in Nigeria Army and pogrom that took place in the North that saw the death of many easterners (Igbo) that were living in the North. This singular action dovetailed to the Nigeria civil war that lasted for three years.

Many Nigerians till date are still inquiring and seriously investigating the reason behind the amalgamation due to the visible differences among the various nations affected by the amalgamation. The complains that are oozing out like black blood about the amalgamation are traceable to ethnicity, nepotism, incompatible cultures, irreconcilable traditions, various customs, different languages with different historical origin of the amalgamated nations. For instance the Igbo have nothing in common with the Yoruba and Hausa/Fulani nations in terms of language, tradition, culture and what have you. Also, the Edo people have no historical link with the Hausa/Fulani and the Igbo. Apart from economic and political reasons, on what ground were they amalgamated as one country? For Udulu (2017, 198) the administrative differences between the North and the South gave us a better understanding of the fundamental differences between the political aspirations of the leaders of the North and South. While the leaders of the South were struggling for the generality of the masses, the leaders of the North who are mainly from the ruling class were trying to salvage their ancestral clan first, before thinking of their followers, the masses. This was why there were differences in thought between the leaders of the South and the leaders of the North.



It is a reality that the reason why the amalgamation is almost an aberration and a comic utopia is as a result of the woeful failure of the Federal government and the central leadership. The central leadership failed to provide good and exemplary leadership that would make the citizens feel that Nigeria is one and belongs to all of us. Nigeria ought to be a country where people would be proud of their citizenship and not too conscious about their ethnicity and State of origin. Udulu (198) argues that Nigeria's political profile is traceable to the colonial period. The British rubber-stamped the then existing political formations and administrations of various ethnic groups of Nigeria, and maintain that status quo until they left. The Americans talk more of America as their country than their States of origin because they enjoy the same things as citizens without special treatment enjoyed by citizens from some States either because those at the herms of affairs are from such States. They do not complain about marginalization, nepotism, ethnicity, favouritism, one-sided appointment in favour of tribes' men and women, or one-sided infrastructural development. They rather promote equality among all the citizens and dwell more on things of common interest and common good of the people than wasting their resources on frivolities and ethnic politics as experienced in the Nigerian States.

The ongoing protest (that started 08/10/2020 scheduled to last for 30 days) against police brutality that culminated to other agitations such as good governance, restructuring, reviewing of bogus salaries and allowances of politicians, funding of the educational sector, reviewing the poor salaries of the Nigeria forces and paramilitary, and some other sensitive issues to move Nigeria forward; some of the politicians tagged the protesters action as ethno-religious plot under the influence of opposition parties to unseat the APC led government. The Governor of Kogi State in an opened broadcast to the State on the 25<sup>rd</sup> of October, 2020, accused the opposition parties of master minding the youth protest against police brutality (ENDSARS), and referred to the protesters as hoodlums and looters. It is a kind of replication of what happened in 1966 when some eminent Northern elites politicized the very first coup in Nigeria and the young military officers from the North carried out a counter coup that ended up in civil war. If Nigeria were to be a united country as some few beneficiaries from the decayed system claim, whenever there is an uprising like what we are experiencing now, the leaders should be addressing the issues in question rather than localizing it as a target

against a particular section of the country or against a particular ethnic group. There are numerous symptoms and signs that Nigeria is not one and will never be one because Nigeria never had leaders that were ready to unit this country as one and all citizens treated equally. Nigeria as it is today is under the serious influence of religious and ethnic politics with distrust of none tribal people. When an Hausa/Fulani is coming to power, his tribal men and women are expecting appointments into juicy positions like Managing Director of NNPC, President of CBN, Chief of Army Staff, and the rest from him, while the other parts of the country feel marginalized. The same apply to the Yoruba and other ethnic groups in Nigeria whenever they are in position of authority. As a result of this anomaly, meritocracy has been sacrificed at the altar of mediocrity in Nigeria. The ethnic politics had been immortalized to the extent that competent people are not given the opportunity through appointments to contribute to the building of the nation, Nigeria. It is a country where a legal practitioner is appointed as minister of mines and power, a medical practitioner becomes a minister of labour and employment, while a technocrat is made the minister of health, just because of ethnicity, religion and party affiliation. What an irony of a great nation like Nigeria where both material and human resources are in surpluscity yet there is deficiency in distribution of wealth and unprofessional appointments of incapable citizens to head the various existing ministries and institutions. The Nigeria leaders succeeded in making the citizens hopeless individuals waiting for miracle endlessly to transform their impoverish life styles to a meaningful average and minimum standard of living. The hunger in the land has turned naturally and supposed decent girls, ladies and women to cheap and chronic street prostitutes, while boys and young men have taken to robbery and cymbal crimes just to get food to eat in order to continue with their miserable existence in a land flowing with milk and honey.

### **The Good and the Bad of the 1914 Amalgamation of Nigeria**

Realistically, amalgamation itself is not evil when there is understanding, genuine intension, common agreement for the common good of those involved, historical fusion of the ethnic groups involved, similarity of language, culture, custom and tradition of the ethnic groups involved, and disabuse of nepotistic, and ethno-religious mentality by the nation States to be amalgamated. In African traditional society some years back, those at the marriageable age might not had knowledge

of men or women they would spend the rest of their lives with either as husbands or wives because it was the responsibility of the parents who claimed to have matrimonial experiences that knew the best husbands or wives for their children. The children accepted whoever the parents approved for them for marriage without questioning as a sign of obedient to the parents. As time goes on, the couple developed love towards each other by accommodating their shortcomings and on daily bases try to understand each other as they grew older in the marriage. When civilization crept in as unexpected thief at night through westernization, such tradition died a natural death, and children are now allowed to decide their fates where marriage is concerned. The modern couples must understand and love each other before marriage is contracted.

The above simple illustration of marriage in African traditional society summarizes the amalgamation of the North and South Protectorates. Though, the conglomerates of nations forcefully brought together as one might not be at the interest of the people at the early stage of the amalgamation, but after several years of being together and passing through stormy and thunderous situations especially the one of the civil war period, it is expected that the various groups would have mastered the art of staying together as one. In spite of the noticeable differences among the various ethnic groups, they still stand to benefit more from each other. For instance, there are States in Nigeria that are blessed with natural resources such as: crude oil, gold, lime stone, iron ore, and while some other States are blessed with agricultural produce. Human resources are distributed throughout the country with rendition of services within and outside their States. The various cultures, traditions, and customs of the ethnic groups are additional coloration to the social beauty of Nigeria and dragged it out of cultural and traditional monotony. Whenever carnivals are organized in Nigeria to showcase our cultural heritage people admire the amazing different cultures been displayed. The various ethnic groups have lots of things to benefit from each other in area of mineral resources, agriculture, and the entertainment world. No man is an Island; therefore, the various ethnic groups with a good understanding of each other they could live together harmoniously and peacefully. In which case, they should pay more attention to the general well-being of humanity especially their neighbouring States and other ethnic groups they co-exist with in Nigeria. In most advanced nations of the world, the citizens focus more on the common good of the

nation and less conscious of their ethnic affiliations and origin, because they realized long ago that less would be achieved if they allow ethnic politics to dominate their social-economic lives. That is why every average American adopts as a philosophy the Abraham Lincoln's dictum which says "think of what you can do for your country and not what your country can do for you." That is everyone should in his/her best ability contribute to the growth and development of the country and not family and ethnic group.

The amalgamation has made Nigeria the most populous country in Africa and therefore referred to as the giant of Africa. Nigeria has played the role of a father and godfather to other countries in Africa at crises periods in history even before her independent. The Nigeria Arm Forces played a prominent role in Congo crisis, Liberian war, Sierra-Leon war, and even Lebanon in the 80s. Nigeria has earned her respect from other African countries because of the roles she has played as the giant of Africa. Nigeria stood and supported South Africa both materially and morally during apartheid policy in South Africa in the 70s.

Nevertheless, the amalgamation of 1914 has further divided the country along ethnicity, religion, and politics. The Hausa/Fulani see other parts of the country as potential enemies who cannot be trusted and entrusted with any sensitive positions. They also consider them as strong competitors who want to push them out of the scheme of political management of the country because of the educationally disadvantageous position of the North. The Southerners and the Middle Beltane think the same way by seeing Hausa/Fulani as the British favourites from the time of amalgamation till date; because of the belief that they never agitated for independent and yet they produced the first prime minister. Udulu (199) posits that the tragedy of 1967 the Nigeria Civil War was that many of its seeds were not, as it is often claimed, sown in October 1960 or even in July 1966 but in the 1950's or as some see it in 1914 (or may be in 1900 when colonialism had its root on the land) after the amalgamation of North and South protectorates. In the 1950's the argument between the Northern parts of the country and the Southern part in terms of readiness of the country independence brought a heated argument between the two. While the South claimed its readiness for independence in 1958, the North under the political leaders like Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto, was vehemently against independence at that time due to

lack of skilled and enough educated personnel to take over anticipated post-colonial administration. By this action the Southern politicians saw the North as delaying the independence of Nigeria.

Also, most Nigeria till now see the amalgamation as false and forced marriage among the ethnic groups especially between North and South because they have nothing in common in are of life style, politics, religion and otherwise. It is a strong belief that the amalgamation was contracted just for economic reason in favour of the colonial masters. This belief is solely responsible for the sharp division and marginalization of some ethnic groups, constant crisis among the ethnic groups, nepotism and lack of national patriotism among the citizens. The development of the entire nation seems to slow down because of ethnic politics and discrimination against one another in area of appointment. The politicians capitalized on this loopholes to carry out their nefarious activities against the citizens through the embezzlement of funds meant to develop the country, while their ethnic cronies back them up ignorantly because they have the mentality that when their tribal men and women steal from the national or State treasury they would come home victoriously to establish in their community. That is why those who loot the nation money successful are given chieftaincy titles in their various communities, while those who served the nation meritoriously are thrown to the lowest background without recognition in their communities.

### **Recommendations**

This work recommends the following as an attempt to resolve the seeming perennial problems created by 1914 amalgamation:

1. Education of the majority of the citizens should be considered as the first priority by the government to broaden the people's mind to think beyond their ethnic background.
2. Patriotic Nigerians should be allowed to occupy leadership positions even if they are not financially buoyant to vie for such positions.
3. Old politicians who are too conscious of their ethnic groups should not be allowed to contest for any political position in Nigeria.
4. If the various ethnic groups unanimously and collectively agree to go on their separate ways it should be granted instead of living in pains together in the name of one Nigeria.

## Conclusion

When marriage is falsely and forcefully contracted because of the benefits of the parents of the couple, the marriage will never be enjoyed by the couple because they will continue to live in bondage and strangers to one another. Also, there is no polygamous home the wives will love each other more than the man who cater for all of them. In resume's the foundation upon which the colonial masters built Nigeria nation through amalgamation is too fragile, weak, frail like one suffering from osteoporosis, and with inferior materials. Nigerians have demonstrated time without number that we are plenteously living together as one whereas we are very much divided and far away from each other. There is no iota of love among the ethnic groups that made up of Nigeria, and it is only those who are the economic and political beneficiaries that actually want the country to remain as one to safe guard their wide spread acquired properties throughout the country. The average Nigerians would like to go their own ways to struggle for their survivals. Nevertheless, separation or secession may not be a permanent solution to the suffering, bad governance and marginalization of some ethnic groups, but rather good leadership and leaders who are patriotic and ready to make sacrifice to bring the nation out of economic, social, and political conundrum and bottomless doldrums. Finally, until Nigeria is ready to practically suppress and eradicate money politics and vote buying, even when the ethnic groups succeeded in parting ways, we will continue wallowing in abject poverty, penury, and oppression from the political class who heartless in looting and criminally inclined in slaying the common man on the street to climb up to high positions in the land.

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