



# ENUGU STATE UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

**JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES**

**Volume 8**  
Number 2,  
**2023**

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**

Prof. Oby Omeje

**MANAGING EDITOR**

Prof. Barnabas Nwankwo

**PUBLISHED BY**

**Faculty of Social Sciences,  
Enugu State University of Science And Technology**

# **Marginalization and Political Agitations in Multi-ethnic Nation: Interrogating the Issues, Challenges and Prospects for a Politically Inclusive and Progressive Modern Nigeria**

**Joy Ngozi Eleje**

*Department of Political Science*

*Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities*

*Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), Enugu*

[joy.eleje@esut.edu.ng](mailto:joy.eleje@esut.edu.ng)

## **Abstract**

*Marginalization, conceptually and empirically is a phenomenon not new in the Nigeria socio-political lexicon; as it has remained a recurring decimal attracting local, national and global debates. In the case of Nigeria, marginalization is multi-dimensional but its politicization constitutes a negative omen confronting the peace, stability and development of the Nigerian federal arrangement. As presently constituted Nigeria is faced with worrisome hues and cries of ethno-religious marginalization, youth and women marginalization, economic and political marginalization evident across states, tribes, ethnicities, religions and gender. The agglomeration and persistence of all these bring to question the sincerity of the political leadership and the essence of Nigeria federal system of government. It is consequent on the above concerns and the apparent lack of trust on the system that the country is today riddled with incessant political agitations that are fast consuming the heart of the Nigerian state. This paper, therefore, is a modest contribution in the quest for true Nigerian federalism that upholds inclusivity across the board as sacrosanct for a more united and progressive Nigeria for all in the spirit of justice, equity and fairness. The paper explored marginalization and political agitations in Nigeria as a multi-ethnic nation with focus on issues, challenges and prospects for a politically inclusive modern Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** *Marginalization, Political Agitations, Multi-ethnic Nation, Politically Inclusive, Progressive, Modern Nigeria*

## **Introduction**

Nigeria as a nation is colonial bequeathal and its structure till date is a product of colonialism concocted without reference and consideration to the interest of the locals. Thus Nigeria remains a conglomeration of ethno-linguistic, cultural and religious groups and affiliations engendered by European imperial inquisition. Nevertheless, Nigeria is also endowed with bounteous natural and human resources; enough to cater for the wellbeing of its numerous population. In spite of her rich natural and human endowments, Nigeria today is regarded as fragile cum failed state arising from numerous challenges confronting its corporate existence and developmental trajectory. Nigeria has witnessed lots of woes and troubles in over six decades of political independence. The memories of Nigeria-Biafra civil strife is yet to be overcome. Terrorism, banditry, farmer-herders clash and all manners of political agitations have become the order of the day. More so, Nigeria is plagued by vestiges of corruption, political instability, and bad governance and worrisome enough is the intensity with which the phenomenon of marginalization by one ethnic group against another has continued to create tensions hence crippling national growth and development. The level of

marginalization and ethnic unrest is so intense that the seemingly efforts toward tackling socio-economic and political challenges in Nigeria appear illusive. Of the ethnic groups that constitute the Nigerian State, each is jostling for recognition and employing every possible means to sway through even at detriment of others. Some of the measures employed often times pose threat to the corporate existence and development of the nation. The relationships amongst the various ethnic groups in Nigeria is that mutual suspicion, mistrust, and acrimony.

In the light of the above, the rate of crisis and agitations by various ethnic groups in Nigeria, most especially South-eastern Nigeria occasioned by the high level of negligence and marginalisation by other major is highly alarming. Even though, government and community leaders have tried to minimize the problems of ethnicity in Nigeria, it still stares us in the face.

Ethnic conflict, marginalisation and political agitations are identified as the bane of democratic experiments in Nigeria. Moreover, since the late 1980s, ethnicity in Nigeria has assumed disturbing new dimensions. The most crucial of these are the issues of marginalisation and agitations by ethnic minorities. It can also be argued that the high level of corruption and lawlessness in Nigeria is largely due to the determined efforts of the hegemonic Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba rulers of Nigeria to shut out other groups from participating in high level decision making. Currently, the discriminatory policies of the President Buhari's administration that concentrates appointments and development in the North and West and starving the South-east and other minorities of development and appointments into political/bureaucratic positions at the centre it totally disheartening and has continued to exacerbate the resurgence of political agitations in the present political dispensation.

There have been various debates and varied opinions on this prevailing scenario from scholars, political leaders, and Nigerians on the issues, which have questioned the functionality and appropriateness of the Nigerian federal system resulting in clamour for political restructuring to include equalisation of all geo-political zones in the socio-economic and political spectrum of Nigeria.

### **Objective of the Study**

The main objective of this paper was to explore the phenomenon of marginalization and political agitations in a multi-ethnic nation like Nigeria. Sequel to the above, the paper shall address the following specifics;

1. To explore the nature of ethnicity, marginalization and political agitations in Nigeria
2. To interrogate the issue of marginalization and the challenges of political agitations in a multi-ethnic Nigeria; and
3. To determine the prospects for a politically inclusive modern Nigeria.

### **Methodology**

This paper used exploratory design. Exploratory design fits where a situation has a deviant character. However, the goal of exploratory design is to discover ideas and insights. This study employed the exploratory design in order to provide better understanding of the failed situation in the local governance system in Nigeria. In addition to the exploratory design, this paper employed qualitative method in its data collection and analyses. Qualitative approach emphasizes meanings (words) rather than frequencies and distributions (numbers) when collecting and analyzing data. In the main, qualitative approach seeks to understand and

interpret the meaning of situations or events from the perspectives of the people involved and as understood by them (in this relying absolutely on documented evidence).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study adopted the social exclusion theory, which contends that social exclusion compels individuals and groups to discriminatory practices (marginalization) that expose them to humiliations and deprivations. The proponents of social exclusion theory among whom are scholars such as Pacione, 1997; Lee et al, 1997; Black and Muddiman, 1997; Walker, 1997; and Hills, 1998 among others; posit that when some groups of individuals are excluded and alienated from the mainstream of society it has negative resultant effects on their citizenship and other political and socio-economic rights. These exclusions are not just limited to material resources but also to matters like social participation, culture and education, access to social services and political power. By the above contention, the theory is considered apt for the study as it succinctly captures the point of view and focus of the study. This is because it not only exposes the complexity of the persistent powerlessness arising from systemic marginalization of some ethnic groups in Nigeria but it further explains the cause of deprivations, humiliations, disempowerment, alienation and hardship facing the marginalized groups as well as the consequential challenges on the political, socio-economic health of Nigerian state due to incessant political agitations.

### **Conceptual Review**

In doing justice to the subject matter of this study, it is only rational that the keywords of this paper be meaningfully explicated for better and easy understanding. To address the concept of ethnicity has been a herculean task. This is because the terms such as ethnicity, ethnic groups, tribe, and ethnic crises and what they stand for on their face value is not very clear.

Phenomenally, marginalization is not alien to the Nigerian federal system; it is copiously manifest in the ramifications of all interactions in the political process. Literally speaking therefore, marginalization is the process whereby a thing or someone is pushed to the edge of a group and accorded lesser importance in comparison to others. In lieu of the above understanding, with respect to Nigeria, marginalization is multi-dimensional and thus a predominantly socio-economic and political phenomenon by which a section of the country; mostly a minority group or sub-group is excluded, and their needs or desires ignored or denied as the case may be. Giving credence to the above descriptions, Mullaly (2000) opines that “marginalization has the potential to result in severe material deprivation, and in its most extreme form can exterminate groups”. Aligning to the above point of view, Young (2000) adds that “along with material deprivation, marginalized individuals are also excluded from services, programs and policies”. Marginalization as a phenomenon therefore is highly consequential to the peace, unity and stability of a nation if not ameliorated. Furthermore, marginalization may be viewed as the socio-cultural cum political process of becoming or being made marginal and/or put to the edge, and excluded from the scheme of things; be it politically, economically and otherwise. Marginalization in Nigeria mostly involves a people being denied certain degrees of political positions and opportunities and economic status. It is this dimension of marginalization that always heats up the polity resulting in restiveness and political agitations of all kinds.

To better appreciate the meaning of multi-ethnic nations we first need to understand what ethnicity or ethnic group is all about. In the Nigerian context, ethnicity and certain concepts like tribe and nationality are oftentimes used interchangeably. This explains why there is no unanimous agreement among scholars as to what defines ethnicity. Thus, ethnicity entails

recognition and pledge of importance to acclaimed affinity among a particular group of people and considerable differences among others. From the etymological point of view, the adjective “ethnic” comes from the Greek word “ethnos” which refers to a group of people who share a common and distinctive culture. According to Obasi (2010) “the group shares a commonality of social customs, rites, myths, religion and ancestral homeland”. Considering its classical form, it refers to members of a particular ethnos that share common features among different ethnic groups. On the other hand, ethnicity in the submission of Azeez (2004) is a sense of people-hood (in-group feelings) that has its foundation in the combined remembrance of past experience and common aspiration.

According to Cohen cited in Okorie (2019) ethnic group is defined as a collection of people who share some patterns of normative behaviour and form a part of larger population, interacting with people from other ethnic groups within the framework of social system. The underlined phrase in the above definition is “sharing of normative behaviour”. Indeed ethnic groups form part and parcel of a political organization called state; even as they maintain their cultural practices, language and more (Adeleke & Charles, 2015). Umezina (2012) defines an ethnic group as one which “ascribes to itself the common blood or common ancestry”. It is a social group of people who identify with each other based on common ancestral, social, cultural or national experience. It is important to note that membership of an ethnic group tends to be associated with shared cultural heritage ancestry, history, language (dialect) or ideology and with symbolic system such as religion, attire, mythology and so on. It is the fact of belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition.

In other words ethnicity is a concept employed by the nations to further their interests and desires. According to Sklar cited by Olukoju (1997), tribal movements may be created and instigated by the new men of power in furtherance of their interests and personal political agenda. The above definition succinctly explains the rationale behind agitation behaviour of some ethnic groups who feel marginalized in the Nigeria polity.

As it concerns political agitations therefore, it is apt to start by saying that the behavioral revolution is a major turnaround in political science as it introduced radical methodological re-orientations, promotes inter-subjectivity, and "identifies the behaviour of individuals or group of individuals as the primary unit of analysis" (Eldersveld & Katz, 2007) in the study of politics. This is why political behaviour is typically "concerned with individual behaviour in the society" (Rose, 2003). Without focusing on individuals, Dalton and Alix (2004) assert, “we cannot systematically explain what citizens actually believe and how they act”. Human attitudes towards politics come in different dimensions, and one critical aspect of it is agitation. The political agitator is a unique political animal. Defined from administrative standpoint, he is one who "exaggerates the difference between one rather desirable social policy and another (Policy Science Centre 2). Socially, he is a man of peculiar behavioral composition, his personality having been formed through interplay of social factors that make him the type that bothers to take emotional extra look and pay critical attention towards public policies and practices that others are often silent about.

In lieu of the above, political agitation is a form of political protest, resistance and contentious behaviour. The political agitator is often fundamentally disenchanted with certain actions or inactions of the political class, and he seeks redress to them in means acceptable to him. The agitator's "protest action threatens elites, and protesters refuse to acknowledge hierarchies and power structures that have been established or established themselves" (Olafsson, 2007), so, when the political elite make policies in the state, they use the instrumentality of the state to enforce and defend them from anyone who dares to raise

objection, brandishing punishments, injuries, jail terms and even death to enforce their threat. The political agitator often ignores these consequences, and, most times, goes ahead on collision course with the state and its repressive instrumentalities.

Given the above scenario, political inclusivity is an emerging concept in the Nigeria political spectrum. It is a term coined to address the existing gap created by all forms of marginalization and exclusion (be it gender based, religious, ethnic, cultural or socio-political) in Nigeria and elsewhere. In other words it is a deliberate process or means for ensuring that all known ethnic groups in a polity are equitably integrated and effectively engaged in all the political processes and activities including equal access to political positions on the bases of justice and fairness. According to Ifediora (2020) political inclusivity portends openness and equal treatment to everyone and not limited to certain people, no matter the gender, tribe, race, language or creed. In this regard this all political appointments, services, establishments, schools, government agencies, and other institutions are welcoming of all people, regardless of their ethnic identity or expression and political affiliation.

Political inclusivity as a paradigm shift holds the potential of eliminating marginalization and thus mitigating incessant political agitations prevalent in a multi-ethnic nation like Nigeria.

### **An Insight into the Nature of Ethnicity, Marginalization and Political Agitations in Nigeria**

It is arguable that Nigeria as a nation is built on a faulty foundation; and amalgamation by Lord Lugard did not consider the local interests and desires of the natives. The formation of the Nigerian state in line with the economic interest of the colonial government paved way for the integration of different ethnic groups with varied ideologies and religious affiliations hence the emergence of ethno-political unrest and tensions in Nigeria. Furthermore, Nwodo (2011) states that;

*“When the British colonial rulers, in the early 20th century, forced the two hundred and fifty ethnic groups that make up Nigeria into a territorial entity, their major preoccupation was to maintain law and order and to make the economic exploitation of Nigeria as easy as possible”.*

But as Dim (2010) asserts, it was solely Europe’s determination to achieve hegemony. The then established ethnic heterogeneity becomes time and again virulent when the social differences lead to social tensions. He further observes that in Nigeria today, conflicts that are political by nature are often disguised as ethnic and religious ones. Arguing further, Umezina (2012) insists that;

*“Nigeria is a mishmash of more than 250 ethnic groups, each of which is jostling for recognition and relevance in the political arena; each has terrible fear of being dominated by others; each is crying of political marginalization”.*

The amalgamation of the Northern and southern protectorates without taking cognizance of the African peoples similarities and most importantly their dissimilarities in terms of structural constitutions, cultures, language and value system and ethnic make-up account for the incessant ethno-religious conflicts, marginalization and political agitations in Nigeria.

Coleman cited in Egbunu (2009) states that although ethnicity is said to be rooted in the very set up of Nigeria, but it got exacerbated by the colonialist indirect rule approach. In addition to the above, Ikime (2008) decries that “it was the British who forced us, as it were, into one nation. It was they who subdivided us into regions, provinces, divisions, districts and sub districts. We did not choose the province, division to which we belonged”. It is not in doubt that such arrangement will certainly have far reaching effects on the polity, unity and development of Nigeria. Describing the prevailing scenario, Nnoli (1980) vehemently maintains that the introduction of indirect rule in Nigeria by Lord Fredrick Lugard, not only reinforced ethnic divisions; it also complicated the task of wielding diverse elements into a Nigerian nation. This method of rulership at the surface engenders relative peace, but apparently, ferments ethnicity.

Olukoju cited in Uzoigwe and Nwadiolor (2017) reveals that ethnicity became further intensified when the Richard’s constitution institutionalized regionalism and thereby ensured politicization of communal associations. Cognizant of this development Amucheazi cited in Uzoigwe and Nwadiolor (2017) asserts that

*“The focus of identity remained with the region and the ethnic group rather than shifting to the new nation-State-Nigeria. This notion was prevalent at every turn of event as the Nigerian citizen identifies him/herself as an Easterner (Igbo), Northerner (Hausa/Fulani) or Westerner (Yoruba)”.*

Suffice to say that during this period politics, access to power and resources were largely determined by ethnic and religious affiliations. During the period also many of the political parties were formed on regional basis and sustained by ethnic chauvinism and regional parochialism. We also cannot rule out the effects of creation of separate quarters popularly called “Sabon Gari” for strangers especially in the Northern region. Such separate settlement is a form of marginalization and thus negates opportunities for mutual relationship and provides platform for differentiation of ethnic groups.

So far we have tried to link the issue of ethnicity, marginalization and political agitations to the colonial masters, however, we cannot overlook the involvement of the educated elites that skyrocketed ethnic tensions through post-independence administration. Most of the political parties that emerged then primarily triggered the mobilization of primordial ethnic prejudices and sentiments as opposed to national issues. This allowed for differential treatment of ethnic groups evident in educational disparity, domination and marginalization so intense in the sharing of “national cake”. The disparity in education engendered mutual suspicion and discontentment. This is equally evident in the lop-sided power sharing, dethronement of merit and enthronement of mediocrity as obtains in the manner and pattern of appointment to public offices. Ethnicity has become so pervasive in Nigeria that it serves as a means of attracting federal resources only to suit the interest of a particular region at the expense of the others and common good (Uzoigwe & Nwadiolor, 2017). Ethnicity and marginalization to a considerable extent has questioned the spirit of patriotism in Nigeria therefore, it should be considered as a cog in the wheel of nation equity and national cohesion. This is the Nigeria reality; since over six decades of political independence the country has never fully experienced peace. It is confronted by a history of one threat or the other impact of which is enormous and devastating.

In Nigeria today therefore, we can identify different dimensions of marginalization as below:

- a) *Ethno-religious Marginalization:* Suffice to say that by the very structural composition of Nigeria, ethnic and religious identities coincide and thus have readily played significant roles in the hands of the ruling elite as subject of marginalization of one group against another.
- b) *Economic and Social Marginalization:* In the case of Nigeria socio-economic marginalization is highly pronounced. This indeed has contributed to widespread denial of access to opportunities and resources by an ethnic group against the other and consequently it results in increased poverty levels.
- c) *Political Marginalization:* The most worrisome dimension of marginalization in Nigeria today is political marginalization, which has been highly elevated in the last decade especially under the APC led federal government of Muhammadu Buhari. This dimension of marginalization has glaringly played out against the Igbos of Southeast extraction through denial of appointments to certain critical positions at the federal level. It might interest you to know that since 2015 under the present administration the Fulani has dominated appointments in security architecture of Nigeria. Despite been one of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria, southeast Igbo has no single representation in the National security council of Nigeria. Similar situation is applicable in most other major appointments of the present administration and therefore a clear sign of marginalization, which has continued to fan the embers of ethnic crisis and political agitations in Nigeria.

### **Marginalization and the Challenges of Political Agitations in a Multi-ethnic Nigeria**

Nigeria is confronted by deep-rooted underdevelopment challenges. Thus issue of marginalization in a multi-ethnic society is a derivative of ethnicity and therefore breeds political agitations. However, as Tanko (2007) observed, that there are many ethnic groups in a society does not automatically mean that there must be conflict between them. This is the purpose of a true federal arrangement is supposed to serve but unfortunately in the case of Nigeria, the situation is different. Osaghae and Suberu (2005) aligning with Tanko's submission affirm that diversity is a necessary but not sufficient condition for conflict". In other words, the very fact that a Country has different ethnic, communal, religious, language and cultural groups does not make division, conflict and political agitations inevitable. Be that as it may, in the case of Nigeria as presently constituted ethnic consciousness and nationalism has beclouded the polity to the point that the citizens often see it as a preferred means of pledging loyalty as against loyalty to the Nigerian state.

More so, ethnic nationalism and marginalization has resulted in the introduction of the 'federal character principle'. Though, the motive behind the 'federal character' may appear laudable on the surface; to facilitate greater unity of the state. The underlying political manipulations and sentiments breed acrimony, political favouritism and prejudice in the public service and overall government appointments and affairs. Today in Nigeria there is glaring impunity by the present administration led by President Muhammadu Buhari, under whose watch even the so called federal character principle is sidelined deliberately to malign, marginalize and sideline a section of the Nigerian state. Under the principle merit is sacrificed on the altar of mediocrity and its effects no doubt are devastating as it contributed to incessant political agitations in Nigeria.

It is sufficed to say that ethnicity and marginalization is pervasive in Nigeria to the extent that the unity of the country is been questioned as it is under threat by both centrifugal and



centripetal forces. At different times, intervals and levels, people have experienced ethno-religious oppression and discrimination, socio-economic neglect and denial of certain political appointments to a particular ethnic group even in a manner that negates the very fundamental laws of the land. Agitation by different ethnic groups in Nigeria in the past and present clearly indicates the negative consequences posed by the issue of marginalization. However, the primary cause of what we experience in Nigeria as ethno-religious tension has to do with incidences of discrimination, oppression, marginalization, domination, exploitation, accusation of neglect, exclusion of certain segment of the country from having access to the nation's economic resources, poor political representation and so on. The consequences of the above observations are the rising cases of militancy by various ethnic segments, religious movements and collapse of national development.

### **Prospects for a Politically Inclusive Modern Nigeria**

The Nigeria state is at a cross roads and evidently fast inclining to a fragile and failed state. This is indeed worrisome to this study and thus calls for urgent need for solution. Pressured by the present reality, many Nigerian politicians and ordinary citizens alike have taken to one extreme; suggesting disintegration of Nigeria as a panacea to this hydra headed situation. The opinion of such people in the submission of (Uzoigwe & Nwadiolor, 2017) may not totally be swept under the carpet if some other solutions are not employed to avert disintegration of Nigeria. Some other Nigerian scholars and politicians have also recommended fundamental restructuring of the polity, whereby the need for renegotiating the terms and conditions of Nigerian political arrangement should be the point of departure in the quest to eliminating ethnic dominance and marginalization of all dimensions. Restructuring provides invaluable measures that could abate the tension of ethno-religious divides and political lopsidedness in Nigeria. It will open up a new chapter for the recognition and appreciation of the equality in dignity and responsibility we owe to one another as a state.

Restructuring as a panacea to marginalization and political agitations should be tailored towards promoting unity, justice, political inclusivity and fairness to all no matter ones ethnic background. This will enhance oneness as a nation and does not in any way negate our diverse peculiarities in terms of culture, language, religion and so on. The uniqueness of every ethnic group, culture and religion will only boom when we understand and appreciate that in unity lies our dignity. Our diversity should be a source of strength and not division and marginalization. It is not in doubt that a restructured polity devoid of marginalization and political agitations will on the long run stimulate us to overlooking ethnic differences that have engulfed us. The feeling of superiority (born to rule mentality) of one ethnic group over the others must be done away with as it incubates discontentment, distrust and suspicions. In Nigeria, Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Fulani, Christians, Muslims and Traditional worshippers alike could lay hold of common ancestry as beneficiaries of the bounteous natural and human resources in our nation.

Despite the observed upheavals that have engulfed Nigeria, the good news is that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. The necessary resources both human and natural to fashion and develop a world class nation are embedded in Nigeria. The heterogeneous nature of the Nigerian State evident in the plurality of ethnic identities could make this quest a reality. There exists a common ground that could serve as a veritable means for the actualization of national development. It is from this backdrop that our periscope is considered indispensable. Eliminating the phenomenon of marginalization and political agitations will boost unity in

diversity as upheld in all federal systems and this if properly harnessed and harmonized in Nigeria, would act as a cohesive force for the actualization of effective nation building.

### **Summary of Findings**

In the light of the perspectives above reviewed the following findings are made:

1. Marginalization is manifested in lopsided leadership selection, which sidelines some ethnic groups in Nigeria, a phenomenon affirmed to be highly consequential to the peace, unity and stability of Nigeria.
2. Marginalization involves people being denied certain degrees of political positions and opportunities and economic status. And it is this dimension of marginalization that always heats up the polity resulting in restiveness and political agitations of all kinds.
3. Political agitation is a form of political protest, resistance and contentious behaviour. In the Nigerian instance, political agitators are fundamentally disenchanted with actions or inactions of the political class.
4. Inclusivity as a panacea is a deliberate process or means for ensuring that all groups in a polity are equitably integrated and effectively engaged in all the political processes and activities including equal access to political positions on the bases of justice and fairness.
5. Political inclusivity as a paradigm shift holds the potential of eliminating marginalization and thus mitigating incessant political agitations prevalent in a multi-ethnic nation like Nigeria.
6. Restructuring as a panacea to marginalization and political agitations should be tailored towards promoting unity, justice, political inclusivity and fairness to all.
7. Eliminating the phenomenon of marginalization and political agitations will boost unity in diversity as upheld in all federal systems and this if properly harnessed and harmonized in Nigeria, would act as a cohesive force for the actualization of effective nation building.

### **Recommendations**

In line with the issues raised in this paper, the following recommendations are germane for policy:

1. There is need for deliberate measures backed by relevant laws to discourage the idea of choosing or electing a leader on the basis of his/her ethnic group.
2. The nature and system of federalism been operated in Nigeria should be reviewed to meet global best practices as obtainable in USA, so as to reduce or stop the cry for political and social exclusion and marginalization.
3. There is need to adopt and promote the values of justice, fairness and equity as necessary conditions for national peace, unity and integration among the ethnic group.
4. The urgency of political restructuring should be given a priority attention to reduce the concentration of power at the center so as to allow each state to develop at its own pace while remaining as equal partners in the Nigeria project.

### **Conclusion**

In the overall context it is apt to conclude that Nigeria as a multi-ethnic nation is faced with numerous challenges, which has made nation building a far cry. Nation building indeed remains the primary target of every heterogeneous nation especially, the developing states. Having established that marginalization and political agitations are self-sustaining and interwoven, to achieve the goal of nation building effectively, the collaborative efforts of

every citizen is required. More importantly the political leadership and elites should rise to the occasion by ensuring equity, justice, fairness and inclusivity of all citizens and ethnic groups in the Nigerian project. It is not in doubt that Nigeria is a heterogeneous country with multi-ethnic groups and religious affiliations. There is need to redefine the trajectory of the relationships amongst the various ethnic groups that constitute the federal system of Nigeria. The peculiarities and beliefs of each ethnic group as unique as they appear, if properly harnessed and harmonized could foster nation integration and eliminate all manifestations of marginalization and the consequential political agitations currently ingrained in the Nigeria political arrangement. Empirical evidences have shown that marginalization resulting in ethnic tensions and political agitations are the banes of nation building, integration, democratic consolidation, and sustainable socio-economic and political development in Nigeria. It is therefore, imperative in line with the interest of this paper to evolve and transparently implement measures that will mitigate marginalization in all its dimensions and thus bridge the gaps between and amongst various ethnic groups in Nigeria by stimulating greater self-consciousness of the nation's unity in diversity. There is need now than ever before to promote merits even while ensuring level playing ground for ethnic groups that constitutes the Nigeria federal structure.

## References

- Adeleke A. and Charles I. N. U. (2015), "Ethnicity and Ethnic Politics: An Impediment to Political Development in Nigeria", *Public Administration Research* 4 (1): 32.
- Anugwon, E. (2000), "Ethnic Conflicts and Democracy in Nigeria: The Marginalization Question". *Journal of Social Development in Africa*, 15(1)61-76.
- Azeez, A. (2004), "Ethnicity, Party Politics and democracy in Nigeria: Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) as agent of consolidation" *Kamal-Raji, Studies*, 7(1), 1-9.
- Black, H. and Muddiman, B. (1997). "Ethnicity, Ethno-class relations and crisis of Nigeria's enduring 'National Question' and Political Instability". In Duro, O. et al (Eds); *Nigeria Globalization: Discourses on Identity Politics and Social Conflicts*. CBAAC, Ibadan: Stirling- Norden Publishers Nig. Ltd.
- Dalton, R. and Alix, V. (2004). Why people protest? The resource, structural and cultural bases of protest. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago III.
- Dim, I. (2010). "The Catholic Church and nation building". In P. Abue & C. Umoh (Eds.). *Religion and Nation Building*, Makurdi: Likas Press.
- Egbunu, F. (2009). *Religion, Politics and Patriotism in Nigeria: A Christian perspective*. Abuja: Madol.
- Eldersveld, J. & Katz, D. (2007). "The impact of local party activities upon electorates". *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 25(1), 1-24.
- Hills, O. (1998). "Acquiescence or activism? Political behaviour among the politically alienated". *Journal of Political Psychology*, 10(1), 135-153.
- Ifediora, W. (2020). *Mechanism for National Integration in a Multi-Ethnic Federal State: The Nigeria Experience*. Ibadan: John Archer Publishers Ltd.

- Ikime, O. (2008). *History, the Historian and the Nation*. Ibadan: Oluseyi Press.
- Lee, H. et al, (1997). "On the origin of social movement. In, Social movement of the sixties and seventies," *American Journal of Sociology*: 78(4), 702-811.
- Mullaly, H. (2000). *Ethnic Minority Problems in Nigerian Politics*. Madrid: Studia Historica Upsaliensia.
- Nnoli, O. (1980). *Ethnic Politics in Nigeria*, Enugu: Fourth Dimensions Publishers.
- Nwodo, J. (2011). "Elections or selections, ethnic and money politics in Nigeria: Lessons from the past towards a better tomorrow". In B. Ugwu (ed.). *Politics, social change and the Church in Nigeria*. Enugu: Kingsley's Press.
- Obasi, C. (2010). *Ethnic conflict and reconciliation in Nigeria: The way forward*. Owerri: Clacom.
- Okorie, D.O. (2019) "Federalism and the National Question: Assessing the implications of Ethnic Agitations and Marginalization in Nigeria", *International Journal of Politics and Good Governance*, 4, (6), 39-46.
- Olafsson, J. (2007). Deviance: A comment on the logic of protest: *TRAMES*, 11, (61), 432-442.
- Olukoju, A.(1997). "The dynamics of cultural nationalism in colonial Nigeria". In Osuntokun, A. & Olukoju, A. (Eds.). *Nigerian peoples and culture*. Lagos: Davidson Press.
- Osaghae, E. & Suberu, R. (2005). A history of identities, violence and stability in Nigeria. Retrieved on April 7, 2022. From <http://www.crise.ox.ac.uk>.
- Pacione, T. (1997). "Political movement and social change: Analyzing politics". *American Political Science Review*, 90(4), 874-884
- Rose, R. (2007). "Perspectives in political behaviour in time and space". In Dalton, H. and Klingeman, N. (Eds.). *Handbook of political behaviour*: 282-301.
- Tanko, P. (2007). "Conflict in northern Nigeria: Toward a resolution". In Bisong, E. (Ed.). *Koinonia*, Enugu: Snaap Press.
- Umezina, C. (2012). "Ethnicity and Nigerian's underdevelopment". *A New Journal of African Studies*, 1 (22), 15-22..
- Uzoigwe, A.M. and Nwadior, K.L (2017). "Towards Bridging Ethnic and Religious Divides In Nigeria: Exegetico-Hermeneutical Application of Gal.3:26-29", *International Journal of Social Development*, 3(2), 27-32.
- Walker, D. (1997). "Internal Colonialism, Federalism and Alternative State Development Strategies", *Publius: The Journal Federalism*, 7 (2); 35-41.155
- Young, A. (2000). "Federal Character as an Integrative Mechanism: the Nigeria's Experiment at Nation Building", in Olugbemi, S.O. (ed.) *Alternative Political Futures for Nigeria*, Lagos: NPSA Publication, Lagos.