AN APPRAISAL OF THE CHALLENGES OF NATION BUILDING IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA AND GHANA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

The paper critically examines the challenges of nation-building in contemporary Nigeria and Ghana with a view to find viable solution. The main objective of the paper is to identify and highlight the challenges of leadership, socio-economic inequalities and the challenges of managing ethnic diversity as the major impediments which have stifled nation – building efforts in both the two countries. The paper employed national integration theory as postulated by Karl Deutsch, Charles Tilly and Reinhardt Bendix. The theory offered insightful comparative analysis of the challenges of nation-building facing the two countries. The study also utilized secondary data for critical assessment and content analysis of the challenges of nation – building in Nigeria and Ghana. The study has evidently found out that Ghana has been able to stabilize much more than Nigeria because diversity of inter-group relations in Ghana have been sufficiently well contained and well managed, the country continues to pursue the agenda of nation building but the management of the challenges of Nation-building in Nigeria has degenerated due to the inability of its leadership to ensure proper management of diversity, socio-economic injustice and lack of good governance are responsible for the escalation of the problems which snowballed and translated to the current security challenges. of Boko Haram Insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, armed robbery and cattle rustling. The paper therefore, recommends among other things, that political leaders of the two countries should exhibit and provide responsive and responsible leadership to guarantee good governance to their citizens and also ensure social justice.

Keywords: Nation, Nation – Building, National Integration Theory

Introduction

The convocation of national political reform conferences over the years in Nigeria has remained an attempt at nation- building, these conferences were often mandated to chart the way forward for Nigeria but each time, failures have continued to be recorded; either as a result of the character of the delegates or the convocation and selection processes of members. And where the delegates succeeded at reaching a genuine and feasible conclusion, their recommendations are often not binding and are therefore confined to the dustbin of history. This is why the people lost confidence with political reform conferences in Nigeria especially as they have turned into an avenue for political settlements. However, there is also the Challenges in Diversity because right from the beginning, it was obvious that the geographical area now known as Nigeria was not going to be easy to manage. Nigeria is home to over 250 ethnic groups, with over 500 languages, and a variety of customs, and traditions (sErondu, & Obasi, O. (2000) B). Thus, bringing people of different cultures, religions and beliefs together was a great challenge. This much was realized by the colonialists. They had to adopt different styles in administering the areas. This is because Nigeria's diversity comes with its own challenges. Building a nation out of these heterogeneous communities would prove to be a tough job (Jega, 2017).

Therefore, Nigeria today is still bedeviled with serious challenges of nation-building ranging from challenges of national unity, challenge of diversity management, bad governance, lack of responsive and responsible leadership with absence of transparency and accountability, miscarriage of justice, nepotism, tribalism, ethnicity and systemic endemic scourge of corruption. All these constituted existential threats to national unity and stability which manifested itself and snowballed into the current security challenges of Boko Haram insurgency, kidnapping, banditry, cattle rustling, farmers herders crises and threats of secession orchestrated by secessionists agitations lead by Nnamdi Kanu, the leader of the Indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB) advocating for the actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra in the South East and Sunday Igboho calling for the South West to break away from Nigeria and establish Oduduwa Republic. It is important to note that the apparent lack of good governance has breed poverty, youth unemployment, illiteracy as well as political and economic isolation of the youth in the Nigeria's development enterprise constitute some of the underlying factors responsible for the contemporary challenges of nation-building in Nigeria and these have threatened the corporate existence of Nigeria as a political entity (Mukwedeya, 2016). Nigeria is currently confronted with high inflation, devaluation of the naira, insecurity, hunger, deprivation and other socio-economic challenges as a result of fuel subsidy removal and foreign exchange reforms carried out by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu administration and these policies have pose existential threats to the corporate existence of Nigeria as a country. Therefore, the study will attempt to provide an enduring practical solution to the above-mentioned challenges and problems of nation-building (Ateku, 2017).

However, Ghana's post-independence experience is also in many ways the African post-colonial story. After Ghana gained political independence, Nkrumah's vision for the country was founded on the nationalist demands that drove agitation against colonialism. He sought to steer his young country to significant progress in health and education. Also on the new leader's agenda were other social and economic issues confronting the country. This vision was embedded in his seven-year development plan presented to parliament on March 11, 1964. In his view, the 1963-1970 plan would ultimately, bring Ghana to the threshold of a modern state based on a highly organized and efficient agricultural and industrial programme. Nkrumah believed he could completely obliterate the dependency-driven colonial economy he inherited which reduced Ghana to an importer of finished goods sold at exorbitant prices and exporter of raw materials bought cheaply (Ateku, 2017). In its place would be an industrialized economy modeled along a socialist production and distribution system which would make Ghana self-sufficient and self-reliant. But we will never know what all his success would have look like. Nkrumah's vision was short-lived by a military coup in 1966. Some 57 years after his overthrow, however, Nkrumah remains a household name in Ghana because of his investments in education, health and energy. Many of his contributions to other important sectors, such as the building of the Akosombo Dam, the Accra-Tema Motorway, the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, University of Cape Coast continue to support the economy and remembered today. (Ateku, 2017).

Therefore, Nkrumah's overthrow in 1966 was followed by four military takeovers in 1972, 1978, 1979 and 1981. Two democratically elected governments established in 1969 and 1979 were

overthrown by the military. Eventually, the current succession of democratic elections was established in 1993. In its early years Ghana's flirtation with socialism dominated its politics. However, the civilian governments that followed steered the country onto a capitalist economic path in which the Bretton Woods Institutions often dictated the pace. But the country has been unable to achieve the envisioned self-reliant and self-sufficient economic policies thereby later the country face so many challenges of nation-building. In the subsequent years that followed, economic growth has been swinging like a pendulum. Over a decade ago the country's economy was growing at 7%, then roaring ahead with a growth rate of over 14% in 2011. Since then growth has declined considerably. In 2015 it expanded by just 4%. Currently, Ghana is under an IMF bail-out programme because of its inability to contain its huge budget deficit, rising inflation and failing value of currency. The jury is still out on whether the country can turn its economic fortunes around again. Unemployment rates are alarmingly high at an estimated 48% and the country faces a power crisis, high depreciation of the currency and high interest rates. (Ateku, 2017).

However, in highlighting the challenges of nation-building in Ghana, Attafuah (nd) noted and asserted that enthnocentrism or ethnic prejudice grounded in the belief that ones ethnic group is superior to another group or all others combines with ethnic discrimination or tribalism impede nation-building and national development efforts in Ghana. Thus, tribalism continues to bedevil the nation. Formation of political parties, patterns of voting in presidential and parliamentary elections, political appointments and termination of public sector appointments, formulation of development policies and programs, and distribution of development projects are all heavily influenced by ethnic consideration in Ghana.

Conceptual Clarification
Nation
The word nation is not easy to define with precision. A distinguished political scientist, Dankwart Rustow (2008), asserted that there are both subjective and objective dimensions of nationhood. On the subjective side, we have all of those feelings and attitudes among people that lead them to make their own national identification. This includes the sense of nationalism, a psychological sentiment of national consciousness among the citizens of the state; citizens' love for and loyalty to their particular states. It also involves the spiritual sentiment of belonging to a homogeneous, united group and the collective feelings and aspirations displayed by the citizens toward their state. (Attafuah, 2023).

On the objective side, we are concerned with those factors as common history, common territory, common language or literature, common culture and similar characteristics. Not all the objective ingredients however, need to be present among a people to produce the spirit of nationalism. An effective nation – state can emerge even where there might be considerable diversity in the objective dimensions so long as considerable homogeneity may be present in the subjective area. (Anifowose, 1999).

Therefore, Switzerland, the United States, and the former Soviet Union are examples of countries that are pervaded by a strong sense of national unity, despite differences in national origins, language,

religion and cultural patterns. Thus, Burges in Appadorai (1975) defines a nation as a population with ethnic unity, inhabiting a territory with geographic unity. A nation is a nationality which has organized itself into a political body either independent or desiring to be independent (Bryce in Appadorai, 1975).

Futhermore, a nation is a body of people who feel themselves to be naturally linked together by certain affinities which are so strong and real for them that they can live happily together, are dissatisfied when disunited and cannot tolerate subjection to peoples who do not share these ties. (Muir in Appadorai, 1975). In other words, early definitions of nation conceived it as a group or race of people who share history, traditions, and culture, sometimes religion and usually language (Carolyn, 2005).

Nation-Building

Alesina and Reich in Umar and Baba (2019) conceived nation-building as a process which leads to the formation of countries in which citizens feels a sufficient amount of commonality of interest, goals and preferences so that they do not wish to separate from each other. According to Gambari (2008) nation-building is the product of conscious statecraft, not happenstance. Nation-building is always a work-in-progress; a dynamic process in constant need of nurturing and re-invention. Nation-building never stops and true nation-builders never rest because all nations are constantly facing up to new challenges.

Nation-building has many important aspects. Firstly, it is about building a political entity which corresponds to a given territory, based on some generally accepted rules, norms, and principles, and a common citizenship. Secondly, it is also about building institutions which symbolize the political entity – institutions such as a bureaucracy, an economy, the judiciary, universities, a civil service, and civil society organizations. Above all else, however, nation-building is about building a common sense of purpose, a sense of shared destiny, a collective imagination of belonging. Nation-building is therefore about building the tangible and intangible threads that hold a political entity together and gives it a sense of purpose. Even in these days of globalization and rapid international flows of people and ideas, having a viable nation remains synonymous with achieving modernity. It is about building the institutions and values which sustain the collective community in these modern times.

According to Ndolo (2005), nation building is the process of political socialization of the people to become good citizens to enhance political order to help citizens have a stake in the worth for fighting for the interest of the nation. Erondu and Obasi (2000) argued that nation building is a process of mobilizing available human, material and financial resources for socio-economic and political development of a nation state. In other words, Illo (2011) posited that nation-building is a project that involves the psycho-social reconstruction of individuals to infuse the people who differ widely in language and shared identity. Therefore, nation-building can be conceived to mean conscious and deliberate attempt by political leaders to unite and socially integrate the citizens through good governance, social justice with a view to instill a sense of national identity and shared destiny and prosperity to foster national unity, national integration and stability.

Theoretical Framework

This paper adopts National Integration theory propounded in 1950's, 1960's by Karl Deutsch, Charles Tilly and Reinhard Bendix as well as as Populace Comfortability or Welfare theory drawn from the philosophy of Karl Marx, Jeremy Bentham, Dudley Seer as the theoretical frameworks for critical study and insightful comparative analysis of the challenges of nation-building in contemporary Nigeria and Ghana. The study will also examine the challenges of nation-building of the two countries with a view to compare and contrast to identify the similarities and differences if any through objective interpretation and explanation of findings. The central thesis and tenets of national integration theory are that the pursuit of nation building becomes a lot much simpler in the face of workable and functional national integration. Okobia in Garpia and Baba (2019) referred to national integration as a state of fusion or harmonious interaction and interrelation of people and groups within a nation to make them an identifiable single entity with common goals which include nation-building accomplishments. From the foregoing, it is apt to note that any conception of national integration that aimed towards nation-building accomplishments must be looked at as the fusion of culturally, socially, politically and ethnically, desperate groups or people in a given geo-political setting into a closely knit cohesive group involve in repetitive cordiality, dominated human interaction geared towards building a territorial nationality.

Thus, before we talk about national integration for nation-building, the following must be taken into consideration:

a. Existence of ethnically heterogeneous society with each ethnic group firmly attached to her ethnic roots.

b. A determination to dismantle ethnic primordial ties, wielding all ethnic groups into one functional geo-polity and therefore, shifting loyalties towards a homogeneous nation.

c. Minimized tension, conflict, acrimony, suspicion, prejudice, segregation and engineering harmonious co-existence, interactive adjustment, high level of tolerance, high geared cordial social interaction.

d. Perceiving a geo-polity, a genuinely ours not there's and having a true sense of belonging to a larger political community.

e. Commitment to the aspirations and ideals of a single entity to which everybody is happily identified and participate in actuality.

f. A mechanism holding a society together. (Mezieobi in Garpia and Baba, 2019).

Therefore, nation-building efforts cannot strive where there are elements of disintegration. These disintegrative elements include disunity, perpetual rivalry, clash of interest, ethnic chauvinism, ethnic suspicion and prejudice, fear of domination of one group by the other, mutual distrust, ethnic discrimination and where the ideology of swallow hypothesis holds sway. Thus, national integration that can elicit nation-building commitments hinges not on mere staying together of disparate people but on the attitudinal dimension of national integration on people which real nation-building bearing national integration really anchors.

However, the other theory also being adopted for the purpose of this study is the Populace Comfortability or Welfare theory. This theory holds that poverty, inequality, unemployment, social exclusion and exploitation of citizens are the societal bedrocks that affect nation building. The central feature of this theory is that nation building efforts would be an exercise in futility if the mass of the people in a nation, who should be mobilized in the pursuit of nation-building aspiration, are wallowing in a very low level of life conditions of abject absolute poverty. The very high poverty level of citizens, for instance and its corresponding life tussle for survival regrettably remove the eyes of the people from nation-building thinking, feeling and activities. Mezieobi in Garpia and Baba (2019) put more concisely when he noted that the striving for survival by Africans in poverty is responsible for the perpetuation of all vices and negative values, socio-political and economic apathy, incessant ignoring and lack of commitment to all nation-building efforts, indiscipline, dishonesty, lack of respect for law and order, greed, aggressiveness and antagonism militating against nation-building. It is believed that if the living condition and welfare of the citizens are tuned high on such side of comfortability and better life through good governance, transparency and accountability for ensuring the achievement of sustainable development, perhaps the behavior and positive attitude germane to nation-building may be elicited from the citizens. In order to change this ugly narrative, it is imperative to re-think on our socio-economic policies to make them largely people centred (Jega, & Ibeanu, 2011).

Methodology

The study made use of mainly secondary data obtained from books, journals and conference papers and sources from the internet were also used in order to enhance the validity of the findings of the study. All data collected were presented and analyzed qualitatively. In addition, the methodology also adopts comparative approach to carry out content analysis of the study.

Challenges of Nation-Building in Nigeria

Nigeria at 63 still faces an existential threat and many factors are responsible for this and indeed the struggle for nation-building in Nigeria is facing numerous challenges. Gambari (2008) opined that Nigeria faces some challenges of nation-building. These challenges include:-

The Challenge of History

The historical legacies of colonial rule create some challenges for nation-building in Nigeria. Colonial rule divided Nigeria into North and South with different land tenure systems, local government administration, educational systems, and judicial systems. While large British colonies like India and the Sudan had a single administrative system, Nigeria had two, one for the North and one for the South. It was almost as if these were two separate countries, held together only by a shared currency and transportation system. Many members of the Nigerian elite class in the 1950s and 1960s had their education and world outlook molded by the regional institutions. Some had little or no understanding of their neighboring regions. Under these conditions, it was easy for prejudice and fear to thrive. During the period of the decolonization struggle, Nigerian nationalists from different regions fought

each other as much as they fought the British colonialists. Nigeria never had a central rallying figure like Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana or Nelson Mandela in South Africa. Instead, each region threw up its own champions (Jega, 2010).

From this historical legacy, therefore, regionalism has been a major challenge to nation-building in Nigeria. To their credit, however, the founding fathers of our nation tried to deal with this challenge by adopting federalism and advocating a policy of unity-in-diversity. Unfortunately, the lack of consolidation of Nigerian federalism around commonly shared values and positions means that this challenge of divisive historical legacy continues to undermine our efforts at nation-building. One current manifestation of this historical legacy is the division between 'indigenes' and 'settlers'. This division has been a source of domestic tension and undermined our efforts at creating a common nationhood. While we should learn from history so as not to repeat its mistakes, we must never see ourselves simply as victims of our history; it is our responsibility to overcome the challenges posed by our history. (Gambari, 2008).

The Leadership Challenge

According to a distinguished compatriot, Alesina, and Reich. (2021). he said that "the trouble with Nigeria is squarely the failure of leadership. Leadership is a critical factor in nation-building and it should be understood in two important but related ways. Firstly, there are the personal qualities of integrity, honesty, commitment, and competence of individual leaders at the top. Secondly, there are the collective qualities of common vision, focus, and desire for development of the elites as a whole. The standards for recruitment and the performance of our individual leaders over the years have left much to be desired. We do not need leaders who see themselves as champions of only some sections of our population. We do not need leaders who do not understand the economic and political problems of the country, not to talk of finding durable solutions for them. We do not need leaders who are more interested in silencing their opponents, than in pursuing justice. We do not need leaders, who preach one thing, and do the exact opposite. We do not need leaders who place themselves above the constitution and the laws of the country, but leaders who lead by upholding and respecting the law. We do not need leaders who have no sense of tomorrow, other than that of their private bank accounts (Gambari, 2008).

If we are to succeed in nation-building, we must have a leadership that is committed to the rule of law and has a demonstrable sense of fair play and democratic tolerance; a leadership with ability and integrity; above all else, we must have a leadership that can see beyond the ostentatious pomp of office. We must have leaders who have a vision for a Nigeria better than the one they inherited; leaders who will lead by deeds and not by words; achievers, not deceivers. We need a leadership that will not only leave its foot-prints on the sands of time, but one, which by dint of hard-work, fair play, dedication and commitment, will live forever in the hearts of Nigerians. Leadership is not everything, but it is an extremely important factor. Unless we have leaders with ability, integrity, commitment and vision, we cannot succeed at nation-building.

However, Gambari (2008) also asserted that in Nigeria, there are some people who represent our national importance by calling us the 'Giant of Africa'. This is an ascriptive perspective. We are seen as giants not necessarily because of the quality of our national institutions and values, but simply by virtue of our large population and oil wealth. But in reality, the greatness of a nation has to be earned and is not determined just by the size of its population or the abundance of its natural resources. China and India have the largest populations in the world, but they are only now rising as important global players. On the other hand, Japan has few natural resources, but has long managed to turn itself into a global economic power house. In today's world, skills, industriousness, productivity, and competitiveness are the determinant factors of national greatness. Not even the possession of the nuclear bomb is enough to make a nation great without reference to the industriousness and creativity of its citizens. Since the time of Adam Smith, every serious nationalist and politician has come to know that the wealth of a nation is not based on the wealth and opulence of its rulers, but on the productivity and industriousness of its citizenry.

The Challenge of Socio-Economic Inequalities

An important aspect of nation-building is the building of a common citizenship. But how can we have a common citizenship when the person in Ilorin has a radically different quality of life from the person in Yenagoa? Or when the woman in Gusau is more likely to die in childbirth than the woman in Ibadan? Through the development of the economy and equal opportunities for all, or through the development of social welfare safety nets, mature nations try to establish a base-line of social and economic rights which all members of the national community must enjoy. Not to enjoy these socio-economic rights means that the people involved are marginalized from national life. That is why in many Western European countries, contemporary nation-building in about preventing 'social exclusion' or the exclusion of significant segments of the population from enjoying basic social and economic rights. In Nigeria, however, not only are many of our citizens denied basic rights such as the right to education and health, there is also serious variation in the enjoyment of these rights across the country (Mamdani, 2022).

As a consequence, the citizen is not motivated to support the state and society, because he or she does not feel that the society is adequately concerned about their welfare. Secondly socio-economic inequalities across the country fuels fears and suspicious which keep our people divided. Some of these socio-economic inequalities for instance is that if we take the level of immunization of children against dangerous childhood diseases, we note that while the South-East has 44.6% immunization coverage, the North-West has 3.7% and North-East 3.6%. If you take the education of the girl-child as indicator, you see a similar pattern of inequality with the South-East having an enrolment rate of 85%, South-West 89%, South-South 75%, North-East 20%, and North-West 25%. Only 25% of pregnant women in the North-West use maternity clinics, while 85% of the women in the South-East do. It is not surprising that 939% more women die in child-birth in the North-East compared to the South-West. Education and poverty levels are also important dimensions of inequalities across Nigeria. If we take admissions into Nigerian universities in the academic year 2000/1, we see that the North-

West had only 5% of the admissions, while the South-East had 39%.As for poverty, the erstwhile Governor of the Central Bank, Charles Soludo, pointed out that while 95% of the population of Jigawa State is classified as poor, only 20% of Bayelsa State is so classified. While 85% of Kwara State is classified as poor, only 32% of Osun is in the same boat. (Jega, Wakili, &Ahmad, 2019).

Challenges of Nation-Building in Ghana

When Ghana gained political independence on 6 March 1957, the founding president, Dr Kwame Nkrumah, declared: "at long last, Ghana your beloved country is free forever" to the euphoria and excitement of men, women and children gathered at the old Polo grounds in Accra. However, over six decades on, has Ghana lived up to hernameas the' black star of Africa'? A thriving democracy? The first three and half decades of Ghana's independence have been characterized by short-lived civilian governments interspaced with military regimes. However, the story has been different since the return to democratic rule in 1992. From 1992 to 2016, Ghana has organized seven general elections in which power has alternated three times between the two main political parties. For some, Ghana is now a beacon of thriving democracy for the continent, where democratic institutions are consolidated, human rights are widely respected, and the media and civil society operate without state interference.

In sum, Ghana's credentials in organizing elections and ensuring smooth transitions of power cannot be underestimated. However, according to Kweitsu (2018) Ghana's democracy is not perfect, obvious challenges of nation building remains a course for concern. Some of the challenges Ghana face today are as follows:

a. **A colonial economy: -**Economically, Ghana has been largely agrarian with heavy dependence on cocoa, gold and, more recently, oil. In 1957, agriculture accounted for 51.1% of Ghana's GDP and 61.8% source of employment for the country's labour force. Yet, while the sector in 2016 employed about 44.0% of the labour force, in the same year its contribution to the GDP decreased to about 18.9%. According to 2016 estimations, half a billion dollars is spent annually to import rice. Ghana has had contracting GDP annual growth rate over the past few years, declining from 14.0% in 2011 to 3.6% in 2016. Since independence, Ghana has pleaded the IMF several times for a bailout. In the 2018 World Bank Doing Business index, Ghana ranks 120 out of 190 countries.

    After 67 years of independence, Ghana's economy has not seen enough structural transformation to propel it into an economic giant. It is claimed that Malaysia had its first oil palm seedlings from Ghana and Nigeria. In 2011, the palm oil industry was the fourth largest contributor to the Malaysian economy and provided 600,000 jobs. Meanwhile, Ghana has spent $150.0 million on the import of palm oil from Malaysia alone within the first nine months of 2017. This must be a call on policy makers to do more in transforming the structure of the economy. (Kweitsu, 2018).

b. **A demographic bulge and socio-economic inequalities: -**In 1957, Ghana's population was estimated at over 6.0 million. Six decades later, the population has almost quintupled to approximately 29.0 million in 2017. By 2035, Ghana's population will surpass 40.0 million. Currently, more than half of Ghana's population (58.5%) is below the age of 25 years. This

growth in population has not been matched by an equal investment to transform it into a demographic dividend – both in education and employment and close to half a million children of primary school enrolment age are not enrolled. Of Ghanaian 15-24 year-olds, 11.1% are not in employment, education or training. Only 10.0% of graduates get a job within the first year of their completion, and it could take up to a decade for graduates leaving school to get employed. In total, 5.1% of 15-24 year-olds who are part of the labour force in Ghana are unemployed and unemployment and lack of opportunities can lead to brain drain. According to a 2017Afro barometer survey, four in ten Ghanaians (41.0 %) have considered leaving the country. Similarly, the 2017 Ibrahim Forum Report also observed that 50.0% of tertiary educated people in Ghana leave the country annually. There is no doubt Ghana's future is hinged on the opportunities that will be created for young people in the next few years. The country stands at a tipping point and failure to meet the growing demands of the youthful population may become a 'toxic brew'.

c. **On Governance: -**Overall Governance has been on the decline in the past few years in Ghana. The 2017 Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG), shows that although Ghana remains among the ten top scoring countries on the continent, it is also among the ten most deteriorated countries over the last decade. However, Attafuah (nd) identify and explore the challenges of nation-building in Ghana within the context of multiple-ethnicities within the country as follows:-

The challenge of Nation-Building amidst Ethnic Diversity

Despite its significant strides in nation-building, Ghana, like many other African countries, remains severely fragmented, fractured and mired along ethnic lines, with other primordial ties and loyalties binding most people far more tightly than the state can currently dream of or claim. The classic example is the traditional Asente-Ewe hostility which has been capitalized upon by nefarious politicians since Ghana's 1957. This is in spite of great personal friendships and business partnerships across the two ethnic divides, as well as numerous flourishing marriages between women from patrilineal Ewe ethnic groups that are considered hugely advantageous to the children of such marriages. A great number of Asente-Ewe concubines also abound in Ghana. Yet, it appears that the two ethnic groups are considered the most fearsome ethno-political enemies, with mutually strong suspicions ant attributions of ill-will, and in their traditional settings, fantastic myths that justify out-group hostility and in-group solidarity, and by extension, the maintenance of social distance and social exclusion of each other. Mutually negative stereotypes and prejudicial attitudes also assail relationship between the large cluster of ethnic groups from the Northern parts of Ghana and those from the Southern parts. Partly rooted in the nature of the colonial and post-colonial political economy, the systems of resource mobilization for economic production, and the unfair distribution of educational and development facilities, all of which have benefited the resource rich South to the disadvantage of the relatively resource-starved North, and which have largely been maintained to date, "northerners" as individuals and groups often tend to be the object of vile discrimination in employment, housing and the provision of social services by "southerners", while the former also tend to find a scapegoat in the latter for virtually every personal or group failing. At the root of the problem also lies the fact that

the development of the resource-endowed South has been made possible by and with the critical supply of labour from the resource-deprived North.

However, according to Zakari (2019) he argued that the following still remains as key development challenges in Ghana which affect the process of nation-building:

  a) Poor macro-economic conditions.
  b) Unemployment, poverty, unreliable energy, corruption, poor infrastructure and low income.
  c) Growing income inequalities.
  d) FDI directed into extractive sectors.
  e) A weak business climate holding back productive investment.
  f) Low adoption of modern agricultural technology.
  g) Very weak manufacturing sub-sector.
  h) Low domestic savings and investment.
  i) High cost of doing business.
  j) Failing public sector machinery.
  k) Destruction of the environment and water bodies.

Comparative Analysis of Challenges of Nation-Building in Contemporary Nigeria and Ghana

Firstly, in analyzing the challenges of nation-building in contemporary Nigeria and Ghana through comparative approach, it has been established that both countries are seriously affected by the challenges of history attributed to colonialism both politically and economically. For instance, the Ghana's inherited colonial economic structure continue to stifle its growth and development after 67 years of independence, Ghana's economy has not seen enough structural transformation to propel it into an economic giant considering the economic vision and aspiration of Kwame Nkrumah of independent Ghana. Therefore, up to today Ghana still remains an importer of European goods at exorbitant prices and exporter of cheap raw materials to Europe and America. This scenario undermined Nkrumah's vision who was very determined to change the ugly narratives of neo-colonialism and economic dependence which rear its ugly heads up to today. This has created serious implications on nation-building in Ghana. This has been justified by the 2016 estimations that half a billion dollars is spent annually to import rice. Ghana has had contracting GDP annual growth rate over the past few years, declining from 14.0% in 2011 to 3.6% in 2016. Since independence, Ghana has pleaded the IMF several times for a bail out. In the 2018 World Bank Doing Business Index, Ghana ranks 120 out of 190 countries. (Kweitsu, 2018).

However, on the political front in Nigeria, the historical legacies of colonial rule have created challenges for nation-building. Thus, colonial rule divided Nigeria into North and South with different land tenure system, local government administration, educational systems and judicial system. And many members of the Nigerian elite class in the 1950s and 1960s had their education and world outlook moulded by the regional institutions. Some had little or no understanding of their neighboring regions. That is why Nigeria since independence never had a central rallying figure like Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana or Nelson Mandela of South Africa. Instead, each region threw up its own

champions and this problem was planted by the British colonial authorities as a strategy of its divide and rule tactics with far reaching implications on post-independent Nigeria which graduated and constituted existential threats to nation-building in Nigeria. (Alesina, & Reich, 2021).

Secondly, other commonalities established as constituting challenges of nation-building for both countries are the demographic bulge and the challenge of socio-economic inequalities. For instance, in 1957, Ghana's population was estimated at over 6.0 million. Six decades later, the population has almost quintupled to approximately 29.0 million in 2017. By 2035, Ghana's population will surpass 40.0 million. This growth in population has not been matched by an equal investment to transform it into a demographic dividend both-in education and employment and close to half a million children of primary school enrolment age are not enrolled. Thus, 15-24 year old Ghanians, 11.1% are not in employment, education or training and by implication this created widening socio-economic inequalities that have grossly affected nation-building in Ghana. Only 10.0% of graduates get a job within the first year of their school completion, and it could take up to a decade for graduates leaving school to get employed, (Stephenson, 2022).

However, in the case of Nigeria, there are political and economic isolation of the youth in Nigeria's development enterprise and it is important to note that the youth constitute large chunk of the population. Many citizens in Nigeria are denied basic rights to education and affordable health care despite the existence of an enabling law, there is also serious variation in the enjoyment of these rights across the country. As a consequence, the citizen is not motivated to support the state and society, because he or she does not feel that the society is adequately concerned about their welfare. Secondly socio-economic inequalities across the country fuels fears and suspicious which keep our people divided. Some of these socio-economic inequalities for instance is that if we take the level of immunization of children against dangerous childhood diseases, we note that while the South-East has 44.6% immunization coverage, the North-West has 3.7% and North-East 3.6%. If you take the education of the girl-child as indicator, you see a similar pattern of inequality with the South-East having an enrolment rate of 85%, South-West 89%, South-South 75%, North-East 20%, and North-West 25%. Only 25% of pregnant women in the North-West use maternity clinics, while 85% of the women in the South-East do. It is not surprising that 939% more women die in child-birth in the North-East compared to the South-West. Education and poverty levels are also important dimensions of inequalities across Nigeria. As for poverty, the erstwhile Governor of the Central Bank, Charles Soludo, pointed out that while 95% of the population of Jigawa State is classified as poor, only 20% of Bayelsa State is so classified. While 85% of Kwara State is classified as poor, only 32% of Osun is in the same boat. (Gambari, 2008).

Therefore, these inequalities pose serious challenges to nation-building and a common nationhood cannot be achieved while citizens are living such paralled lives. Thus, socio-economic inequalities are a threat to a common citizenship. Sadly, it is the cumulative negative effects of government neglect through bad leadership over the years that prompted the current end bad governance nationwide protest.

Thirdly, comparatively, both countries also experience challenges of leadership and good governance. The overall governance has been on the decline in the past few years in Ghana. The 2017 Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG), shows that although Ghana remains among the ten top scoring countries on the continent, it is also among the ten most deteriorated countries over the last decade and this has continued to be a challenge of nation-building in Ghana. While in Nigeria, it is important

to note that good leadership is critical factor in nation-building. The standards for recruitment and the performance of our individual leaders over the years have left much to be desired.

Fourthly, the two countries are confronted with similar challenges of Nation-building. For instance, in Ghana the challenges that have attended the business of forging a sense of nationhood have been daunting, long-standing and occasionally debilitating. Ethnic competition, rivalry, conflict, domination and marginalization often characterized inter-group relations in Ghana and these have also posed existential threat to project of Nation-building. Likewise, in Nigeria also various ethnic groups today talk about marginalization and domination, virtually all the groups are affected in one way or the other by issues of national question. For the Niger Delta and oil producing minority, it is exploitation and environmental degradation; for the Igbo it is marginalization; for the Hausa Fulani it is uneven development; for the minorities of the North, particularly the middle belt it is one of internal colonialism etc.

Conclusion and Recommendations

After 63 years of Nigeria's independence and 67 years of Ghana's independence respectively, it must be emphasized here that despite the challenges of nation-building faced, important progress has been achieved, but there is potential for further reforms to strengthen the two countries democratic institutions through good governance. Many Nigerians and Ghanaians are yet to experience the economic liberation that comes with independence; youth unemployment remains a threat to the security of the countries, and many young people feel that their dreams can only be achieved abroad. As long as opportunities and the enabling environments remain limited, the promises of independence will continue to be a mirage for many Nigerians and Ghanaians alike. Ultimately, countries future can only be determined and shaped by visionary and accountable leadership.

In the final analysis, the following recommendations are made for ensuring and achieving national unity, national integration and stability through proactive nation-building effort:-

a) There should be economic development and equal opportunities for all through the development of social welfare safety nets to promote nation-building to achieve national integration and stability.

b) There should be no scape-goating and white washing between and among the different section of the countries which prepare the grounds for mutual suspicion but rather citizens should see each other as their brother's keeper. There should be promotion of inclusivity, acceptance and shared sense of belonging.

c) Political leaders should exhibit and display responsive and responsible leadership through good governance, social justice, sound economic management transparency and public accountability in governance so as to achieve peace and unity, national integration and stability.

d) There should be promotion of fundamental human rights, social and economic justice and the rule of law.

e) Fair and equitable distribution of the benefits of development thereby achieving an enduring nation-building.

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