Imbibing an effective Political Culture as a Catalyst to Good Governance and Sustainable Development in Nigeria.

[1]OSAWARU, Osamede Christopher, Ph.D
Department of Philosophy, University of Benin, Benin-City, Edo State, Nigeria.
Phone:+2348034158593
E-mail: christopher.osawaru@uniben.edu, chrisosawaru4@gmail.com,
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0009-9888-3094

[2]ABDULLAHI , Ibrahim
Department of Philosophy, University of Benin, Benin-City, Edo State, Nigeria
Phone: +234 7031155317
Email: abdul.uniben@gmail.com
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0005-9080-9720

Corresponding Author   :   Osawaru, Osamede Christopher, Ph.D   (christopher.osawaru@uniben.edu, chrisosawaru4@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The method by which Nigeria has been governed in the over sixty-two years of her independence and the level of her moral, social, and economic development are all indicative of a defective politica,l cultural values and practices that are subscribed to by both the leaders and the followers. Sustainable development and good governance do not take place in a vacuum, but in a society of people with an effective political cultural values and practices. Culture is an all-embracing entity, a vehicle to total development. Any nation that aims at progress without an effective political culture is only deceiving herself by engaging in self -immolation. Political culture, when promoted and enhanced becomes the spring board for progress. It is against this background that this paper identifies the principal aspects of our political cultural life as an essential ingredient for the attainment of good governance and sustainable development. Through critical analysis and evaluation, we are able to subject our political beliefs and social practices to the searching light of criticism and suggest what can promote the kind of self -understanding that would provide some basis for determining the kind of politico-cultural reconstructions that would be required to attune Nigeria to changes in her existential demand.

Keywords Development, Governance, Good Governance, Political culture, Sustainable development.

AUTHORS' BIO

OSAWARU, Christopher Osamede, PhD holds a Bachelor's degree in Philosophy from Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Master degree in Philosophy from University of Lagos, and Ph. D in Philosophy from the University of Benin. He is a lecturer in the Department of Philosophy, University of Benin. He researches in and teaches, aesthetics, ethics, philosophy of value and culture. He has contributed to so many local and international journals.

ABDULLAHI, Usman, is a research student rounding up his MA at the Department of Philosophy, University of Benin. His area of specialization is social political philosophy

INTRODUCTION

There has been a bulk of contributions by various individuals and groups in the discourse that has emanated in the process of understanding and reviewing the phenomenon of political culture and governance in Nigeria. There are writers and scholars who have provided vivid description of the situation in the country. For some, Nigeria 'is a country that is blessed with abundant resources — human and material resources yet the social being of a large percentage of her citizens is characterized by clear signs of mis-governance; their existence is one harrowing and continuous struggle, plagued by poverty, hunger, disease and ignorance' (Arua & Oladipo, 1991). Others have provided critical and in-depth analyses of the contemporary Nigerian experience. In his analysis of political culture in Nigeria, Oladipo argues that the momentous technological changes of the 19th and 20th centuries have not been particularly beneficial to Nigeria but an agent of cultural dislocation, occasioned by Nigeria's loss in her encounter with Western cultural influences (Oladipo 2007, p.106). Consequently, a primary challenge for Nigeria is that of how she can redress her unfortunate cultural situation by regaining her capacity for "deliberate, self-initiated change" (Oladipo, 2007, p.107).

While some have heaped all of Nigeria's problems on the doorstep of capitalism, imperialism and globalization, others have argued that underdevelopment in Nigeria has been largely caused and sustained by internal factors. In the characteristic position of the former, (Vaughan, 2005, p.112) argues that the global era ushered in a notable crisis of the postcolonial Nigerian state. According to him, it was the impact of neo-liberal economic reform policies imposed on African states by the Bretton Woods institutions and the popular pressure for democracy following the collapse of communism in East Europe that set the stage for the political crisis of the 1990s.

However, Diamond for instance, depicts that "injustice is more complex than the people simply getting cheated, robbed, exploited and oppressed by others; that it persists because the people cooperate in their own exploitation (Diamond, 1989, p. 440). In his characteristic literary expositions and reconstructions of social realities (Achebe, 1987, p.141) articulates what he has regarded as 'the prime failure of [the] government'. It is not the massive corruption, nor the 'hand-me-down capitalism', nor the damnable shooting of workers and students. It is the failure of our rulers to re-establish vital inner links with the poor and dispossessed of the country. For Oyeshile, the problem of ethnic cleavages has been a major obstacle to democracy, progress and development in Nigeria (2005, pp. 18-19). In the same vein, Ifeka

(2000, p.122) submits that the lack of trust between the rulers and the ruled ensures that there is an obstruction of national development at all levels of social existence. Ujomu (2002, p.205) opines that the absence or lack of operation of some core social values such as trust, cooperation, compassion, justice, tolerance, etc., among the different interests and segments in the society, ensures that Nigeria achieved little or no sustainable development and that the various levels of national government could not effectively manage the nation's resources for the overall security, peace, prosperity and well-being of all. Oladipo (2000, p.65) maintains that where the moral underpinning is strong and resilient, the society survives and thrives but where it is weak and fragile, the society's capacity for social progress becomes impaired. There is no doubt that Nigeria is more of an example of the latter phenomenon.

There are those who have envisioned a desirable human condition in Nigeria and have subsequently proffered solutions to the crisis of underdevelopment in the country.(Adedeji, 1999, p.21) suggests that if Nigeria is to achieve the goal of good governance, economic recovery and sustainable development, then there is need for a reformation of a new political culture that would effective and progressive that entails: social values such as human rights and dignity, respect for personal and community rights, public accountability and transparency, democratization of the development process, justice, equity and fair play. On his part, Asouzu (2004, p.24) suggests that our ability in Nigeria to reposition ourselves for development and to contribute meaningfully to the world "largely depends on our ability to acquire an accommodating comprehensive mindset that is in tune with the demands of the principle of complementarity". These and other recommendations have been proffered. Beyond these recommendations, this paper asserts that there is need for the development of our political culture to entrench a stabilising agent and effective tool for arresting the tide of poverty, unemployment and misery; to entrench progressive human development, enhance creativity and increase productivity for the common good. To use the reformed political culture to entrench an attitudinal change or frame of mind that will support the necessary pillars of development in Nigeria. For, if those pillars exist without the basic politico-cultural reorientation on which they can be firmly erected, nothing can be achieved.

Political Culture, Governance and Development: A Conceptual Understanding

The emergent post-colonial Nigeria have failed to evolve a genuine and sustainable political culture. The country is beleaguered by disputations, divergent and antagonistic

perspectives on what pattern of political culture is authentic and adaptive to the Nigerian cultural milieu as well as what form of government within the democratic settings, convey the necessary balance of power among the various tiers and arms of government. As a political philosophy, political culture expresses a distinctive and patterned form or body of principles, precepts, beliefs, norms and doctrines that prescribe and state how beliefs on governmental and economic life should be carried out. In its functional sense it creates a framework for political change, and is unique to nations, states and groups. To be sure, political culture differs from political ideology in that people can disagree about political ideology but share a common political culture. Ujomu (2002) describes it as "a shorthand expression to denote the set values within which the political system operates and it is also the sum of the fundamental values, sentiments and knowledge that give form and substance to political process" sees political culture as a "system of empirical beliefs expressing symbols and values which defines the situation in which political actions takes place"(Ujomu,2002) Common to all these conceptions of political culture is a certain orientation of the citizens of a nation towards politics, and the perceptions of political legitimacy and the traditions of political practices. One way of understanding political culture, therefore, is in terms of the shared paradigms that co-exist within a given society. This involves identifying the various cultures within the society other than the dominant culture. Some of the variables used to define political culture are its paradigms about: government, economics and morality.

Political culture refers to the cumulative deposit of political knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving.(Hofstede,1997)) It is a collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another. The position that the ideas, meanings, beliefs and values people learn as members of society determines human nature. People are what they learn, therefore, culture ultimately determine the quality in a person or society that arises from a concern for what is regarded as excellent in arts, letters, manners and scholarly pursuits and many more. It is a particular stage or form of civilization.

Governance: The term, governance, is quite complex. It can refer to the activities of a government or the process through which society or an organisation is administered or managed and controlled. (Hoffman and Graham, 2006, p.106) In this sense, governance may be described as a complex   of the legislative, executive and judicial activities of a government. When we say of a system of governance that it is good, we might simply mean that it is effective in achieving the ends expected of a government or that it possesses a number of inherent qualities. (Ekanola, 2003, pp.50-51) Governance generally refers to the business of running a government. it indicates the manner in which authority, control and power are managed in a nation's attempt at developing her social and economic resources. Like most concepts of its kind, the concept of governance due to its complex weaving of economic, political and social aspects of a nation has not been amenable to easy or simplistic definition. In other words, the concept has not been an exception to the volatility and eclecticism for which social political philosophy has been globally noted. World Bank (1993) defines governance as "the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development". According to the World Bank (1993), governance has three dimensions. These dimensions are: "the nature of political regimes; the exercise of authority in the management of social and economic resources and, the capacity of government to design and implement policy and to discharge its functions". Accordingly, governance deals with "rule-making, legitimization, and enforcement" while it structurally comprises three distinct institutions: the "ruler or the state", the "ruled or the society" and, the "rule of law". In this regard, governance is the "relationship between state and society institutions". Normatively, this relationship highlights the values associated with good governance". These values include: "transparency, organizational effectiveness, accountability, predictability, legitimacy, popular participation and plurality of policy choices.

Ekanola identifies an efficient or political system as one that adequately protects and promotes the rights of citizens , provides for the general welfare and interests of members of society, properly manages and distributes available resources in society and also enhances social harmony through the maintenance of law and order.(Ekanola, 2003-2004, pp.50-51) When a system of governance is described as good in the sense that it is efficient in achieving the ideal ends of government , the prefix "good" may be understood in both moral and the non-moral sense. From the non-moral perspective, the goodness of a system of governance is premised simply on its efficacy in achieving stipulated ends. However, from the moral perspective, we normally say of an action or institution that it is good if it enhances human welfare and bad if it inhibits the same (Barcalow1994, pp.4-5) Thus a system of governance may be morally appraised to be good or bad, on the grounds of utility, to the extent that it facilitates human welfare. In his contribution to the conceptual discourse on governance,

Ekanola (2009, p.70) had this to say: Governance refers to the functions undertaken by a government maintaining a unified state, defending its territorial integrity and running its economy... It (equally) means the effective and efficient functioning of government towards securing the well-being of its citizens. Jega (1999, p.101) analysed the concept of governance in relations to the "person entrusted with political power and authority". In this regard, good governance according to him, involves the "orderly and stable management of the economy". Pointedly, governance as a process encapsulates layers of relationships and political nuances between policy makers and the citizens. The opposite of this, is bad governance.

Development: The concept "development" has its root from the French word "veloper" meaning "to wrap". To develop therefore means to "un-wrap" or to change and become larger, stronger or more impressive, successful or advanced. There is no agreement as to what development is. It was coined by developed nations to describe the power and powerless nations. There are various aspects to what constitutes development, however common to all these is a positive change in human wellbeing. The individual and his quality of life must be the centre of the conception of national development. It is in this regard that Oladipo avers that development should not start with goods, but with the people, their education, organization and discipline. It is not all about money, profit and the number of industries. It is understood as a long-term improvement in the standard of living, as felt and judged to be by most of the people in the country. (Oladipo, 2008, p.17)

Development is a process of transformational agenda. It is not purely materialistic but happens within the context of a people in relation to the level of growth and progression of individual members of a society. Its real essence is on man in a proper way to provide a humanitarian paradigm "which bring about marked improvement in the standard of living of the people". It involves a structural transformation of the economy, society, politics and culture, the development permits the self-generating and self-perpetuating use of the people's potentials. In man, development is the ability to appropriate, analyse, understand, manage, control and appropriate his environment and cultural heritage. It involves; physical, emotional, intellectual, moral and spiritual development. However, good moral/ spiritual life is a pre-requisite for any meaningful and genuine development.

On a related note, Ekanola, provides us with a transformed framework for interpreting our basic experiences on the subject-matter. He remarkably asserts that, "Development is here understood as the quantitative and qualitative improvement in the material, emotional,

and spiritual conditions of human existence" (Ekanola, 2009, p.71)However, this analysis grasps an essential truth that development is a systematic entrenchment of values in both qualitative and quantitative aspect of human life. It is materially, emotionally and spiritually driven as a value within a state that goes beyond the evolutionary perspective. It is inevitable march of progress in every culture. Development is not organized around the competing theories of social-change, nor does it adhere to a simple, all-encompassing perspective. Rather, the narrative retraces the concept of development as an increasingly global enterprise that liberates the people through the promotion of a general welfare in the provision of security, shelter, good health and proper democratic governance.

While it may be academically expedient to acknowledge these classifications (as in exhaustive as they are), it is practically necessary to add that any conceptualization of political culture, governance and development thus restricted in form or practice, as identified above cannot rise to the challenges of development. The reason for this is that it may be practically impossible to pursue good governance and development in any sphere of human experience without putting into consideration the dynamic nature of political culture. This may have therefore been partly responsible for the lack of synergy and the disconnect between political culture, good governance and sustainable development in our national life.

Political Culture, Governance and the Crisis of Development in Nigeria.

A critical observation of the Nigerian scenario showcases a country where the people have unconsciously imbibed the culture of their oppressors and have thereby become the facilitators of their own oppression. The basic premise here is that, no matter the cause(s) of underdevelopment, the prevailing attitude of the people remains the primary and major source of the sustenance of social collapse. In *Anthills of the Savannah*, Achebe clearly captures this situation. No group is spared from the searing critical eye of the novelist, not even those which claim to represent the poor and dispossessed. The prominent intellectuals of the Cabinet appear as a spineless collection of buffoons, blowhards and ambitious schemers, who are not above manipulating tribalism for personal advantage (Achebe 1989, p.439). Neither the students nor the organized workers are omitted from the broad indictment. We should not pretend to be ignorant of the fact that in the real context of Nigeria today, that workers are not part of the oppressed but of the

oppressor. For they are the very comrades who presides over the sabotage of the nation by their unproductivity and fraud, thereby ensuring that the benefits of modern life will ever remain outside the dreams of the real victims of exploitation in rural villages [and cities]. (Ibid,440). This sweeping indictment of every portion of contemporary Nigerian's elites does not lead to a simplistic celebration of the innocence of 'the people' (Ibid.). Rather, the problem lies right within the attitude and mental consciousness of the people.

Socio-economic development is an organic human phenomenon which requires the total personality (attitude, consciousness, dispositions, values) of human beings for its achievement and sustainability. Once the personality is misplaced, what remains is an individual who is incapable of pursuing and achieving a meaningful development. A society that parades people with 'weak' attitudinal dispositions will ultimately find development elusive and underdevelopment inevitable. The point being made is simply that the prevalent attitude of most Nigerians is such that breeds in its multiplicity, the conditions for endemic underdevelopment. Such attitudes include tolerance for impropriety of the ruling elite, celebration of mediocrity, excusing away financial recklessness of the political actors amongst others. The questions that follow from the above include: how do these attitudes get acquired and entrenched especially in the context of a society? How do attitudes, dispositions and values influence or impact on the social condition of a people?

The unfortunate developments in contemporary Nigeria have generated public concern about the future of Nigerian federation as a political entity. Quite disturbing is escalating regime of violent crimes, banditry, kidnapping, religious and ethnic tensions. Consequently, economic and social relationships drifts into a state of comatose in most commercial cities which justified the fears of many that the nation may not be able to navigate the storm of uncertainty too far. Security challenges, religious intolerance coupled with massive corruption in public places have dominated every national discourse. The insurgent question has been politicized with attendant consequences on human lives and properties. The culture of fear with mutual suspicion determines every aspect of human relationships. Sadly, the capacity of the state to contend with these challenges obviously is below expectations. Nigeria has been a perennial victim of the devious manipulation of ethnicity, regionalism and religion. Colonialism and its multi-dimensional impacts remain one major factor of socio-cultural economic and political significance in Nigeria history that accounts partly for this twist of fate. The centrality of this epoch was informed more by the

supposed artificiality of the Nigerian federal system which has the heritage of 'ethnocentricity and divisiveness' as against the desirable spirit of the operation and cohesion as precondition for sustainable development in the federal context. (Otonti, 1964, p.5)

Similarly, colonialism left in its wake the perpetual division of Nigeria along ethnic lines against the spirit of communalism that pervaded our traditional societies. This in itself is anti-development in addition to constituting a veritable obstacle to the nation's quest for national cohesion. A distinguishing feature of post-colonial Nigerian politics is the preoccupation of the country and its leaders with achieving both unity and stability anchored on peaceful co-existence of the country's disparate nationalities. Scholars are of the opinion that we may have failed in exploring the traditional inter-tribal communal relations, which thrived on the recognition of our differences and respect for our visible distinctiveness. Gupta, (1968) cited in Obafemi, Olu "Cultural Diversity and National Development"(2005, p.9) argues that the linguistic situation in Nigeria is not entirely different from what obtains in other new independent nations. As he observed, most new nations are based on plurality of segmental groups. The national tie of the people to their segmental group is often valued more highly than their civic ties with the nation, which reflects the deep-seated dislocation between culture and traditional values on the one hand and the Nigerian nation state and politics on the other hand. This as a result has led to the appropriation of the state resources to service sectional enclaves. Integration of culture into the body politics and our ideologies has therefore become necessary to harmonise loyalty and centralise commitment.

The Need for a Sustainable Development and Politico-Cultural Reforms in Nigeria

The purpose of this section is to clarify the idea of development that this paper regards as desirable for Nigeria, which may be distinct in some areas from other ideas of development. Although a familiar concept that is difficult to define, a working definition will be presented here to ensure a common ground of understanding as the paper unfolds. Development is a universal phenomenon and reality that pervades the essence of man. To properly define the scope of the meaning of development that shall be considered henceforth, it is pertinent to state that development in human society and among human beings is our focus. Development is a many-sided process but never a state of affairs. At the individual level, it implies increased skills and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility, and material well-being (Walter 1982, p.3). The development of the individual is

largely a product of the public or collective conventions and world-view of the social group in which a person is situated. At least, he is 'socialized' into a social group, and his development is the degree to which he has or he is capable of internalizing these communicated norms. The individual is not an isolated island; therefore the indices of individual development highlighted above are expressions of interpersonal relations whose "language game" is a structure put in place by the society. That is, the development of the individual is largely contextual — socially dependent.

At the group level, development implies the "expanding and adaptive capacity of the society in satisfying the material and cultural needs of its members" (Irele, 1993, p.15). Both the human and the non-human "others" that man relates with constitute his 'Environment'. Development could mean a process of change from one state to the other for the purpose of achieving a goal. It could be the successive stages, landmarks and conditions in the process of realizing an end. In characterizing development, the latter state is presumably better, higher, more perfect, more complete and advanced than the former. Development in human society is a conscious process which derives from man's desire to live a better life and his vehement pursuit of this status. The process of development is the successive consequences of the relationship between man and his environment. It is an unfolding of his potentiality to study, understand and live by the realities of his environment. Much of human history has been a struggle for survival against natural hazards and against real and imagined enemies (Walter, op cit.). One could hold therefore, that development is the degree and manner at which man is able to understand and solve his existential problems as they unfold.

Today, economic development, that is, the dynamic progression or upward movement in the material welfare of the human person has come to dominate the discursive terrain of development studies. Economic development is occupying the central position in most developmental concerns and policies. To this effect, consideration for other spheres of human existence is to the extent at which they promote the economy. Hence, development has come to reducibly mean: elimination of poverty, disease and ignorance; increase in national wealth in such a way that every person will have enough. The chief aspect of development going by this idea is the degree of access to the wealth of the society and the means of production. It is a systematic transformation of the conditions of life of the majority of the people in a beneficial manner to enhance their attainment of individual and collective well-being. The idea of 'sustainable development' was raised as a strategy by which communities seek economic development through approaches that also benefit the local environment and quality of life. It has also become an important guide to many communities that have discovered that traditional approaches to development are creating, rather than solving societal and environmental problems.

Sustainable development as an idea provides a framework, under which communities can use resources efficiently, create efficient infrastructures and relationships, protect and enhance quality of lives, and create new businesses to strengthen their economies. The idea of sustainable development is conceived to help create healthy societies that can sustain the present generation as well as those that follow via the judicious use of economic, environmental and cultural resources. The concept of sustainability emphasizes the ideas of "directing", "maintaining", and "defining" a suitable framework for a desired development, which will involve the least risk and loss to humanity. Sustainability requires that the real incomes rise, that educational standards increase; that the health of the nation improves, that the general quality of life is advanced (Pearce, 1989, p. 2). All these benefits are to be realized with little or no damage to the potentials of both the present and future generations. Sustainability, as it relates to growth and development, is a review of traditional meaning and approaches to development. Arguments abound in literature to suggest that there are many multi-ethnic nations in the world whose development appeared to have been informed more by commitment to traditional values , celebration and patronage of cultural heritage ,credible vision, defined mission and greater sense of belonging and above all, responsible statehood ,being the most potent panacea for ethnic consciousness and loyalty. Okwudiba was of the opinion that "…ethnic groups are not necessarily homogenous entities even linguistically or culturally." (Okwudiba, 2006, p.31) Thus, we must strive to explore what is common to us all, to champion the course of our development . As Ikime rightly noted, "…whenever the issue of Nigerian unity comes up for discussion, there is a tendency for many a Nigerian to be apologetic, to find excuses which are deftly paraded as reasons why we have, almost necessarily, to remain disunited. (Ikime, 1984, p.4)

On his part, Biodun Adediran reasoned that constant references to the negative aspects of our plural character were among the machinations of early European writers. Among many fallouts of their writings was a ready negative impression on our cultural heritage upon which subsequent writers based their writings. For example, they are quick to amplify the impossibility of forming an enduring nation state from the ashes of what, in their own thinking, was a mere collection of disparate groups of people.(Adediran,1999, p.4).To them, achieving

integration was a mirage but to us, here lies an issue that calls for a renewed interest in our own history if national development is of utmost importance to us as a people within the context of the present federal structure. Consequently, we need to "fasten on our differences," and harness those aspects of our culture that are unifying, in order to enhance national cohesion. As opposed to our traditional economic system with its enviable features of healthy competition, fair exchange and so on, Nigeria's pseudo-capitalism brought about by the west only succeeded in entrenching polarization deepened further by liberal democracy . As noted by many scholars, the class nature of our contemporary society brought about by this pseudo-capitalist leaning also constitutes a major impediment to national development.

Politics and democracy should be rooted in the family. In Nigeria, individuals who mostly do not represent the interest of the people control contemporary political development formally. While it is often assumed that there is grassroots democracy, the fact is that people at the grassroots are only mobilised behind some individuals' selfish agenda, hence meaningful participation barely take place. Ortserga observed that, different from what tradition preaches, in Nigeria, the grass roots people are merely used as "inputs in the political industries to manufacture political positions." (Ortserga, 1999, p.25) The implication of this is the growing disconnection between the electorate and elected officials, the state and the citizens. The most viable option lies in a recourse to our family traditional system that would be communal in character and hinged on egalitarian principles. We share the views that class rule is based on the protection of the interests of a class. This ensures that politics is not geared towards solving the problems of society but addressing the interests of individuals and cliques. We must therefore be prepared to eliminate class rule as it was in our traditional setting, encourage mass participation, and ensure that the societal interest, takes precedent over personal interest, in order to guarantee social harmony.

By whatever interpretation, democracy is not alien to Nigerian culture. History is replete with varying democratic practices that cut across the various traditional institutions in Nigeria. There are existing traditional practices among the Nigerian people that are synonymous with contemporary expositions on democratic governance both in principle and practice. Such practices among the Igbo village democracy and our cross-cultural extended family as with the Yoruba, Tiv, Bini, Nupe and so on, could be incorporated in the conduct of our conduct of politics to instil discipline, and re-enact integrity, respect, and such other virtues as could promote peaceful co-existence. These can provide the basis for sustainable

democratic governance. We must add that our traditional sentiment abhors appropriation of collective patrimony, much in the same way it frowns at dictatorial tendencies in whatever guises and the lack of accountability on the part of trustees of our collective communal interest. "Power was shared vertically as everyone had a say in how society was governed. Abuse of power was curtailed by the various structure put in place to effectively check on the powers of the ruler" Without mincing words, we need a kind of cultural renaissance to enable us face the challenges of governance in the twenty-first century Nigeria.(Babawale,2006, p.51)By this, I mean the patronage of culture, which should concern itself with the entire way of life of the Nigerian people; their creative, artistic, scientific and technological capabilities ,benefiting there from economically, morally and politically.(Bello,1999, p.46)

We must not fail to re-echo the fact that there had always been effective inter-personal and inter-group relationships amongst our people before the European incursion. This complex tradition of ethnic interaction cut across groups and societies, including the Yoruba, Jukun, Nupe, Bini, Idoma, and Igala to mention but a few. Characteristic of traditional institution were the prevalence of kinship, dynasty, and emirate system amidst notable intra and inter-societal migration of people as against isolated settlement as western scholars would tend to suggest. Without being too historical, the point must be made that the extensive interaction also meant years of admixture of populations. Indeed, it provided a context within which diffusion of culture traits as well as cultural affinities and heritage of common sojourning thrived.

One significant aspect of the collective history of Nigeria's ethnic nationalities is that they were linked at several points and over time by the myth of common ancestry, cross-border commercial transactions, among other exchanges and ideas that seem to weld them into a unified entity. (Babawale,2006, p.1) All of these naturally favour possible conception of a federal system that could have thrived on mutual understanding and cooperation were it not for the colonial interlude. Justification for a revisit of our cultural heritage is premised on the conviction that the substance of our cultural heritage can still be harnessed and explored for sustainable development.

However, the challenge before   us borders on raising the level of consciousness of the citizenry on the positive aspects of Nigerian history, playing down the negative and retrogressive aspects of our culture and appreciating what can be borrowed from our past to

sustain the present and guarantee our future as a people through accelerated development. This calls for commensurate understanding of the issues involved in order to generate an enduring solution. Indeed, given the peculiarity of a people, our culture can serve as a vanguard of change through the value system. In any case, since our interest in the past is in the present and this present is shaped not only by on-going tasks, but also by future aspirations, our intellectual engagements with our culture and value system would be rewarding if it helps in clarifying for us yesterday's experience, today's task and tomorrow's possibilities. The definition of philosophy as a rational and critical activity helps in creating a tradition of thinking and discourse whose main focus will be on issues affecting the interests and aspirations of the people. Any society that neglects this role does so at his own peril; because philosophy in its critical and rational role, serves to challenge a people's established views of themselves and their condition as a precondition for redefining who they are and what they can be. The reappraisal of our political culture is to identify its strengths and weaknesses. This reappraisal is a philosophical imperative that have the potential of promoting self-understanding that would provide some basis for determining the kind of political and socio-cultural reconstruction in our society.

Conclusion
In this paper, we have tried to establish that there is a defective political culture in Nigeria that is impeding good governance, growth and development in Nigeria. The challenge before us is to make use of our various institutions to facilitate the reorientation of our youths and political actors to imbibe the spirit of brotherhood and serve, cultivate a sense of commitment, among other virtues of societal significance. This will go a long way in stemming the tide of political intolerance, character assassination, political violence and political rascality. Apart from periodic interaction with the youths through programmes, agencies of government should actually begin to organise refresher course for key political actors who are presumed agents of change. We need to embark on massive public enlightenment programmes that would encourage the people to take their citizenship responsibilities more seriously. Not only should they participate more actively in the political process, they must invest their time and energy in the choice of the right men and women that would make policies. The nature of Nigerian politics at the moment gives cause for grave concern. Political contestations seem to be regarded as the equivalent of warfare- the winner takes all and the looser loses everything. Nothing is better than winning and nothing can be worse than losing. In this context, violence takes centre stage at election time. Politicians all over the country are willing and prepared to acquire power and retain it at all cost. What results from this mind-set are a spiral of violence and a high

level of insecurity in the society

A major problem confronting our society today is the character of our political parties . There is a total breakdown of discipline and lack of focus in many of the parties .Indeed, we can say that many of the political parties lack the essential attributes of political parties, They neither articulate the interest of the populace nor even possess the wherewithal to curb the excesses of their members. Indiscipline within the nation's political parties has turned them into war machines defending the "fortresses" of warlords masquerading as political leaders. Parties' leaders attack one another on all fronts over all manners of issues. Members insult the leadership of their parties without restrain and they viciously attack their parties on issues they themselves should resolve. Party gatekeepers /godfathers determine which candidates would run for an elected office after fleecing potential contestants of huge sums of money.

This practice inevitably breeds anew crop of looting and thieving politicians who need to recoup their "investments" at all costs. These parties have a fixation for capturing power while totally neglecting the non-power aspects of political contestations. Under the scenario enacted above, meaning political competition cannot take place. There is an urgent need for the nation's politicians to develop a code of conduct that would guide their representatives in government. Informed opinion in the country insists that the government of the day has not spent enough time to reform the nation's politics . Tragically; the political process is the hub that drives the economy.
Our politics, as mentioned earlier, remains uniquely Hobbesian . There is the need for a return of law and ethics into our politics to signpost total departure from the garrison politics that is threatening so visibly to test our polity apart. Our politicians must be able to organise truly competitive elections whose outcomes are uncertain ex ante. Uncertainty of outcomes remains the predictable characteristic of truly democratic elections. Politicians must come to terms with the possibility of today's winners becoming tomorrow's losers. There is an urgent need for our politicians to imbibe democratic attitudes. It is difficult to build **democracy** without **democrats**. The political elite must understand the language of compromise, negotiation and dialogue.

More can be achieved through dialogue than through conflicts. They must learn to persuade and not coerce. The high level of corruption and evidence of bad governance that we see before us are there to show that Nigeria lacks good quality leadership. To move forward as a nation, we need a new breed of leaders that are sensitive, patriotic, accountable and imbued with

demonstrable vision. We must admit that, a way out of our socio-economic and political crisis is the adoption of what Adebayo Adedeji describes as "a social economy paradigm of development which assumes the launching of a development process that is socially just, economically productive, ecologically sustainable, politically stable and participatory, and culturally vibrant"(Adedeji,1999, p.21) The practice an ideal political culture is an appreciation of the resources of the past and its contributions to the present as well as our imaginative response to such contributions in the light of our present problems and as a strategy towards our development in the future.

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