

Text and Context Analysis of Tribal Sentiment in Julie Okoh's *Aisha* and the Nigerian Development in the 21st Century

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Abstract

From past till present, tribal sentiment, as a cankerworm, has pragmatically positioned as a major issue plaguing the Nigerian space as portrayed in Julie Okoh's *Aisha*. Tribal sentiment, fathomed through cultural, traditional, religious, political and ideological differences, visible in the diverse Nigerian space – Southeast, South-south, South-west, and the North has gravely affected the nation in all fronts - economically, politically, socially, and otherwise. Often times, this issue is manifested through conflict, manifesting through acts of violence such as incessant killing, youth restiveness, destruction of multimillion properties, kidnapping, and every other forms of violence. The gargantuan effect of these malicious acts is an increase in the level of death, pain, and suffering of the people and underdevelopment to the country. This has therefore questioned the love and unity which the country professes over the years. This issue has subsequently generated impetus in argumentative and dramatic portraiture by critics and dramatist, yet, the issue is aggravating by the day. The study therefore aims at interrogating the cause and effect of tribal sentiment in the Nigerian space. Thus, with content analysis method, this study investigates Julie Okoh's approach and attempt to establish the cause and effect of tribal sentiment on the Nigerian space using drama as an instrument. The effect of it will create positive change amongst Nigerians, thereby effectuating change around societies. The study therefore recommends that tribal sentiment must be abolished in all regions as that would create development in the Nigerian space in the 21st century.

Background to the Study

Ethnic sentiment which unequivocally metamorphosed to conflicts have weathered Nigerian history for years past, and a complex tribal justice system has arisen as a result of political, economical, social, religious, topographical, and cultural differences, whose gargantuan nature, questions the unity professed. Although today illiteracy eradication and development projects have played an important role in reducing tribal disputes, much remains to be done to address longstanding truces and other unresolved tribal arguments that have affected the front of the Nigerian political cum economic social strata. This has meticulously endangered and threatened the development of the Nigerian state, thus created pain, hunger, suffering and poverty on the people.

Lucidly, the ongoing tribal or ethnic conflict caused by pensive sentiment has stalled the implementation of decentralization measures in many governorates. Security concerns prevent government institutions from functioning effectively in certain areas and hamper participation in activities of local governing bodies (Mojalli, 2009). Across disciplines, scholars of ethnicity have recognized that research on ethnic conflict has tremendously interrogated the unique context of ethno-politics, questioning whether and how ethnic identity is significant to politics and political mobilization, and how such ethno-politics is related to political violence. It is equally important to investigate the discourses of conflict actors and local analysts, to examine critically the use of terms such as 'ethnic violence', 'ethnic conflict', or in most cases as often used, 'ethnic clashes' in the discursive framing, interpretation, and explanation of conflict. The three aforementioned are prevalent in the Nigerian space in the 21st century.

The crisis/clashes in Nigeria is not unusual as it serves as microcosm of the macrocosm of the African states, thus, making most countries in African extremely security challenging. The pervasiveness of violent conflict in Nigeria is routinely ascribed to the countries' backwardness and the 'natural' propensity for violence of its indigenous populations. Furthermore, the whole African continent is in fact still torn apart by many cases of conflict and civil unrest, which hinder the development of its states (Pamela, 2015). Pamela on the same plain noted, strikingly that "Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ethiopia and Eritrea, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria and Somalia are only some examples of the atrocities that afflict the African continent and make peace and stability impossible". Next, she writes that "Africa is also the continent with the highest rate of poverty, illiteracy, and infant mortality" caused by incessant conflict amongst tribes whose political ideologies differs by content and context. Numerous international organizations, both governmental and nongovernmental, according to Pamela (2015) have tried to promote strategies for poverty reduction, economic and social development and crisis management. Africa seems, though, not to respond as well as other parts of the world to the "therapy" which instinctively reduces poverty, hardship, death, suffering, and sickness.

More so and on global base, Pamela avers that "Since the 1960s, several development and international financial aid programs have tried to address the issues of poverty and

underdevelopment in Africa, Asia and Latin America. These programs yielded results in some parts of the world, as for the so-called “Asian Tigers” - Singapore, Honk Kong, Taiwan, and South Korea. Throughout history, ethnic conflicts according to Hossien (2016) quoting Esman (2004) have long been a component of international politics. Furthermore, Hossien fervently explained that “One of the most debated issues relating to ethnic conflict is whether it has become more or less prevalent in the post-Cold War period”. Hossien also avers that “At the end of the Cold War, academics including Samuel P. Huntington (1993) and Robert D. Kaplan (?), predicted a proliferation of conflicts fuelled by civilization clashes, tribalism, resource scarcity and overpopulation”. The post-Cold War period according to Hossien has witnessed a number of ethnically-informed secessionist movements, predominantly within the former communist states. Conflicts have involved secessionist movements in the former Oslavia, Transnistria in Moldova, Armenians in Azerbaijan, Abkhaz and Ossetians in Georgia. Outside the former communist bloc, Hossien insists, quoting Cornell and Hartmann (1998) that “ethno-separatist strife in the same period has occurred in areas such as Sri Lanka, West Papua, Chiapas, East Timor, the Basque Country and Southern Sudan”.

On a lucid note, Hosien (2016) opines, quoting Esman (2004) that “Ethnicity results from interethnic relations, whenever two different groups or societies come into contact and establish various modes of spatial, political-economic, cultural and social relations, throughout history, ethnic conflicts have long been a component of international politics”. Even today, ethnic wars according to Hossien quoting Mohammadzadeh (2010) continue to be the most common form of armed conflicts around the world. Hossien concludes by quoting Duffy (2004), Schlichting (1997) and Fearon (2003) that “In the recent past for example, there have been numerous instances of ethnic conflict including ethnic war in Somalia, Kurdish struggle for autonomy in Iraq and Turkey, guerilla wars in El Salvador and Nicaragua, insurrection in Chechnya, and the conflict between Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda to name a few”. It is most pervasive in Nigeria considering that Nigeria is a gulf, harboring more than five hundred ethnic groups, whose way f life differs in most ramifications.

In a nutshell, the emergence of indigenes and settler's unhealthy rivalries in most parts of Nigeria according to Ejikeme (2016), has remained for many decades one of the major sources of intractable inter-ethnic crisis bedeviling the sovereign nation. The indigene and settler phenomenon according to him is a cancerous disease in the body polity of any nation as cancer is to the human body system. Ejikeme also insisted that “if the problem is not detected early enough and treated effectively to cure the ailment, if allowed to spread to other body components, it would either pose insurmountable health challenges or destroy the entire system”. Its effect according to him is therefore disastrous to national integration and nation building. In human history, issues bordering on communal conflicts, inter-ethnic crisis, are common phenomena as conflict is a reality of social relations at the individual, group, organizational, community and societal levels. As late as pre-colonial period, and during colonial era, many African ancient kingdoms experienced inter-kingdom dynastic feuds or inter-community conflicts within kingdoms.

Ejikeme went on writing that “In modern society, the intractable conflicts emerging from the saga of indigene/settler in various parts of Nigeria stem from the conception, definition and perception of the character of who is an indigene and who is a settler; which defines what rights indigenes have over non-indigenes”. This ironically ridicules the unity which aims to strengthen its fronts and build the nation to an enviable entity. It therefore generates lack of innovation by non-indigenes due to the fact that they may be denied of their possession as was prevalent in most northern states of the country.

On a larger note, Ejikeme (2016), avers that “as a result of the intransigent trend, many communities have been destroyed, cases of colossal loss of lives and properties have been recorded, and millions of displaced people have been vulnerable to abuse (e. g. rape, hunger, infections, epidemics) and other related consequences”. Women and children are the major victims/casualties of the lawlessness. Nigeria according to him is a heterogeneously constituted society where ethnic-based conflicts flourish, and distrust amongst tribes is very high; where most natives are ill-informed, issues are based on ethnic sentiments to foster the struggle for resource control, and each ethnic-group 'fight' to have undue advantage to federal or state benefits. Ejikeme sums up that “the indigene status provides 'indigenes' the identity, recognition, affinity and meaning for individual members of the group acting individually or collectively to defend group interests”.

This menace often affects inter-marriage union in so much as each tribe or ethnic group wishes to meticulously protect her boundary, avoiding any means of encroachment that may one day be of great effect to them. This is most often pervasive when issue of religion differences creeps in. The objective of this study is to investigate the root causes of tribal or ethnic discrimination in the Nigerian society, as portrayed in Julie Okoh's *Aisha*. Identifying the cause and effects of tribal/ethnic discrimination forms the thrust of this study.

Critical Race Theory and Tribal Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Tribal Critical Race Theory (TCRT), extensively discussed by Jeanette Haynes in the year 2008, is the cradle of which this study is based. The theory when encapsulated and outlined, offers the possibility of unmasking, exposing, and confronting continued colonization within educational contexts and societal structures, thus transforming those contexts and structures for Indigenous Peoples, is the cradle of which this study is shaped. When mastered and applied, the theories of Critical Race (CR) Tribal Critical Race (TCR) becomes a kind of emancipating communication in the form of discourse required to change the mentality of people and eradicate tribal sentiment syndrome which has pragmatically resulted to incessant conflicts that affects the country in all fronts, thus increased the level of poverty, suffering, death, hunger, and sickness of the people.

The goal of CRT is to construct an alternative reality by naming one's reality through storytelling and counter storytelling; thus, the advantage of CRT is the voice that it provides people of color. Examples of “voice” according to Jeanette (2008) include

“parables, chronicles, stories, counter stories, poetry, fiction, and revisionist histories”. CRT allows for the contestation, deconstruction, and reshaping of the master narrative by enlisting multiple perspectives and experiences as sources of valid knowledge which serve as catalysts for transformation. For members of the dominating society, CRT according to Jeanette (2008) quoting Ladson-Billings (1998) provokes a “cognitive conflict to jar white racism” disrupting particular beliefs about the world. CRT according to Jeanette, also quoting Delgado and Stefancic (2001) provides crucial knowledge to white people because it helps them “grasp what it is like to be nonwhite” that is, counter storytelling serves to “help us understand what life is like for others and invite the reader into a new and unfamiliar world.

Methodology

This research work employs the case study and content analysis research approaches of the qualitative research method. It involves explaining the issue, describing, analyzing and interpreting data on the bases of tribal sentiment as portrayed in Julie Okoh's *Aisha*. It is qualitative because it deals with the analysis by a notable Nigerian playwright, and descriptive because it involves the use of ideas to describe and analyze the issue of tribal/ethnic discrimination within the play contexts. To achieve this, the study employs the primary and secondary sources. The primary source is the play text and the researchers' ideas concerning the issue of tribal/ethnic sentiment in Nigeria, while the secondary source includes materials from the institutional publications, articles, journals, text books, internets, research materials, amongst others.

Synopsis of *Aisha*

The play centre's on Aisha, a Kanuri Muslim woman who due to her unquenchable love for Ehimare, an Edo Christian man, decides to painstakingly lie to her enraged and religious fanatic Muslim father that she is carrying Ehimare's child. Due to this, her father decides to chase her out of the house, threatening to kill her anytime he set his eyes on her. On the same plain, Adesua, Ehimare's mother also detests Aisha for two reasons. First is Aisha's tribe and religion. Adesua on so many occasions complain on how her parents lost their lives and properties in Kaduna, by some Hausa Muslim protesters and her grandparent's massacre during the Biafra/Nigeria civil war by some Hausa Muslim soldiers. Second reason is that Ehimare refused to marry the young maiden she had groomed for him as wife, rather, Ehimare conceded by taken Aisha, a maiden from the tribe she believed maimed her parents and grandparents as wife. Adesua sworn never to agree Ehimare perform Aisha's traditional marriage rite in their village when she observed that Aisha has been disowned by her parents.

As a result of these controversies by Aisha's parents and Adesua, Ehimare's mother, Ehimare and Aisha connived and had their court marriage, neglecting all traditional rites which they later thought was the reason for their ten years' inability to conceive a child. Major issue in the play started in the rising action when Adesua arrive Ehimare's house, insisting that Aisha is barren and will never be able to conceive insofar as she remains Ehimare's wife, thus has charmed her only son Ehimare into believing that all is well. She

demanded that peace can only be restored in Ehimare's house only if Ehimare agrees to send Aisha, his illegal wife, out of his house, and thereafter, takes Etemini, the daughter of a prominent man in their village at Edo as wife.

This nuance generated a lot of tensions between Adesua and her son Ehimare, whom she believes is taken sides with his wife Aisha. Angered by this acts which she termed betrayal, Adesua decided in the mid night to invite some of her coven mates, into Ehimare and Aisha's room to remove Aisha's womb, but luckily, Aisha distinctly woke up to behold the face of Adesua with the other witches that she was unable to recognize before they disappeared. She quickly woke Ehimare and disclosed that she saw Adesua, his mother and some women whom she was unable to fathom their faces trying to take her womb, but instead, Ehimare for the first time, slapped Aisha for maliciously and audaciously calling Adesuahis beloved mother, a witch; Aisha runs to Otibho, Ehimare's Sisters house in fear.

Unstable by his ridiculous action against Aisha, Ehimare quickly rush to Otibho's house to apologize and seek Aisha's forgiveness. He later reveals to Aisha that he has accepted to marry Etemini, the maiden that his mother has insisted he must marry, but Aisha, misinterpreting his candid intentions, demanded to call their marriage quit. Afraid of this, Ehimare quickly reveals that he has to take the situation of his mother's demand, to pay her bride price which will be carried out according to the culture and tradition of the Edo people, thus, perform the traditional rite which would formally make them husband and wife considering that the court marriage which they had earlier done is not wholly valued in African society. In agreement to this new development, Ehimare quickly rushed home to disclose to his mother that he has agreed to marry Etemini, for the sake of peace. Adesua quickly accepted and a date for the traditional marriage rite was agreed upon.

On the specified date and time, the traditional marriage rites on Etemini whom for long had her face covered according to the culture and tradition of Edo people was carried out and when the helm of the woman was unveiled, only to reveal that the Etemini was Aisha. Adesua observing this, quietly works out as controversy over Aisha taken the place of Etemini was argued by the family of the supposed Etemini and Ehimare's people. It is thereafter resolved that Aisha be allowed to be Ehimare's wife inasmuch as the traditional rites were fully performed and the dowry paid.

The story comes to an end as Chike, Ehimare's driver, rushes in to hand a letter from Ehimare's doctor at Lagos which reveals that Aisha is pregnant with Ehimare's child such as Ruddy, discloses to Chike that their secret love affair has resulted to the unborn child in her womb.

Character Analysis of *Aisha*

This section focuses on the examination of main characters in the play. The play has six (6) main characters and other minor characters. The main characters are discussed as thus:

Aisha: She is the main character in the story that the action revolves around. She is young, understanding, loving, determined, self reliance, fearless, and moderate Kanuri woman. Aisha is the daughter of a Muslim family. She decided to lie to her father that she is with Ehimare's child after she observed the keen hatred her father had against Ehimare because he is of another tribe. Aisha's father had wanted Aisha to marry a Hausa Muslim business man but Aisha knowing that the father loved education, pleaded she should be allowed to finish her education before getting married. She is hated by Adesua because Ehimare decided to disobey her by marrying a girl from the tribe she believed killed her parents and grandparents. Aisha later connived with Ehimare to have a traditional marriage rite in Ehimare's town when they discovered that their court marriage does not count. Aisha represents the good women in Nigeria who sees intercultural marriage as a palatable means of promoting unity in Nigeria.

Ehimare: He is Aisha's husband, a Christian, and an Edo man. He is faithful, patience, gentle, loving, bold, generous, patriotic, and sometimes harsh. He decided to have a court wedding with Aisha when he discovered that Aisha's parents and his mother Adesua are against their union. Ehimare always picks quarrel with Adesua, his mother, each time Adesua tries to embarrass Aisha because of their childlessness. He got angry and slapped Aisha when Aisha told him that she saw Adesua and some unknown women trying to take her womb. He later planned with Aisha to concede with Adesua into marrying Etemini, on that process, he would perform Aisha's traditional marriage rites. Ehimare represents all patriotic citizens in Nigeria who are busy fighting against tribal conflicts and sentiment that is massively prevalent in the Nigerian space in the 21st century.

Adesua: She is Ehimare's mother and a witch. She subsequently quarrels Aisha over her childlessness because she believes that Aisha is from the tribe of the people who killed her parents and grandparents due to tribal clashes and war. She hated Aisha because Ehimare decided to marry her instead of marrying her friend's beautiful daughter whom she had groomed for him. She is responsible for Aisha's countless miscarriages. She always picks quarrel with Aisha, hoping Aisha would be frustrated and quit her marriage, in so doing, Ehimare would take Etemini as his wife. Adesua was happy when Ehimare agreed to marry Etemini but was later disappointed that the young girl whom she was hoping was Etemini and her traditional marriage rites performed is Aisha. Adesua represents all the people in the Nigerian society who are against interethnic marriages. Subsequently, Adesua represents those in the Nigerian space who believes that unity amongst the diver's regions is unattainable.

Ruddy: She is Aisha's house maid. Ruddy is rude, selective, fearful, quarrelsome, uneducated, pretentious, and hard-working. She is secretly in love with Chike but due to the turbulence in Ehimare's house against Aisha, she vowed never to marry any man whose tribe differs from Yoruba tribe. She was later impregnated by Chike. Due to the pity she had for Aisha over Adesua's continual torment decided to attack Adesua. Ruddy represents some Nigerian women who despite her hatred against other tribes, still concede into having cordial relationship with people different from her tribe.

Chike: He is Ehimare's driver. Chike is young, handsome, literate, polite, humble, loving, respectful, generous, and hardworking. He is madly in love with Ruddy, thus, seizes every opportunity to express his love for Ruddy. He wished to have Ruddy as his wife despite her Yoruba background. Chike was happy when Ruddy reveals to him that she is pregnant with his child. In the end, Chike delivered the enveloped that revealed that Aisha is three months pregnant with Ehimare's child. Chike just like Ehimare represents the select few in Nigeria who believes that with love, unity can be ascertained.

Otibho: Otibho is Ehimare's younger sister and a good friend to Aisha. She is young, understanding, peaceful, considerate, and accommodating. She planned with Ehimare and Aisha to trick Adesua into believing that Ehimare was to marry Etemini, unknowing to Adesua that it was Aisha. Otibho represents the good women in the Nigerian society who resent the maltreatments that mothers in-laws give to their daughter in-laws. Like Ehimare and Chike, Otibho sees unity in association.

Aisha and theme of Tribal Sentiment in Nigeria

Aisha according to Julie Okoh discusses the problem of lack of development and progress in the Nigerian space caused by ethnic sentiments, intolerance, conflict and violence. Extensively, the issue of ethnic sentiment is so appalling that an average Nigerian is willing to kill, maim, and even vote for a corrupt, unqualified, and an unpatriotic politician into a higher position, instead of allowing a qualified person in a sister tribe. This nuance is prevalent and envisaged in the local, state, and even federal strata inasmuch as it relates to politics. Unequivocally this has resulted, or rather created discrepancies which have magnificently affected the fronts of the Nigerian state-economically, politically and socially in a way that pain, suffering, poverty and lack of development have visited the space in the 21st century. In the play, the major issue that Julie tries to portray meticulously is the issue of tribal sentiment, envisaged on two tribal and religious fanatics, embedded on the characters of Aisha's father and Adesua, Ehimare's mother.

They both express their grievances on their experiences regarding the effects of tribal sentiment raging from the inter-tribal war that existed between the Ibos and the Hausa/Fulani in states such as Kano, Kaduna, Plateau, Maiduguri and other Northern states in Nigeria. For instance, Adesua fervently and painstakingly analyzed the tragic experiences that she witnessed regarding her parents killing by armed religious fanatics in Kaduna and her grand-parents carnaging by angry Nigerian military officials in the South during the Biafra/Nigerian civil war. She is also embittered on the general carnaging of the southerners and the destruction of their properties in the northern part of Nigeria by angry Northerners. This statement is clarified when Adesua fervently explain that:

Adesua: No! No! It is not the same thing. Hausa are too dangerous. They are ready to kill without thinking. They have no human feelings. How can you forget so soon what they did to us during the pogrom? See how they are still killing the southerners living in theirland like rat. Right from the time

of the civil war till today, any small thing they burn down houses. They burn down churches. They burn down properties with millions of naira, belonging to southerners (p. 30).

On this note, she fathomed avenues of frustrating Aisha into leaving her marital home. She targets her attention on Aisha's ten years of barrenness, though she ironically masterminded Aisha's predicament. She flamed when Aisha explains that the fault of her inability to conceive may be attributed to Ehimare, her son. Adesua's statement below clarifies this notion:

Adesua: And you cannot succeed. My son will have children like his father and forefathers. All strong and healthy men! Like a father, once they bend down to work, the earth is swollen with yam tubers. If anyone is sick, it is you (p. 20). On the same plain, Aisha also explains the reason why her father hated her involvement with Ehimare. Her statement below explains it:

Aisha: Not exactly. My father wanted me to marry him. But I pleaded with him to allow me finish my education first. He couldn't refuse. He valued education very much, that was why he sent me to school in the first place. Otherwise I would have been married off before fifteen according to our tradition (p. 9).

In the Nigerian society, the issue of tribal sentiment is so prevalent that conflict always results each time the issue of interethnic marriage is carried out. Nigerians see their individual tribes as the best even when they discover discrepancies in their tribes. They even associate their tribes to their religion, believing that their religion which is associated with their tribe and tradition is superior. It is against this backdrop that Ehimare explains that:

Ehimare: Is not the same thing. We complain about the apartheid in South Africa, racism in North America, anti-Semitism in Europe, yet we condone tribalism in our land. Soon this country will be worse than Sudan, or even Israel and Arab. Mother, intolerance is destructive and retrogressive (p. 35).

In and rule system insomuch as it has increased the issue of corruption in the country. The Nigerian society, the issue of tribal sentiment has distinctly increased the issue of nepotism, favoritism and divides resultant effect of this dichotomy is the increase in the level of poverty that has magnificently created pain, suffering, sickness and death of the people and underdevelopment to the nation.

Notwithstanding, the issue of tribal sentiment has increased the issue of tribal conflicts amongst the people in that most tribes in Nigeria are craving for self-determination. For instance, groups such as Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), which serves as a watchdog against

oppressors on the Ibo ethnicity in the south-eastern part of Nigeria are for long agitating for self-determination; the militia and the militant groups in the Niger Delta are equaling demanding for resource control, and the Herdsmen/farmers clashes over land usage in states such as Benue, Kogi, Edo, Delta, Enugu, and other states in Nigeria are plausible issues of tribal sentiment. The conflicts resulting on these plain is most times insignificant. Evidence of this statement is fathomed when Aisha solemnly stated:

Aisha: I agree with you absolutely. But when one lives and works with people with different ideas, it is difficult to avoid conflicts all the time. Suddenly, crisis breaks out, sometimes over very insignificant things (p. 10).

Against this backdrop, Aisha queried that why is it difficult to attain peace and harmony? This is as a result of the countless controversy between Aisha and Adesua. In the Nigerian society, peace and harmony is farfetched as there exist new cases of tribal conflict in all regions raging from the sporadic exploit of the blood thirsty Sharia zealots of the North West and North Central Region, to the incessant display of violence by the angry mafia of the armed bandits that paint the political landscapes in the South South, with blood, and from the hot headed ethnic militia known as the O. P. C. in the South West, and MASSOB in the South East, to the murderous secret cultists in nearly all our Universities and polytechnics. It has been an orgy of violence and a season of blood and tears in which the very foundation of the nation is threatened (Amiriheobu, 2018), quoting (Thewillnigeria.com, 2012). Precious human lives have been destroyed in their thousands and properties worth hundred and millions of naira have been set ablaze. This is masterminded by some corrupt politicians who instigate the notion of tribal sentiment on their people. In the play, Chike argues with Dogoyaro as thus:

Chike: Relax! I don't blame you. They have turned all of us into zombies and war-horses (p. 23). On that note, Dogoyaro pleaded that even when we decide to protect ourselves and our tribe, we should as good citizens of Nigeria, preach peace.

His statement below buttresses this:

Dogoyaro: In that case, me. I go outside to protect the territory. As the chief security officer for dis (sk) compound, a retired sergeant of the twenty fifth battalion of the Nigerian Army, I command you all to behave like good citizens. Let there be peace in this house. No more noise. No war. No secession. By order! Understand! That's right. As it were (p. 24).

This explains that war and conflict are products of aggression and violence, which are the signs of psychological disorder rather than a socio-cultural phenomenon. All these are visible in the Nigerian society as the regions in the Nigerian space are aggressive over a fundamental issue that affects them. To this, Ehimare in the play explains when he tries to clarify the notion that the issue of violence is not only visible in the Northern region of the country, but prevalent in other regions. His statement below clarifies this assertion:

Ehimare: Is it only in the North? What about the community violence in the South? The Ogbakiri people in Rivers State have been fighting each other for years. Riot and war will continue to burst out in the country as long as the people refuse to listen to each other. As long as we cannot let go of past hurt. And as long as everybody is fiercely protective of his ethnic group instead of fighting for national unity (p. 31)

This statement is plausible considering the fact that after the country gained her independence in 1960, there has been moment of chaos in the country, ranging from military coup to the Nigeria/Biafra civil war, to intra and inters communal clashes over land ownership. Aftermath of these conflicts which is usually linked to tribal sentiment is the killing of loved ones that create lasting pain and hatred in the heart of the bereaved. This hatred and pain is always transferred to the next generations which make it extremely complex to curb in the past years. Due to the complex nature of this, most Nigerians have decided to take up arms to fight in the street in defense of their tribe. Otibho's statement in the play clarifies this statement:

Othibo: ... Tomorrow, you may even take up arms to fight in the street in defense of your tribe. Then before you know it, another civil war has erupted. Remember Biafra/Nigerian War. It was the same ethnic sentiments that generated it (p. 46).

The continuation of ethnic violence and sentiment may painfully disrupt the awesome dream of massive development which would create peace and unity in the Nigerian state. In the play, Aisha explains:

Aisha: Dreams! What dreams! Can a home be built with conflicts and hostilities; or a nation with bullets and gunpowder? See how we have been living like cats and dogs tearing each other apart. No, my dear, no dream can be realized where there is discord and strife (p. 48).

It is regrettable that Nigerians can't fathom that the diversity which has brought about war, violence, death, pain, and strife in the country can as well be used to build up a nation infused with new values made up of our multicultural existence. Elaborately, Julie explains that "My Kanuri and Fulani origins mixing with your Edo and Yoruba backgrounds to form a hybrid culture". This new vision swelled up can pragmatically generate wealth, long life and prosperity, thus make the nation envy to her counterparts. This can only be achieved if we don't hold any body responsible for the lost of one's loves one.

This is explained in the play when Aisha lamented that:

Aisha: Not when your mother will never get off my back. She hates me too much. She grudges me for the massacre of southerners in the North, especially the pre civil war carnage. I have vague memory of that war. Yet my life is constantly being menaced because of the offence committed by my parents and grandparents. As long as we continue to put tribal sentiments into the centre of our lives, everything will continue to fall apart (p. 50).

In a nutshell, Julie in the play writes that “in the Nigerian society, it has become important to educate the people that there is no culture that is monolithic or static. Every society according to Julie (2005) incorporates several cultures. For, as people travel, from place to place, they carry their culture along with them. They also meet people from other places and learn from them.

Taking the best out of their different cultures, they form a new way of life, different but superior to their individual cultures. That is to say, whether you accept it or not, a part of my culture is already in yours; as a part of yours is already in mine. It is just for us to accept it and reshape it into hybrid culture. When cultures meet in a spirit of tolerance and understanding, they further the cause of progress.

Against this backdrop, Julie also insisted that Nigerians most also realize that the barrier between communities and tribes has been broken down. People now move from place to place easily. So, every community is now made up of people from different cultural backgrounds.

Julie concludes by drawing emphasis with Ehimare's statement that:

Ehimare: In this house for example, our maid is Yoruba, the driver is Ibo, the security guard is Tiv, the gardener is Hausa/Fulani, my wife is Kanuri and I am Edo (p. 59).

Conclusively, Julie Writes that “ in our daily existence, we share our life together, we relate to each other without thinking of place of origin. It is only when it comes to political interest that we become biased. Tribal sentiment is an afterthought, a connivance to hurt the other person, to create conflict and dissension, to retard progress. We should be more concerned about how to build a strong united progressive country than fueling tribal sentiment, because tribal violence brings complex set of events such as poverty, ethnic or religious grievances which affect the social relationship of the people in the society.

Conclusion/Recommendation

From the study, it is observed that tribal sentiment is the greatest menace plaguing the Nigerian society in the 21st century. Political violence brings complex set of events such as poverty, ethnic or religious grievances which affect the social relationship of the people in the society. It is therefore creating violence, death, pain and suffering of the people and underdevelopment to the Nigerian nation. This has therefore resulted to the fact that the unity which we professed in the national anthem is ridiculed. For instance, the issue of farmers/herdsmen clashes over land ranging and grazing which has created lot of tension nationally and internationally is never an oversight such as it has resulted to rivalry and conflict in states such as Benue, Kogi, Enugu, Edo, Delta, Katsina, and some other states. While some governors in states such as Rivers, Bayelsa, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Imo, and few others, mostly in the Niger Delta, have vowed never to entertain the ideology of cattle ranging or accepting grazing in or around their state. Nevertheless, the issue is as a result of past experiences most importantly the Biafra/Nigerian civil war which claimed most lives and mass destruction of multi-million properties in the southern region of the country.

Second reason for such is the carnage of the Ibos in some states in the Northern region by some angry religious and tribal fanatics. The governors believe that allowing the cattle ranging ideology in their respective states would pragmatically result to cultural encroachment and total takeover of possession by the Fulani Herdsmen, considering the intrusion and total takeover of some states in the Northern part of the country by Shaihu Usman Dan Fodio.

Notwithstanding, the study observes that the issue of tribal discrimination in Nigeria is most visible once it relates to politics. This unequivocally implies that the issue of tribal sentiment is fast diminishing in the mind of Nigerians considering the cordial relationships amongst people of different culture, norms, tradition, values, and functions, most especially in the exchange of goods and services, but springs up during electioneering eras, where an average Nigeria prefers voting for his corrupt and unqualified tribal brother than voting for a qualified person from another tribe. It is as a result of this that the issue of favouritism, tribalism, nepotism, and divide and rule system creeps in, thereafter, increasing corruption that has clandestinely positioned as the greatest issue in the Nigerian space in the 21st century. It has painfully made the country to be the poverty capital of the world. The after effect of these is an increase in the level of crime, perpetrated on daily bases. These crimes include like of kidnapping, incessant killing, assassination, vandalism of oil installations, armed robbery and other malicious acts that affects the people.

Hopefully, the issue of tribal sentiment can be curbed and peace and development restored in the Nigerian space if tribal ideology is abolished in all regions. To achieve this, law against tribal and religious fanaticism should be established and agency whose duty will be to see that offenders are severely punished be propounded. This will help minimize the issue of tribal sentiment in the country. Secondly, national orientation program should be conducted occasionally on the effect of tribal sentiment on the Nigerian development. Lastly, it has become important to also educate the people that there is no culture that is monolithic or static, every culture is tied with each other. They should be made to understand that when cultures meet in a spirit of tolerance and understanding; they further the cause of progress.

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