

Ethnic Bias, Favoritism and Development in Africa

Elota Adaobi

*Department of Public Administration
Federal Polytechnic Oko, Anambra State*

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Abstract

The leadership in many African Countries with their ethnic diversities is characterized by ethnic bias and favoritism and citizens are thus treated unequally in many respects, particularly when it comes to national resource allocation and political representation. This breeds resentment and creates conditions for an ultimate rejection of the state by the frustrated and politically conscious masses. It is also a tantamount to corruption there by weakening the ability of the state to function efficiently and is therefore anti-developmental. In this paper, it argues that the socio economic crises in many African countries are aggravated by practices of ethnic Bias and favoritism that have consistently violated the principle of the impersonality of economic agents caused by resentment among the marginalized ethnic groups fuelled conflict and retarded development on the Continent. It is also recommended that a strong and credible judicial body with powers to investigate crimes against citizens and prosecute & punish offenders be established by the African Union.

Keywords: *Ethnicity, Ethnic Bias, Favoritism, Human Rights and Corruption*

Corresponding Author: Elota Adaobi

Background to the Study

Unequal treatment of citizens on the basis of ethnicity is a common characteristic of the political leadership in many African countries. This practice is anti-developmental (Martinussen, 1997: 329-30), aggravates the problem of income inequality and leads to resource scrambles harmful to growth (Alesina and Rodrik, 1994) creating conditions for an ultimate rejection of the state by large members of frustrated and politically conscious people especially those with considerable education (Todaro, 1994:159). It is also a tantamount to corruption since it often involves explicit and implicit reciprocal obligations among the favored groups depending on whether the beneficiaries are business associates and acquaintances or friends and loved ones. It weakens the ability of the state to function efficiently and pursue growth-promoting policies (Mauro, 1995) because of lack of consensus on issues favorable to all ethnic groups (Easterly and Levine 1997). Accountability to the general public is compromised since those in power often misuse public trust and the power entrusted to them for private-gain (Rose, 199:"91). The lack of proper accountability coupled with the sometimes passive response from intimidated and manipulated citizens- many of whom lack the will - power to speak out for fear of harassment results in monopolization of power, abuse of privileges, arrogance and waste of resources by the political leadership.

In African it is not uncommon for authorities to award government contracts to unqualified bidders who are in Cahoots with relatives and cronies. This often results in either poor execution of or non-execution of projects. Friends and relatives are prioritized in the granting of business permits and export and import business licenses which encourages rent-seeking behavior. It is also not uncommon for the authorities to establish important government-funded projects in arbitrarily selected areas, even where the projects are cost-ineffective. Often an atmosphere of uncertainty is created in the domestic economy, encouraging capital flight and brain drain. In this paper, it argues that treating citizens unequally on the basis of ethnicity is anti- developmental and major problem in African. It has also caused resentment among marginalized ethnic groups, fuelled conflicts and sometimes wars and discouraged investment, retarding growth and development prospects. The following sections disuses theoretical issues that bring into focus certain anti- developmental aspects of personalized ties in general and unequal treatment of citizens on the basis of ethnicity in particular. In section 3, it looks at the effects of such anti – developmental attitudes and policies in some African countries while in section 4, it makes a recommendation for tacking these problems and finally, section 5 is the conclusion.

Ethnic Bias and Development: Personalized ties seldom promote efficiency in the market. Dealing only with friends and loved once limits Market entry to insiders, causes sales' and trading agents to favor relative and friends and compromises an important advantage to the market - its impersonality. Similarly, such ties in the public sector lead to a patrimonial system characterized by favoritism and pay offs that undermine the transparency and effectiveness of formal institutions (Rose, 1999; 104-5). Formal agent-principal relations and the obligations they impose on agents become meaningless. The supposedly distinct responsibilities to a superior considered to be separate from ties of loyalty, friendship and kinship become difficult to accept as natural. Critics argue that the trust, reputation and reciprocal obligations created

by personal ties can felicitate corruption, distorting, and the operation of the state (Rose, 1999:105). When formal state institutions are weak and ineffective, these personalized ties can be useful for a short period but in time can promote a patrimonial system and lead to favoritism and corruption (Easter, 1996; Rose, 1999:107).

In a patrimonial state where a specific interest group is heavily dependent on state patronage, the ensuing corruption hold back economic growth (Kochanek, 1993) and development in general. Citizens in such a state may ignore the importance of the market and public sector efficiency and rather endorse the idea albeit Implicit that the way to get anything done is to establish personal ties with those in power. They will also consider it appropriate to reciprocate with gifts to such powerful officials. Critics argue that such societies will find it difficult to develop large scale business enterprises or support active cross-border and thus depriving themselves of sustainable economic independence and will also find it difficult to establish modern bureaucracies where skill are the main pre-requisites for hiring civil servants and where civil servants are expected to keep their roles as officials distinct from the roles as friends or relatives (Rose, 1999:106).

Ethnic Bias is a product of personalized ties between the leadership as public officials and certain interest groups within the same counting both usually from the same ethnic group. Just like personalized ties, therefore, ethnic bias has features of corruption and favoritism and is anti-developmental. In societies that practice ethnic bias and favoritism, the behavior of the leadership towards others varies depending on whether those others are from the in-group with whom affinities are shared and who therefore should be treated fairly or outsiders including people from other ethnic groups who must be politically and economically marginalized. The minority at risk described by Gurr (1993) includes this latter group who provoked by political and economic discrimination often resorts to political action in pursuance of collective interest.

The fairly well-treated group usually comprises those to whom the leadership owes its power or on whom its continued power depends (Todaro, 1994:591). The leadership backed by members of the sane ethnic group uses its political power to obstruct all economic reforms that could interfere with its control over the country's resources. Since the leaders depend on the state resources to maintain their power base, they resist and restructuring away from this dependency including market liberalization programs that promote the free flow of resources to productive activities. They see economic reforms as barriers to important sources of self-enrichment and so they intervene in all sectors of the economy rather than allowing market forces to fulfill their allocation role.

The leaders manipulate members of the ethnic group into believing that reforms are threats to both their political and economic power bases and that they have relatively prosperous community so that reforms are more likely to reverse than increase that prosperity. They effectively promote wider division within the diverse ethnic groups especially if members of the leaders own ethnic group are themselves experiencing job competition from other ethnic groups (Martinussen, 1997: 327). They manipulate laws and regulations too, violating

individual rights including the right to produce and make a profit. This situation puts each ethnic group at risk when it is out of power and when is worse, it makes it difficult to agree on good policies that foster economic growth (Easterly and Levine 1997) especially long term growth. Rather, the leaders waste resources on patronage and on corrupt and rent seeking activities in order to hold on to power and the associated privileges (Brass, 1991). They systematically divert resources for investment to themselves and a few cronies from the same ethnic group, shifting the distributions of income in their favor at the expense of other ethnic groups.

Unequal income distribution is sometimes defended by being associated with a system of patronage aimed at creating a natural bourgeoisie that can be transformed into a class of local investors and entrepreneurs (Akinde, 2004:11). This argument builds on the neoclassical view of the savings growth causality which argues that high savings will through high investment will lead to growth. Theoretical support for this casual direction from savings to growth via investment comes from the Harrod Domar model which demonstrates that the more an economy is able to save and invest from a given Gross National product (GNP) with total, national savings being equal to total investment, the greater will be the growth rate of that gross national product (Todaro, 1994:70-2). In the tradition of the neoclassical pure market economy, broad income inequalities are seen as a necessary condition for maximum growth which in the long run should raise standard of living for all through the natural trickle down processes of competitive and mixed economic systems. In this argument, it is also reflected in the controversial Kuznets curve which promotes the hypothesis that income inequality first increases and then decreases with development (Kuznets, 1966). Critics of this common view however, argue that its validity would to a large extent depend on how the savings are invested.

In this case, countries that are reacting ethnic bias and favoritism, the ruling elites (the leadership) and their relations and cronies usually belong to the same ethnic group and are not noted for their frugality or their desire to save and invest substantial proportions of their income in the local economy (Todaro, 1994:159). Savings by the few privileges is such countries are anti-developmental because they are often stored in safe havens abroad in the form of capital flight (Todaro, 1994) for fear of political instability at home usually a product of ethnic bias and favoritism. Such savings aggravate the wealth and income of inequality that are considered being harmful to the growth (Alesina and Rodrik, 1994) and impose a tax burden on human and physical capital investments and other growth-promoting activities (Person and Tabellini, 1994).

The African Experience

The root causes of ethnic bias and favoritism in Africa can be traced back to colonial days. Colonization redrew the boundaries of African nation-state that were more or less disproportionate amalgams for easy administration (Kumuyi, 2007). These states were modeled as extractive rather than investment destinations, the colonial powers being engaged in predatory activities regardless of the indigenous peoples religious beliefs, culture and ethnicity (Grabowski, 2006). The arbitrarily redrawn boundaries defied any genuine process of development especially political development and rather created fertile ground from conflict.

The amalgamation of a wide variety of ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic groups within the same nation in practice created fault lines that divided societies (Grabowski, 2006). However, the exercise provided opportunities for the colonialist to play one ethnic group against another to maintain a strong grip on power.

Since the independence of new nation – states, Africans have simply continued with the same politics of extraction and divide and rule rather than with good investment and the unification of diverse ethnic groups. The political leadership has remained a business of narrow ethnic and group interest serving only special interests as focus groups. It has thus far failed to address the legacies of the colonial administration in any thorough fashion with the result that harmonious ethnic co-existence remains elusive on the continent. The political leadership has to a greater or lesser degree complacently continued with the colonial leadership style, practically from the moment of independence which explains why the power of certain ethnic groups has been perpetuated. In other words, why many African leaders allied with citizens from their own ethnic group consider it a worthwhile national idea to monopolize disproportionate shares of their countries resources, Critics argue that the continent lacks a unifying servant-leadership with a strong motivation and deep desire to serve all citizens without special political favors or prejudice to any group on the basis of ethnicity (Kumuyi, 2007). In many African countries, political favors, whether in cash or in kind inspired by ethnic bias and favoritism are to some degree altruistic transfers with no explicit reciprocal obligations attached.

The benefactors do however derive psychological benefits described by Rose as the satisfaction of living up to moral commitment (through receiving) no tangible gains (1999:93). Often, these benefactors favor certain ethnic groups and disfavor the others. In some countries, the disfavored groups exhibit frustration but never the less, tolerance and submissiveness too- partly because they lack the will power to complain and partly because they fear even more severe exclusion, reinforced by intimidation, reprisals or harassment should they complain.

Tanzania is an example where despite widespread corruption inspired by ethnic bias and favoritism, the victims predominantly Indian harassed and intimidated by powerful political groups usually become resigned to their fate for fear of reprisal. The number of those living below the poverty line in the country rose from 48.5% in 1991 to 75% in 2000 (Lipumba, 2003:12-15).

In some African countries, however there victims of ethnic bias and favoritism have been transformed political stability and the governments concerned through rebellion and conflict. The political climates of Sudan and Uganda in recent decades offer good examples. In Sudan, the dominance of the country's natural resources by a government lead by Arab Mushin North, coupled with religious intolerance and poor integration of it largely Christian and animist African southerners, culminated in armed struggle that have only now subsided after more than 21 years. Even the calamitous crisis in the country's Darfur region that has claimed many lives and destroyed economic activities stems from the exclusion and marginalization from political processes and economic development of large ethnic groups who demand local autonomy, better representation at national level and an end to ethnic discrimination.

In Uganda, President Yoweri Museveni heads a regime that is more like a military government than a civilian one and is rife with ethnic conflicts, the main victims being people from northern Uganda and Acholi ethnic group both condemned as primitive and therefore marginalized through displacements (Finnstorm, 2005:9-11). The ethnic inspired conflict that began in the country in 1986 between the government and a rebel group the Lord's Resistance Army has yet to be resolved.

Many countries in Africa experiencing the minority at risk' syndrome described in Gurr (1993) have also seen the formation of various levels of militant ethnic groups, a syndrome described by Brass (1991). These levels usually evolving sequentially are ethnic transformation, ethnic community and ethnic nationality.

Rwanda, Burundi and to some extent, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have witnessed ethnic transformation in the form of collective action by ethnic groups against one another and even against the state. In Rwanda, for example, the ethnic tensions between the majority Hutu group and minority Tutsis peaked in 1994 when within the space of 100 days from April to July about 800,000 lives were lost and most of the victims being Tutsis and some Hutus who opposed the Hutu-led governments repressive policies (Harsch 2004:14). In Burundi, a similar conflict between Hutu and Tutsi groups resulted in a war that lasted for 12 years from 1993 claiming about 300,000 lives (Wakabi 2005 26-7). In Nigeria, ethnic groups have to some extent developed into an ethnic community, the main affected area being the oil rich Delta especially Ogoni land which has already organized into such a community. The people of Ogoni land complain bitterly of political and economic marginalization by the Nigeria government despite the ancestral land being the main source of the country's oil and thus of government revenue. The collective action by the Igbo who are the predominant ethnic group in the country's eastern region would have evolved into ethnic nationality under the name of Biafra if it had not been for the defeat of the secessionists by the federal government in a three year civil war from 1967 to 1970 with many lives and properties lost. This civil war was also caused in part by marginalization and exclusion.

Nigeria's ethnic fragmentation and religious intolerance make it difficult to establish a stable government. The very strong ethno-religious character of the country's politics influences most of the central government development strategies and has continued to create tension in the country, exacerbated by the fact that the influential Hausa-Fulani ethnic group which has held political power for much longer than any other sees itself as a "Super power" in the country and therefore believes that the country's unity depends on maintaining the status quo. In other words, the other ethnic groups, including the Igbo, Yoruba and the minorities contend that the existing institutional structures in the country continue to deny them the real political power. This lack of proper national unity has meant that rather than agreeing on policies that foster economic growth and development, all of the ethnic groups will continue to focus mainly on grabbing the spoils from the oil, the country's main source of revenue perceived to have been dominated so far by the Hausa Fulani. The struggle for access to oil revenue remains an important driver of the struggle for power in the country with politicians promoting further ethnic divides for their personal gain. An example is the splitting of the country's original for

federal regions, East, West, North and Mid-west (Sheyin 2007: 32) into 36 states from the 1960s through the 1980s -a project that not only further weakened the already bartered national cohesion and chances for unity but also encouraged the waste of resources through the creation of a bloated public sector & the project means that more oil revenue is allocated to those regions that have been awarded more states.

The struggle for the country's oil resource has also meant increased government intervention in private sector activities. For example, in the 1980s, some members of the ruling elite comprising top ranking military officers, their spouses and cronies from mainly the same ethnic group hoarded large quantities of oil, creating artificial scarcities that resulted in very high domestic prices and shared the profits with their recruited smuggling syndicates (World Bank, 1993). Earlier in 1970s, the country's cement manufacturers were tasked with supplying cement at prices heavily subsidized by the government to high ranking military officers, the majority belonging to the ruling ethnic group. This made competing difficult especially for those without government connections. Shortly afterwards, in the year 1975 when the cement producers losses had become unbearable and the local market could no longer get its regular domestic supplies the same officials in the military government began imposing large consignments of cement. It was later revealed that the consignments were even deliberately delayed at their port of entry in Lagos with the freighters compensated for having to wait and that the whole exercise was aimed at reaping higher benefits by aggravating scarcities and pushing prices high for local consumers. These types of interventions on the market by the Nigeria political leadership, albeit in military uniform were said to have cost the country an estimated US\$2billion or one-quarter of the 1975 oil revenues (Lundahi, 1997: 40).

Meanwhile, the government had banned all importations of stock fish for no apparent economic or health reason other than to punish the Igbo who had just been defeated in a civil war and for whom trade in stock fish was an important main stay at the time. The resulted in smuggling instead and the beneficiaries being government officials and their recruited smuggling syndicates while imposters and consumers alike suffered. Incident of capital flight from the country have also been noted among the most pronounced in recent years being the estimated \$ 6 billion stolen by a preview military dictator, Sani Abacha (City press, 2005) who hails from the dominant ruling ethnic group. Perhaps, the Nigeria government's most serious cost ineffective and therefore growth retagging project inspired by ethnic bias and favoritism was the construction of the country's largest oil refinery in Kaduna and northern Nigeria. This project was merely a demonstration of power by the ruling northern elite at the time and it has since proved difficult to sustain partly because of lack of expertise in maintenance and partly because of the enormous costs involved in transporting the crude oil through often sabotaged pipelines from the producing Delta area in Southern Nigeria.

Ethnic bias and favoritism have aggravated the fragmentation of African diverse ethnic groups and have been linked to the continent's poor economic performance. African countries lack the ethnic homogeneity associated with productivity and capital per worker increases (Easterly and Levine, 1997). Workers belonging to the wrong ethnic group and therefore

without proper political representation, lack motivation at work because they feel alienated by the system and those with proper political representations by virtue of their belonging to the ruling (right) ethnic group, exude enormous arrogance and are over protected by the system. Workers in this latter group, most of whom hold high positions hardly possess the necessary competence but nevertheless keep their Jobs especially since they face little competition from their peers, African loses in the process. Critics argue that ethnic fragmentation aggravated by ethnic bias and favoritism continues to burden the political systems in many African countries and has a negative effect on economic and social development. For example, in the Ivory Coast, the term Ivoirite is the country's version of modern nationalism defining the criteria for participation in political life and the distribution of resources including jobs, property and political power (Akinde, 2004:26). These criteria's put certain ethnic groups at a disadvantage especially those of suspected foreign discrete blocking them from mainstream economic and political activities (Akinde, 2004). Ivoirite nationalism has been criticized for being anti-developmental and for trying to keep the Akan, the ethnic group that has ruled the country since independence, permanently in power.

In Ghana, ethnic inspired rivalry is mainly between the Ashanti group which produces most of the country's primary export, cocoa and is therefore seen as having economic and industrial power and to the Akan group which has the most political power by virtue of the several members from the educated elite including the country's founding father, Kwame Nkrumah. During its term of office from 1957 to 1966, Nkrumah Aka led government taxed cocoa producers heavily through a coca marketing Board visually freezing the producer's price of cocoa in the process (Easterly and Levine, 1997). This heavy tax burden on cocoa producers was only lightened when an Ashanti-based government with Kofi Busia at the helm ruled Ghana from 1969-1971.

Busia's government tried to restore incentives for cocoa producers by increasing producer prices paying farmers close to world-market determined prices for their crops. The government also devalued the overvalued local currency boosting cocoa exports (Easterly and Levine, 1997). Busia's efforts to promote cocoa production were reversed when he was ousted from power by the military in 1971. The military leadership partially reversed the currency devaluation, favoring the political elite and their ethnic supporters who were engaged in the importation of foreign goods (Easterly and Levine, 1997). At the same time, the contribution of cocoa production to fanners' income as well as the national income decreased drastically. For example, the ratio of the producer price to the world market price of cocoa- decreased from 89% in 1949 to just 6% in 1983 and the contribution of cocoa exports to the gross domestic product (GDP) decreased from 19% in 1955 to 3% in 1983 (Easterly and Levine 1997). The overvalued exchange rate in Ghana was also reflected in a high black market premium that peaked in 1982 with the black market exchange rate at 22 times. The official exchange rate and the effect of this on cocoa and the economy was described as killing the goose that laid the "golden egg" (Easterly and Levine, 1997;1218). Even the ascension to power of president John Kufour, an Ashanti in recent times has not significantly lessened the ethnic hostility in the country since 'it is seen by many Ghanaians as heralding the hegemony of the Ashanti ethnic group that already dominates other ethnic groups in the matters of economic and industrial powers, it therefore fills other ethnic groups with envy and hostility.

In Kenya, the citizens are divided mainly along ethnic lines, these divisions often opposing threats to the country's stability and development. Ethnic loyalty has grown so strong in the country that it is considered a threat to nationhood. A recent example in the 2007 post-election violence that was mainly fuelled by ethnic hatred claiming an estimated 1000 lives and displacing 350,000 people (Kimani 2008:3). The violence broke out on 30th December, 2007 barely 3 days after the disputed 27 December presidential elections in which the incumbent Mwai Kibaki had declared himself the winner over the main opposition, Rallis Odings. These two aspirants being from different ethnic groups, Kibaki's victory declaration had defied objections by the oppositions and elections observers that the vote tally was seriously flawed (Kimani, 2008). By the time a power sharing agreement was signed aimed at resolving the crisis, the country had suffered an enormous loss of homes, property and livelihoods and in addition to the loss of lives. For example, the country's manufacturing association noted that industry lost an estimated 35% of the business in January 2008 alone and anticipated a 20% decline in production by April of the same year (Kimani 2008:18). The impact of the post-election violence has been particularly significant in the sub-region, in view of Kenya's long standing role as East African's main transportation hub. Over 80% of neighboring Uganda's import and almost all of Rwanda's exports pass through the Kenya port of Mombasa. Other countries in the sub regions such as Burundi, the eastern DRC parts of northern Tanzania and Southern Sudan also depend to a large extent on this port for their commercial trade (Kimani 2008:3).

Ethnic hatred and the struggle for power in Kenya are interwoven often stirred by the feeling of "winner takes all". In other words, it is believed that any ethnic group with access to political power also commands economic power to the country. Ethnocentrism in the country's politics in particular has meant a corrupt and incompetent administration with many civil servants appointed and promoted to positions on ethnic grounds rather than on merit. Kenya has a complicated mix of several ethnic groups, the dominant once being Kikuyu, Luhya, Luo, Kalenjin and Kamba. There comprise about 69% of the total (Easterly and Levine 1997). Under President Jomro Kenyatta, the Kikuya formed an alliance with the Luo and later with Kembra and were the dominant power from the country's independence in 1963 until 1978. Kenyatta prioritized his coalition home region during national expenditure allocations. For example, his coalition's road-building investment share totaled about 44% in 1979/1980 (Easterly and Levina 1997). The ascension to power in 1978 of President Arap Moi, a kalejin in alliance with Kamba, Euhya and smaller groups resulted in a reversal of the road investment shares. Moi's coalition home region increased its share from 32% in 1979/80 to 57% in 1987/88 while kenyatt's share fell to 16%. Expenditures on health were also revisited in favor of moi's coalition home region with a share of 49% against Kenyetta share of just 18% during 1987/88 (Easterly and Levine 1997). Political influence among Kenya's ethnic minded ruling elites also extends to controlling the country's commercial banks which often engage in high risk lending even to borrowers with no intention of honoring repayment obligations (Rose- 1999:10). It was estimated that in 1992 about one-third 1/3 of the-country's banking assets were more or less worthiness with political interference in the financial system to blame (Bigsten and Moenel996, Rose-Ackerman, 1999:10-11). Often, critics are silenced by patronage and rewards (Rose-Ackerman 1999:213) which diverts scarce resources and entrepreneurial talents away from productive investments.

In the DRC (formerly Zaire), president Mobutus sees seko who ruled the country from 1965-1997 and changed its name from Congo to Zaire suppressed all opposition placing mainly people from his ethnic group in all strategic and important positions and using his country enormous mineral wealth to sustain his corrupt region (MacGaffey, 1991) while Mobutu looted the national treasury, depleting it of foreign exchange reserves a great deed of the country's mineral output was with then complicity of customs officials smuggled out by members of Mobutus inner circle and ethnic group. The country's importers with the complicity of bribed government officials undervalued the merchandise significantly depriving the national treasury of revenue from import duties (MacGaffery, 1991). The country gradually but consistently degenerated to a dysfunctional state with predatory and corrupt officials at all levels of government Mobutus was eventually overthrown by another dictator, Lavrent Rabils who immediately replaced Mobutu's people in important positions with his own people Rabils also stepped up expenditure and resource abuse Mobutu- style renamed Zaire the DRC and to safe guard his power base, took total control of the country's natural resources and awarded worthless contracts to neighboring Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia-three countries that were also used as front to fence off an aggressive invading Rwanda. Kabila's government intervened specifically in the market for diamonds, one country's main mineral resource ordering dealers to sell their gems to a state backed monopoly an unnecessary intervention that adversely affected the country's largest source of export revenue (The economist 2005). Kabila was assassinated and succeeded by his son, Joseph but lastly peace has yet to prevail in the DRC even after the recently held democratic elections that officially endorsed the young Kabila as president. The successive regimes in the DRC have thus far made little or no positive impact on the country's economic development and their expenditure patterns remain an expression of power by the ethnic groups in power and actually undermine then legitimacy of these regimes.

Ethnic problems in African inspired by ethnic Bios and favoritism have meant that resources for development are often diverted to finance conflicts. Between 1970 and 2002, our 35 wires were fought in Africa with the vast majority of them intrastate in origin. In 1966, armed conflicts in 14 of the 53 countries of the continent produced more than 8 million refugees and displace persons over a 5 year period to 1997, armed conflicts claimed about 2 million lives .and by 2000, there were 12 million refugees in Africa, over 40% of the world total (African Development Bank 2003: 39). The annual average increase in expenditure on fence for all the sub-saharan based on 1980 level rose from 24.1% during 1975 -1984 to 88.4% during 1985 - 1989 (World Bank 2002: 2004). In 2000 (the last year which data was available) the value was still very high at 8.13%. Productive investment on the other hand has remained very low in the continent. For example, Africa share of world total foreign direct investment in 1970 was a mere 5.5% and during 1990-2000, it fell to 1% (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/ African Development Bank 2002). The level of investment on the continent has remained dismally low even in recent years recording a 15% degrees affecting both export and import and the continent world export shares declined from 7.3% in 1948 to 1.5% in 2001 and that of sub-Saharan African country's obtain their political independence as from 1960s. This brought with its power struggles among the diverse ethnic groups. The lack of power sharing in particular caused resentment among the under-represented ethnic groups who felt politically marginalized. This has fuelled ethnic conflict which have had a negative effect on socio-economic conditions in many counties (African Development Bank 2004:146).

Conclusion

Africa has failed dismally to benefit from its ethnic diversity because of ethnic bias and favoritism. In many countries on the continent, these remain the cause of conflict and underdevelopment. The continent lacks dedicated leadership and strong democratic institutions with the result that the character of governments has remained more or less unchanged, lacking in all - inclusive reforms that favor all citizens, irrespective of their ethnicity. The hegemonic elites in power in many countries continue to rule than govern, looking mainly after the interests of their own ethnic group on whom their power mostly depends. In other words, we suggest that the African union will set up a strong, independent and credible African court on human rights with a broad but well defined mandate that includes effective protection of marginalized ethnic groups.

Recommendation

A country strategy aimed at achieving equal participation by all ethnic groups would ordinarily demand a political leadership of the servant-leader type that is accountable to all citizens. Discrimination against citizens on ethnic grounds is a violation of human rights & ethnic group that are discriminated against in Africa are usually marginalized economically in terms of resource allocation and politically in terms of decision making. Addressing these problems in view of the lack of dedicated servant leadership in many countries therefore requires that the continents body, the African union set up a strong and credible African court on human rights with a broad but well defined mandate that includes among other things effective protection of marginalized ethnic groups. Such a court should be accorded a reasonable amount of autonomy and be adequately resourced and given powers to investigate crimes against citizens and prosecute and parish offenders irrespective of their political or economic standing. Many Africa countries have poor human rights records, a legacy of the colonies administrations that is their quest to extract as much of the resources as possible denied the colonies their human and civil rights. Africa human rights record has failed to improve with the transition of power to Africans and abuses even escalated especially during the cold war period who many African countries were governed by authoritarian, often military, dictators who forced their opponents into exile or jailed or killed them (Iloarah 2004). The human rights abuses also meant that ethnic bias and favoritism increased and according to Bottigliero, most African countries have yet to see human right as "part of an integral strategy to prevent ethnic violence and promote the rule of law is the society (2007:156).

The regional and sub-regional organizations in the continent have so far prioritized peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations but given far less attention to human right issues such as the ethnic Bias and favoritism that lead to violence and by extension hold up development in the region. Africa's have in other words, adopted the strategy of "cure is better than prevention" when it should be the other way around. The existing African court on human rights operational since 2004 and some other parallel operating instruments and institutions such as the African (Banjul) charter on human and peoples' rights, operational since 1986 (Bottigliero, 2007:156) and the African commission on human and purples rights, a quasi-judicial regional human rights institution established in 1987 (Fleshman, 2004:10) - all have limited mandates-a shortcoming that limits their dealings with ethnic minority issues on the continent (Bottigliero, 2007:157). For example, the African commission was mandated to

deal mainly with interstate complaints from government to and not necessarily with complaints from individuals or groups of individuals except in rare cases many of which have usually been ruled inadmissible for the simple reason that the commission lacks proper investigative power and resources. The commission also needs the prior authorization of the Assembly of head of State and Government to take any action against offenders (Bottigliero, 2007:157-8) & even the existing African Court has similar constraints. Not only must the court be granted jurisdiction by governments over private cases, it has to be established that the complainant has exhausted all local remedies, a task that proves rather cumbersome. Critics argue that many African judges are afraid of losing their positions or being arrested or assaulted and are simply incapacitated to pass judgment against their own government or influential personalities (Fleshman 2004:10). Since they are not insulated from political pressure, their ability to carry out their judicial duties is severely limited. Perhaps these constraints explain the African Commissions powerlessness to prevent the ongoing ethnic inspired humanitarian crisis in Darfur and the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and equally its inability to provide, victims with effective redress. These weaknesses of the existing commission and court justify the urgent need for a much stronger, independent and more credible African Court on human right. So the African union should do more to assist in this regard.

An important concern for the African Union is how it can contribute to holding African leaders accountable to their people and how it wants to determine measures for setting up standards of economic and political governance by which the performance of African governments can be objectively assessed. An arm of the African Union, the peer review mechanism is already tasked to periodically do an objective assessment of member countries government performance to identify and promote appropriate services and to raise an awareness alarm where countries lack the required standards (Ilorah 2004). This task should be seen as a practical demonstration that the African Union has replaced the charter of its predecessor, the old organization of African Unity-a charter that subscribed to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of its neighbors (a stipulation that often styled criticism of fellow African leaders) with a more progressive provision establishing a principle of non-indifference (African Union/New partnership for Africa's Development, 2001:5) especially in areas including unconstitutional seizures of power, genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity (Ilorah 2004).

However, special emphasis on ethnic bias and favoritism, the main factors causing conflict on the continent is still lacking. A strong, independent and credible African Court on human rights in therefore needed to address these issues especially since many countries on the continent lack powerful independent judiciaries. Perhaps, the court should also undertake other functions such as education and advocacy there by teaching the citizens about their human and civil rights and their civic duties and obligations. The African union for its part should unreservedly encourage political power sharing among ethnic groups in all member countries. It should encourage undemocratic direct father to son power transfers or any similar power transfers as these tend to perpetuate ethnic dominance, promote corruption and discourage proper reforms and investments thus retarding growth and development prospects.

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