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 TRIBALISM IN NIGERIA AND HOW ITS AFFECTING SOCIETY

 The word "tribe" can be defined to mean an extended kin group or clan with a common ancestor, or can also be described as a group with shared interests, lifestyles and habits. Some tribes can be located in geographically proximate areas, like villages or bands. Tribalism implies the possession of a strong cultural or ethnic identity that separates one member of a group from the members of another group. Based on strong relations of proximity and kinship, members of a tribe tend to possess a strong feeling of identity.

 Tribalism can be interpreted as superiority complex among specific ethnic group, which makes them prejudiced towards their neighbors. The existence of tribalism traces back to the era of slavery. However, in the modern days of Nigeria, this issue still exists and prevents so many people from getting along and uniting to combat more relevant issues, which concern all of the Nigerian people. Tribalism influences many spheres of social life – for instance, quite often competent workers is overlooked because of their tribal identity. The problem of tribalism is that people of different tribes are separated from each other. The tribe members usually identify with their tribe very strongly and they feel truly connected only with people of their own beliefs. They often have set stereotypes about the other tribes, which prevent them from broadening their mind, learning more about different cultures and befriending people who do not belong to their own tribe.

The Effect of Tribalism on the Development of Nigeria

 Tribalism has had a huge effect in the development of our country Nigeria. The issue of tribalism dates back to decades ago and it has grown increasingly worse today. Tribalism like corruption and other social vices has eaten deep into all the sectors of the nation. It has had expression in not only the different sectors of the nation but also in human relationships. In the political sector for instance, you discover that once an influential person or someone gets into an influential position, he or she begins to put people who come from his tribe, in different positions of authority. Now, whether the person is skilled for the job or not, remains irrelevant. All they are concerned about is bringing their fellow tribe’s person on board and this in itself is wrong because when such people are brought in, they won’t live up to expectations.

 Tribalism has its root roots in selfishness. Tribalism thinks highly of itself more that the next person. In the office setting, the same thing that happens in politics happens there. People are promoted in their places of work, not because they merit it but because they belong to the same tribe with the person in charge of promoting staff. This is what has caused many companies not to outlive their owners.

 In the aspect of relationship, tribalism has ruined several relationships, casual relationships business relationships and romantic relationships. I have personally heard people say,’ I cannot marry someone who is not from my tribe’, ‘I cannot do business with this person because he/she is not from my tribe’, the most common is, ‘My parents will not allow me to marry someone from another tribe’. These statements come from persons who either have had bad experiences with people from another tribe or experiences heard from either their friends, family or other people’s stories. Yes, it is sad to have bad experiences but it is not good to generalize, draw up conclusions and begin to behave in a certain way towards people who do not belong to your tribe. As an individual, if you got hurt by an individual, tackle that issue with the individual. Do not say, this is how people of this tribe behave. People that belong to a particular tribe don’t all have the same upbringing. Having this in mind, it will make you know that differences should be treated objectively.

 The best way to curb tribalism is to love one another. Don’t pass judgement to that man or woman, boy or girl because of what you heard. Get to know them and love them for who they are. Be someone of integrity. Treat people equally. Don’t withhold love to someone who desperately needs it because the person is not of your tribe. Instead, love the person even more. Promote that person in the office that you know deserves it. When we do this, we will not only shape our immediate environment but we will shape our world.

 Fighting tribalism with acceptance is extremely significant for every Nigerian. Instead of pointing out each other’s differences and blindly following the stereotypes, people need to learn to see good things and possible contribution to the future of the country in each other. Today, the young generation is really aware of how important is tolerance, and how much it helps to build healthy relationships between people. There is still a lot to learn, but the first steps are done.