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**Tribalism and its effect in Nigeria**

**What is tribalism?**

Tribalism is a state or fact of being organized in a tribe or among tribes. It defined as the label for social groups who feel a distinct sense of difference by virtue of common culture and descent.

While tribal societies have been pushed to the edges of globalization, tribalism is arguably undiminished, these is because it is founded upon intense feelings of common identity that’s leads people to feel tribally attached.

In Nigeria, tribalism is defined as a social phenomenon associated with the identity of members of a competing communal group(s) seeking to protecting and advance their interest in a political system. The communal factor may be language, race, religion, or common history. Tribalism in Nigeria involves the demand of one tribe to compete with another tribe or tribes. According to Chinua Achebe he defined tribalism as “discrimination against a citizen because of his/her place of birth” (Achebe 1997).

In Nigeria today, tribalism has elevated to dominate a large percent of the nation, it controls how people think and talk, it also determines what they support or oppose. It is promoted by political leaders, adapted by the young and old, its being passed from generation from generation. One of the problems we face in Nigeria is conflict due to ethnic competition. The ethnic diversity of Nigeria has been a threat to the nation rather than a source of pride and development for the nation.

**Tribalism in Nigeria’s political development.**

Ethnicity and Tribalism has played a major role in Nigerian politics since the pre-colonial era and is with fact an important cause of conflict and an obstacle to economic development of the nation. The first to fourth republics showed a clear picture on how the Nigerian political party was tribally oriented. Let’s take for example:

* The **ACTION GROUP** was dominated by the western region and was headed by Chief Obafemi Awolowo

The **NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NIGERIA CITIZENS** formerly known as **NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NIGERIA AND CAMEROONS** allied with the Igbos dominant only in the eastern people.

In 1914, the British amalgamated the northern and southern protectorates and one political Nigeria was formed. But once the British left in 1960, inter-tribal conflict surfaced. Multiple coups and counter coups lead by ethnic sentiments occurred in the 30 months’ civil war which claimed more than 2 million lives, more than 90% of those killed were from ethnic extractions which made the situation worse.

According to an International survey on Nigeria shows that Nigerian were most identified by their tribes. These just saying that ethnicity and tribalism was what was used to run the country. In 2011 the general election in Nigeria can be used as a clear example, the outcome of the election shows that 95% of votes for each candidates were casted in their ethnic region. In Nigeria some citizens believe in a certain assumption that one destiny is determined based on their ethnicity or religious beliefs.

**Impact of tribalism on national development**

Tribalism has been inculcated as part of the Nigerian life that people don’t even realize that it is wrong and they don’t see that the practice is only taking Nigeria backwards. According to Mr. Cletus Umezinwa he said “Nigeria is a failed state” backing his statement to number of factors like cultural and value decadence, fragile political structure, poor leadership and frequent ethno-religious crisis. Often times conflict in Nigeria is linked with ethnicity or religion, these bringing the evolution of ethnic soldiers such as **bakkasi boys; movement for actualization of sovereign state of Biafra(massob); yandaba; arewa forum; boko haram** and so on…

**The impact of tribalism includes;**

* **Inability to fight corruption:**  There is a tradition in Nigeria that forbids citizens from exposing or prosecuting fellow tribesmen for corrupt practices. For example, a private jet belonging to the president of the Christian association of Nigeria was apprehended in South Africa over possession of 9.3 million dollars that was allegedly meant for purchasing of arms. Before the South African government could conduct a thorough investigation his ethnic region and kinsmen were already in the media defending and exonerating him, and declaring war if he was prosecuted.
* **Political division**: Current political tension in the country is mainly as a result of avoidable clash between forces of democracy and tribal interests. Tribalism cause a huge political divide and has caused a lot of problems especially when power is taking away from a leader from a particular ethnic group, this was seen in 2011 when power didn’t return to a particular ethnic group, it also led to the scaling of the book haram insurgency, due to the rate of tribal suspicion the northerners felt cheating at the results of the votes.
* **Employment**: Guarantee of employment or award of contract in public service is a function of one’s tribesperson in position authority.
* **Distrust**: A fundamental impact of tribalism in Nigeria is a culture of distrust amongst various ethnic groups in the county. Due to distrust, confidence on objective and legitimate issues of poverty and environmental pollution in Niger Delta is trivialized as Ijaw issues or as Ogoni issues.

In all honesty tribalism as done a lot of harm than good in the nations not only national but also economic development. But in all his it has also caused the citizens to face psychological and emotional distress and that is something a lot of youths are facing in this days, one isn’t free to live where they want to cause of the fear of being in danger due to their tribe, when one schools in a land that isn’t their ethnicity they find it difficult to cope cause of the number of people who have taken in the act of tribalism, acquiring admission to a school that is of another ethnic group it is difficult or close to impossible. Lastly in a group of 20 the chances of you finding people instilled with tribalism is very high which can make others feel uncomfortable, teenagers and youths are mocked or bullied just because of their tribe with brings people to hate were there from hate themselves or they end up have emotional problems and don’t feel comfortable around people who are not from their ethnic group, some people in most cases try to marry out of their tribe so that their generation after them don’t have to go through some of the problems they faced due to their tribe.

But that isn’t the solution because almost if not all tribes face this sort of problems and erases of hiding your true tribe won’t solve anything we as a nation have to come together and see that we are in a national crisis and if it is not solved what God has blessed us with as national pride can as well turn into a curse.