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TRIBALISM IN NIGERIA

Tribalism is a way of thinking or behaving in which people are (excessively) loyal to their own tribe or social group. It can also be defined as the state when people are organized by tribes and their lifestyles. Also the behavior and attitudes that stem from strong loyalty to one's own tribe or social group.

A tribe is a social division in a traditional society consisting of families or communities linked by social, economic, religious, or blood ties, with a common culture and dialect, typically having a recognized leader. The tribe also means either the clan or extended kin group which shares a common ancestor, or, according to a more modern definition, it is a group of people who share common lifestyles, habits, and interests.

The problem of tribalism in Nigeria is that people of different tribes are separated from each other. The tribe members usually involve with their tribe very strongly and they feel truly connected only with people of their own beliefs. They often have set stereotypes about people from other tribes, which prevent them from cooperation, learning more about different cultures and befriending people who do not belong to their own tribe. People who exhibit these fanatic behaviors are called Tribalists.

A Tribalist is a person who often boasts about the successes and good qualities of their tribe, but refuses to recognize its bad qualities and faults, sometimes they try as much as possible to conceal them. Shows favoritism towards people of their tribe and picky when it comes to people who do not belong to their own tribe, major and minor tribes alike. Gives all the privileges to his/her own people, but tries to exempt them from any obligations and duties when it comes to humiliating and dangerous activities. They also strongly believes that people from the other tribes do not deserve support, sticks to the stereotypes against them. These people regard marriage only between the members of their and oppose to the inter-tribal marriage.

In Nigeria there is a huge number of tribes. Which includes a lot of different minor tribes, but the largest and most famous ones are Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa. All of them have their own customs, culture and beliefs. Sometimes, these tribes can misunderstand each other because of their different worldviews, and this is one of the biggest social problems in Nigeria nowadays.

Tribalism can be interpreted as a superiority complex among specific ethnic groups, which makes them bias 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 areas of social life for instance, parents not allowing children to marry individuals from other tribes, job applicants are denied work because of their tribal identity, even some lecturers don’t fancy students from other tribes, this also goes on in government for example the current president has more officials from the north than any other tribe and this could be as a result of his ethnicity.

There are a lot of causes which contribute or contributed to this social vice in Nigeria which are explained as you read further.s

Amalgamation: the merging of northern and southern protectorates in 1914 is widely considered to be a mistake. These neighbors are culturally incompatible. These differences have always been the main reason for social and political disagreements. Both northern and southern region have some religious and ethnic minorities, which see the main ethnic groups as oppressors. Since Nigeria is formed of so many ethnic groups, the nation is divided, and the country lacks real unity.

Resource control: this is another issue which causes ethnic conflicts in the country. Nigeria’s resource control is a real issue, which has been relevant because of the country’s environmental downfall, and the lack of development in Niger Delta which is essential for the nation’s economy.

Marginalization: this term means underestimating the importance of a particular ethnic group. Since there are so many ethnic communities in Nigeria, there is a high chance that some of them will be unseen and unheard, and their opinion, in the long run, will be made unimportant. Even though the government is searching for a proper solution to this problem, it has a long way to go before it is finally solved.

Constitutional reform: since the 1999 constitution is often viewed as a military-centered document, many people are demanding the new one, which will clearly define the rights of citizens and their privileges by the place where they currently reside, and not the place of their origin. Also, the toxic influence of religion on the political life should be dealt with. There are a lot of problems with it, and the government is working on the way to compromise, but it still causes ethnic conflicts among people.

Religious intolerance: one of the critical issues in Nigeria is the conflict between Muslims and Christians. There is a strong hostility between these two groups, both religious and ethnic. The religious bigotry has already caused a lot of deaths. A lot of nationalists strongly believe that there is no country like Nigeria, only a territory and that it was a colossal mistake to unite the northern and southern parts. The Islamist organization “Boko Haram” is also a significant problem, because they regularly terrorize and kill people who support the western ideals and traditions, both Christians and Muslims. They are trying to impose the radical Muslim faith and Sharia law on people. However, Nigeria is a multi-religious country, and everyone should be allowed to express their own beliefs freely.

Lack of vision: since the country is formed out of different nationalities which all have their own views and traditions, there is no such thing as patriotism when it comes to Nigeria. It is hard to inspire the patriotic feeling in the citizens. Even though Nigeria has a national anthem, flag and other symbols of national identity, not many people attach any deep meaning to them.