

Characteristics, Variations and Dynamics of Nigeria Cultures
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Introduction:

In the early years of West African contact with the Europeans, specifically between the 15th and the 19th centuries, there was no nation called Nigeria. "It was generally believed that the Portuguese were the first to make a planned, systematic and effective exploration of the West African Coasts in modern times" (Onwubiko, 1973:148). This was made during renaissance when the young men were enthusiastic for knowledge about the world and in their efforts to find new route to Asia, they arrived West African Coast. The Portuguese were really actuated by various motives-religious, political and commercial, to undertake the voyages which led to their exploration of the coast of West Africa.

When the explorers arrived what is now called Nigeria, they met the inhabitants in small language groups and not as a larger group as Nigeria. They did business with them as separate groups. It could be understood that these small groups existed independently with each speaking a particular language with which it was identified and its culture transmitted. However these small language groups started getting in contact with one another as a result of trade centres evolving along the coastal areas. Dike (1959) confirms this saying, "The most important populations occurred between 1450 and 1800, and gradually converted the little Ijaw fishing villages into city-states." No doubt, the stimulus to this movement was the development of European trade on the coast. As a result, Bonny, Brass, Old Calabar and New Calabar on the Niger Delta, Elmina, Accra, Cape Coast, et cetera on the Gold Coast came into being as centres of coastal trade. Northern Nigeria known for Islamic religion then was under the Royal Niger Company after the conquest of Etsu Nupe, Ilorin, Bida, Gwandu and Sokoto. However, in about 1890, the Royal Niger Company Charter was abrogated and "Sir Fredrick Lugard appointed to establish formal British control over the Northern and Southern Nigeria" (Ojiakor, 2006: 10). Sir Fredrick Lugard later in 1914 amalgamated the Northern and Southern Protectorates now identified as Nigeria. Amalgamation and subsequent independence notwithstanding, Nigeria is still battling over language differences amongst the citizenry.

Composition of Nigerian State:

There has not been any human dictionary around the Globe that the name, Nigeria could be found before the year 1914. It was in 1914 when Sir Fredrick Lugard amalgamated the Northern and Southern Protectorates that this vogue word, Nigeria found its way onto the lips of mankind.

The match to the formation of this great black nation, Nigeria was a gradual one. It started in the 15th century when the Europeans came to West African Coast in search of lucrative trades. "The discovery of the coast by the Portuguese in the 15th century had important results for West Africa" (Onwubiko, 1973: 24). It led to the development of coastal trade between West Africa and Europe the main commodities of which were gold and Negro slaves.

The Niger as West African Leading River attracted the attention of Europe towards the end of the 18th century. The desire to use it as a highway of trade with the interior led to European penetration from the coast and exploration of the hinterland of West Africa. This was followed by European conquest and imperialism. The resultant influence was the spread of Christianity and European culture in the forest lands as opposed to the spread of Islam and Arabic culture in the Sudan hence the

abolition of slave trade. Ojiakor (2003:4) states that “The movement in Britain for abolition of slave trade was accompanied by the desire to find markets for the products of Britain’s new industries and raw materials like palm oil for lubrication of machines.”

“The expanse of land that is today called Nigeria was inhabited by folks rural areas of different ethnic groups, each of which had the status of a kingdom or a nation” (Okodo, 2007:3). When the Europeans came to this area called Nigeria, they met many different groups hence the multiplicity of many peoples speaking different languages such as Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Fulani, Kanuri, Efik, Igala, Nupe, Urhobo, Itsekiri, Ijaw and hundreds of others.

Many language groups in Nigeria then meant many independent nations. And the message this multiplicity of nations was sending across to the Europeans was that for the Europeans to subjugate these different nations, they had to face many wars which they really did. These wars emanated from as a result of dishonour to commercial treaties which the various language group leaders were separately and ignorantly lured into signing with the explorers. For instance, in 1857 when Kosoko, the king of Lagos proved stubborn and continued to trade on slaves, Beecroft deposed him and in his place, enthroned his uncle, Akiloye who implemented their plan to stop slave trade. As a result of this, Lagos became a British territory during the time of Dosumu on 1861. So “... the first step in the British acquisition of Nigeria was the annexation of Lagos in 1861” (Onwubiko, 1973:254). And it “... marked the first major step taken by the British Government in the 19th century to acquire economic and political dominion over the people of Nigeria” (Ajayi, 1962).

This was followed by the establishment of a British protectorate over the Oil Rivers in 1885 as a result of increasing rivalry with other European powers in the area. The British Government was still very unwilling to undertake the heavy financial burden of administering the area in spite of the stipulations of Berlin West African Conference on effective occupation.” But in 1891, it created a skeleton administration by the appointment of a Commissioner and Consul-General who resided at Old Calabar. Consular and Vice Consular were also appointed to the various rivers. In 1893, the area of the Protectorate was extended inland to Lokoja and the Benue and renamed the Niger Coast Protectorate. Then in 1897, following the British occupation of Benin, that area west of the Niger became part of the Niger Protectorate.

Understanding the power of the British weaponry, many groups in Nigeria used to run to them for help during disputes with their neighbours and with that, so many empires and nations became the British territories. This could be seen in the treaty signed with Rev. Samuel Johnson to end Ibadan and Ekiti war in 1886; the help accorded the Egbado in 1891 against the Egba by the British and Series of treaties signed with Yoruba local chiefs in 1893 by Sir Gilbert Carter. One could not lose sight of other treaties signed with Oyo, Ilorin and Ibadan which finally made the entire Yoruba to come under the British loyalty in 1910.

This same tactic used to overcome the Yoruba land was also used by Royal Niger Company having been constituted to administer territories on the Niger, inland from the coast. It passed laws and set up courts. And so according to Isichei (1973; 44), “The National African Company had concluded about thirty-seven treaties in the Niger territories including Atani, Onitsha, Aboh. Osomala, Ndoni, Oko, Odekpe by 1884.” As a result of war in 1869 due to quarrel between Oko Jumbo and Jaja, after the death of King William Pepple in 1865, “Jaja retreated and founded the state of Opobo where he controlled the oil trade from the Igbo land” (Ojiakor, 2006:8). He cut the friendship of the British having signed a treaty of protection with them. However,

when insincerity was found on the part of Jaja in the treaty signed with him, there was disagreement which led to his being deposed to Ghana and his territory now under the British control. In-fact, with threat and deportation meted to the chiefs or leaders of ethnic groups such as Oba and others, their enclaves: the Yoruba land, Benin, and Oil Rivers became the Niger Coast Protectorate.

Among the Niger Igbo, the Royal Niger Company did not take kindly with them. "The company's rule displaced a barbaric brutality" (Isichei, 1973: 120). In consonance with Isichei, Kalu (1980:55) says, "It was the duty of the European, and this was exactly what the British Government was accomplishing, said Lejeune, to destroy barbarism in all its forms." Thus did the Superior justify the war against the Arochukwu and other government expeditions? In 1878, Atani was bombarded for refusing to trade with them. They sacked Onitsha in 1883 and bombarded Asaba. They confronted Obosi in 1892 and fought Aguleri and environs. By so doing, all the Niger Igbo succumbed to paying allegiance to Royal Niger Company between 1870 and 1899. After all these, in same "... 1899 the charter of the Royal Niger was revoked and the British assumed full control" (Ojiakor, 2006:9). So, it was learnt that between 1901 and 1912 other areas of Igbo land were defeated and eventually became British colony.

Northwards, the Royal Niger Company stopped at nothing in capturing Northern Islamic tribes of Nigeria. They defeated Etsu Nupe and went ahead to capture Ilorin, Bida, Gwandu and Sokoto and subjected them into signing treaties. As Onwubiko (1973:255) says, "... the hinterland of Nigeria north of Lokoja was being administered on behalf of the British Government a chartered company- The Royal Niger Company." The British Government had declared a Protectorate over areas claimed by the company in 1887. Then on January 1, 1900, it took over direct administration of the area from the Royal Niger Company and named it the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria with Lugard as its first High Commissioner.

This was how Britain gradually subjected all the ethnic groups in Nigeria under its control. "In furtherance of the extension of the political domain of the British Government, the demand for the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern parts of Nigeria was made" (Okodo, 2007:5). This demand was seen as easy way to actualize the British Government dream. And so, "In 1910, the Secretary of state for colonies, Lewis Harcourt, presented to the British House of Commons a proposal to merge the Southern and Northern Protectorates" (Ojiakor, 2006:11).

Though the merger met a stiff opposition due to wide differences between the Islamic Northern Protectorate and the Protectorate of the Christian South, the British Government went ahead with its plan. They were after their interest and not of the people's. Lord Fredrick Lugard was therefore appointed the first Governor General of Nigeria. The name, Nigeria fashioned by Miss Flora Shaw who later became Lugard's wife, means Niger Area after the River Niger. This was how Nigeria became a creation of British Government.

Cultural Groups in Nigeria:

Nigeria is the most populous nation in the Sub-Saharan Africa with a population of over one hundred and forty million inhabitants. "Nigeria is a composite of over two hundred and fifty ethnic groups with distinct customs and traditions centred on distinct languages" (Onyejekwe, 2001:106). One should think that language is a measure through which ethnicity could be identified. This is because it is a vehicle through which culture which identifies an ethnic group is transmitted. In recognition of this view, Oyelaran (1990:21) clarifies that culture is its language. Based on this, Osuagwu (1988:1) referring to Banjo, states that "There are about 400

distinct language groups in multi- ethnic and multi – linguistic country, Nigeria.” Osuagwu is not alone in testifying the multiplicity of cultural groups in Nigeria. Sofulunke (1990:34) quoting Osaji, states that the indigenous languages spoken in Nigeria are 368. This number is very far below the number found by Osuagwu who was before Sofulunke. It was Hansford as quoted by Elugbe (1990:11) who was close to Osuagwu having put the number of languages or cultural areas in Nigeria at 394 an equivalence of 400 as estimated by Ahukanna (1987). However, the peculiar situation in which Nigeria finds itself, must be recognised for Nigeria is a multi- lingual hence multi - cultural nation. This situation has achieved for the English language the status of a Lingua Franca in Nigeria.

After a survey conducted to determine the attitude of Nigerians to the concept of choosing a National language, Odusina (1990) observed that no ethnic group wanted the imposition of another language (except their own) on them for fear of a life- long domination. This stance has helped in consolidating the position of English language, to the detriment and subjugation of our indigenous languages. Baldeh (1990) sees this as the reason for the English language being institutionalised as a language of government, education, commerce, industry, law and administration. So to be educated was in the eyes of many, to be versed in the English language.

All these are to buttress the point that Nigeria is a multi- ethnic nation. In fact, Nigeria is a mini Africa in terms of ethnic grouping. Of all these ethnic groups in Nigeria, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba are the three major ones found mainly in the north, east and west respectively. The country is presently constituted into thirty-six states with Abuja as the federal capital. The thirty-six states were further grouped into six geo-political zones. None of these six geo-political zones can boast of only one language or cultural group within it. Each of them has many.

We can now give examples but before we can do so, it is pertinent to know the states in each geo-political zone. The North Central geo-political zone comprises of Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger and Plateau. North East States are Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe states while the makeup of North West geo-political zone are Jigawa, kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara States.

In the Southern part of Nigeria, South-East geo-political zone comprises Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States. South-South zone are Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers States while South West comprises Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo Osun and Oyo States.

Crozier and Blench (1992) put the number of languages currently estimated and catalogued in Nigeria at five hundred and twenty one (521). This means that Nigeria has no less than five hundred and twenty-one cultural groups since language determines ethnic or cultural group. This number according to Crozier and Blench includes 510 living languages, two second languages without native speakers and 9 extinct languages. However, with survey conducted using correspondents in all the geo-political zones, it was found that Nigeria is a nation of six hundred and thirteen ethnic groups. These are distributed thus: North Central political zone has 124 cultural groups; North East has 249 while North West has 86 cultural groups. Coming to the South, while South East has 11 and South South- 181, South West has 16 cultural groups.

In further analysis of these cultural groups according to the states in which they are found, while Igbo is the only cultural group found in Abia state, the major groups of Adamawa state are Bacama/Bata (Bwatiyi), Bura-Pabir, Fulani, Huba (Kilba), Longuda, Mumuye and Samba Daka. Most other ethnic groups in Adamawa state are extremely small and therefore speak endangered minority languages, due to

the influence of Hausa and Fulfulde. Homa people are reported to have stopped speaking their language. Other cultural groups found in Adamawa state are Bali, Bana, Bile, Boga, Daba, Dadiya and Dera. Others are Dong, Dza, Fali, Gaa, Ga'anda, Gengle, Gevoko, Gude, Gudu, Huba, Hwana, Jarawa and Kaan. It also includes Kamwe, Kofa, Koma, Kpasham, Kugama, Kumba, Kwa, Laka, Lala-Roba, Lamang, Lamua-Degsa-Tola, Marghi, and Mboi. Mbula-Bwazza, Momjango, Ngwaban Nyong, Nzanyi, Peere, Psikye, Sambadaka, Sukur, Teme Tso, Vemgo-Mabas, Waja, Wom, Xedi, Yendang and Zizikiveken.

In Anambra state are found Igala and Igbo cultural groups. In Akwa Ibom, the major ethnic group are Anang, Ibibio, and Igbo. Others who are minority are Ebugha, Efai, Ekit, Enwang, Etebi, Ibibio, Ibuoro, Idere, Ika, Iko, Ilue, and Itu Mbon Uzo, Nkari, Obolo, Okobo, Oro and Uda.

Bauchi state has the following as its major cultural groups: Bole, Fulani and Hausa. Most others are very small and their languages extremely endangered due to the strong influence of Hausa. Ajawa, Gamo-Ningi, Kubi and Mawaa people no longer speak their languages while the languages of Lere, Shau, and Ziriya are nearly extinct. Other minority ethnic groups are Bada, Beele, Bure, Crwogai, Dass, Daza, Deno, Diri, Duguri, Duguza Dulbu, Galambu, Geji, Gere, Geruma, Giiwo, Guruntum-mbaaru, Gwa, Gyem, Fulani, Inere, Jarawa, Jere, Ji'nu', Ju, Karekare, Kariya, Kir-balar, Kona, Kudu-Camo, Labir, Lame, Lemoro, Lere-Cluster, Luri, Mangas, Mawa, Mburku, Miya, Pa'a, Pero, Polci, Sango, Saya, Shall-Zwall, Shau, Shiki, Shuwa-Zamani, Siri, Tala, Tapshin, Vaghat-Ya-Bijim-Legeri, Warji, Zangwai, Zari, Zeem, Ziriya and Zumbun.

In Bayelsa are the following ethnic groups: Biseni, Ekpeye, Engenni, Epie, Ijo, Izon, Kugbo, Ogbia, Okodia, and Oruma, ethnic groups. The fourteen ethnic groups of Benue state are Agatu, Akpa, Basa, Eloyi, Etulo, Idoma, Igade, Iyiye, Izi-Ezza-Ikwo-Mgbo(Dialects of Igbo), Kukele, Oring, Okank, Tiv, and Wanzunu.

Among the ethnic groups in Borno state are Afade, Shuwa, Buduma, Bura-Pabir, Ubak, Cineni, Dera, Dghwede, Ga'anda, Geveko, Glavda, Gude, Guduf,, Jara, Jilde, Kanuri, Lagwan, Lawang, Mafa, Manghi, Mpade, Nggwahyi, Putai, Tedaga, Tera, Waja, Wandaala/Malgwa and Nedi

For Cross River state, the major culture group is Efik. Bokyi, Ejagham, Igede, and Yala are also fairly large. Other cultural groups are the speakers of small minority languages which are Abanyem, Agoi, Agwagwune, Alege, Bakpuka, Bekwarra, Bete-Bendi, Bumaji, Doko-Uyanga, Efutop, Ekajuk, Eki, Evant, Iceve-Maci, Ito, Kiong, Kolumono, Korop, Kukule, Legbo, Leyima, Leyigha, Lokaa, Lubila, Mbe, Mbembe, Nde-Nsele-Nta, Ndoe, Nkem-Nkum, Nkukoli, Nnam, Obanliku, Odut, Olulumo-Ikom, Otank, Putuywam, Ubaghara, Ubang, Ukpe-Bayobiri, Ukpet-ehom, Ukwa, Umon, Usaghade, Uzekwe and Yace.

In Delta state, the major ethnic groups are Igbo, Igala, Itsekiri, Izon, and Urhobo. The minority ethnic groups among them are Enuwa, Isoko, Okpe, and Uvbie. Ebonyi state has Izi-Ezza-Ikwo-Mgbo, Kukele, Legbo, Mbembe and Oring. Edo has 4 major ethnic groups. They are Ebira, Edo, Esan, and Okpamheri. The others which are minority group are Emai-Julehaora, Gghutuo, Ibilo, Ika, Ikpashi, Ivbie, Okpe-Idesa-akuku, Oloma, Ososo, Sasaru-Enwan-Igwe, Ukaan, Uneme and Yekhee.

Only Izon has Ekiti state whereas Igbo ethnic group occupies Enugu and Imo states. The twenty one ethnic groups found in Gombe state do not speak their languages any longer due to the strong influence of Hausa, Fulfulde, Tangele and Waja. The other ethnic groups in Gombe are Anak, Bangwunji, Bole, Burak, Dadiya, Dijim-Bwilim, Jara, Kamo, Kushi, Kutto, Kwaami, Longuda, Loo, Ngamo, Tera, Tso

and Tula. At Jigawa state we still have Bade, Hausa, Kanuri and Warji cultural groups that still speak their languages while Auyokawa and Teshenawa ethnic groups can only be recognised by other aspects of their culture apart from languages which have gone extinct. Kaduna state has two major culture groups – Gwari and Hausa and other minority groups. They are Acipa, Amo, Ashe, Aten, Atsain, Ayu, Bacama, Bagbere-Ejar, Berom, Bina, Cinda-Regi-Tiyal, Cori, Doka, Dungu, Gbagyi, Gbiri, Gbiri-Niragu, Ham, Hausa, Idon, Idun, Iku-Liora-Ankwa, Ikulu, Irigwe, Izere, Jere, Iju, Kadara, Kagoma, Kaivi, Kamantan, Kannkon-Nindem, Kanufi, Kinuku, Kono, Kurama, Kutuijimi, Mada, Mala, Nandu-Tari, Ningye, Ninzam, Nkwak, Numana-Nunku, Gwantu-Numbu, Piti, Pongu, Ruma, Shamang, Shama-Sambuga, Shem, Surubu, Tumi, Tyap, Vono, Yeskwa and Zhire.

The two major ethnic groups in Kano state are Fulani and Hausa while Duwai and Kurama cultural groups are minority. While Fulani and Hausa cultural groups make up Katsina state, Kebbi state has Hausa as major cultural group and following minority groups: Acipa, Boko, Buha, Cishingiri, Dendi, Gwamhi-Wuri, Hun-Saare, Kag-Fer-Jiir-Koor, Ror, and Us-Zuksun, Kyenga, Lela, Lopa, Reshe, Shanga, Sorao and Zarma.

In Kogi state, Kakanda, Kupa, Ebira, Basa, Igala, Nupe-Nupe-Tako, Oko-Eni-Osoyep and Yoruba are the cultural groups found. Kwara state has Ebira, Yoruba and Nupe as major cultural groups and Ayere, Bariba, Bokobaru and Sorko as the minority groups. Also whereas Lagos has Egu and Yoruba ethnic groups, Nasarawa state accommodate the following peoples: Agatu, Ake, Alago, Arum-tesu, Basa, Basa-Gumna, Bu, Dibo, Duhwa, Ebira, Eggon, Eloyi, Gade, Gbagyi, Gbiri, Goemai, Gwandara, Ham, Hasha, Kofyar, Lijili, Mada, Mam, Ninzam, Numana-Nunku, Gwantu-Numbu, Nungu, Tiv, Toro, Wupan and Yeskwa.

Gbiri, Gbagyi and Nupe are the major ethnic groups in Niger state. The other ethnic groups that are minority are Acipa, Asu, Baangi, Bariba, Basa, Gurmana, Basa-kontagora, Bauchi, Boko, Busa, Cinda-Regi-Tiyal, Cishingini, Dibo, Fungwa, Gbagyi, Gbiri, Gupa-Abawa, Gurmana, Gwamhi-Wuri, Gwandara, Hungworo, Hun-Saare, Kadara, Kakanda, Kakihum, Kami, Laru, Lela, Lopa, Nupe-Nupe-Tako, Pongu, Reshe, Shama-Sambuga, Sorko, Tsikimba, Tsishingini, Tsivadi, Ujjili and Zarma.

As Ogun, Oyo and Osun states have only Yoruba as their cultural group, Ondo state has Izon and Yoruba as major ethnic groups and the following minority groups: Akpes, Arigidi, Ehuain, Iyayu, Uhami, Ukaan, and Ukue. In Plateau state, Angas, Berom, Goemai, Kofyar, Mwaghaval, Ron and Tarok are major cultural groups found along with Hausa. Others that are minority ethnic groups are: Amo, Aten, Bada, Bagbere-Ejar, Boghom, Bo-Rukul, Cara, Che, Dass, Duguri, Firan, Fyem, Fyer, Horom, Iguta, Irigwe, Izere, Izera, Janji, Jarawa, Jere, Jorto, Koenom, Kona, Kulere, Lemoro, Mishit, Montol, Mundat, Mwaghavul, Pal, Pyapun, Sha, Tal, Tambaa, Tapshin, Vaghat-Ya-Bijim-Legeri, Wapan, Wase, Yangkan and Yiwom.

With Igbo as a major ethnic group and minority Ijo clusters in River state, other minority ethnic groups are: Abua, Baan, Defaka, Degema, Ekpeye, Eleme, Engenni, Gokana, Ibari, Kalabari, Khana, Mini, Nkoloo, Obolo and Obulom. Sokoto has only Hausa as its ethnic group whereas Taraba has the following ethnic groups: Abon, Akum, Anca, Batu, Bete, Bitare, Bukeen, Buru, Comokarim, Dadiya, Dirim, Dong, Dza, Dzodinka, Etkeywan, Etulo, Fali of Baaissa, Fam, Fulani (Adamawa), Fum, Gbaya, Jibu, Jiru, Jukuntukum, Kam, Kapyia, Kholok, Kona, Kpan, Kpati, Kulung, Kuta, Kwak, Kyak, Laka, Lamnso, Leelau, Limbum, Loo, Lufu, Maghdi, Mak, Mambila, Mashi, Mbembe (Tigo), Mbongno, Mingangdoso, Moo, Mumuge, Mvane,

Ndegbite, Ndoola, Ndunda, Nshi, nyam, Pangseng, Piya-Kwonci, Rang, Sambadaka, Sambaleko, Shoo-Mind-Nye, Somyeree, Tha,Tita, Tiv, Viti, Vute, Waja, Waka. Wannu, Wapan, Yamba, Yendang and Yukunban.

Yobe state has Kanuri as the major cultural group and Kutto and Maaka as small minority groups. Others which are a bit larger, but their languages are endangered due to the strong influence of Hausa are: Bade, Bole, Duwai, Karekare, Ngamo and Ngizim.

Zamfara which is the last state in alphabetical order of states in Nigeria is occupied by the Hausa ethnic group whereas Abuja, the federal capital territory is shared by Basa, Dibo, Gade, Gbagyi, Gbari, Gwandara, Koroija, Korozuba, and Nupe-Nupe Tako ethnic nationalities.

Time and space could not allow us to go into details regarding the local government areas where each of the cultural groups could be found in each state. However, it should be made clear here that it does not mean that members of an ethnic group whose language is said to have gone into extinction, are off the face of the earth. A language and not the speakers and their culture can go into extinction as a result of a strong influence of a more developed and widely spoken language might have had over them.

Details of Selected Cultural Groups and Their Characteristics:

In this section, details on few selected cultural groups are unveiled. This is very important in the sense that “Each of the groups differs from one another due to the fact that one has different language and other aspects of culture by which it is specifically known”(Okodo, 2007:7). Effort is also made to select cultural groups both majority and minority from the six geo-political zones in Nigeria apart from Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, the three giants of the ethnic groups. The selection of these however was made randomly.

The Hausa Cultural Group:

Location: The stretch of plains which lies to the north - central and north – western parts of Nigeria, according to Iloeje(1976) is generally referred to as Kassar Hausa (land of the Hausa). Today Hausa are found mostly in Bauchi, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Nasarawa, Plateau, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara states.

Origin of the Hausa: The Hausa are of pure Negro stock. They are usually tall, slim and dark in complexion. In their tradition of origin, however, the Hausa claim that they are the descendants of Bayajidda (Abuyazidu) who was believed to be the son of Abdullah, a one time king of Baghdad. In effect, they claim to have migrated from the north east. Greenberg, however, classifies the Hausa language as belonging to the Afro – Asiatic linguistic stock.

Occupation: Leather work is the chief occupation of the Hausa. With hides they produce items like sandals, fans, handbags, saddles and cushions. The Hausa are also noted for dying. Because of the abundance of cotton many Hausa are engaged in textile works. Many of them today are farmers producing mainly grains and roots like maize, millet, rice as well as onions, carrot, tomatoes, groundnuts, dawa and beans.

The Fulani Ethnic Group:

Location: The Fulani, like the Hausa, live in the Northern part of Nigeria. They concentrate more in Adamawa, Bauchi, Gombe, Kaduna, and Kano, Katsina, Sokoto and Taraba states.

Origin of the Fulani: A pure Fulani is tall, slim, and fair in complexion. He also has long dark hairs and pointed nose. The original homeland of the Fulani has been traced to the middle Senegal basin around Tekrur. It was from this Senegal basin that they migrated over time into their present abode. The Fulani are believed to have

migrated into Sokoto in the 14th century. From Sokoto they spread to other parts of the north. Fulfulde is the language of the Fulani people.

Occupation : The Fulani are usually classified into two sub-groups. These are the Fulani Bororoje and the Fulani Ngida. The Bororoje are basically cattle rearers. They take their cattle across the Sudan in search of pasture. And because of the nature of their occupation the Bororoje are usually, nomadic living in makeshift homes.

Unlike the Bororoje, the Fulani Ngida (House Fulani) live in permanent homes in the states. They are mainly traders, craftsmen and administrators. Many have taken to crop production like their Hausa counterparts. Most of the cattle reared by the Bororoje belong to the Fulani Ngida.

Belief System : While most of the Bororoje are heathens, most Fulani Ngida are Moslems. It was the Fulani that introduced Islam to Northern Nigeria in the 15th century, and at the beginning of the 19th century, they led the Jihads (religious wars) to purify Islam and convert non Moslems. They belong to various Islamic sects (denominations) or brotherhoods.

The Yoruba People :

Location : The Yoruba occupy the general area of South Western Nigeria. They predominate in Lagos, Kwara, Ogun, Ondo Osun and Oyo states.

Origin of the Yoruba : The Yoruba have two traditions of their origin. Both legends however, claim that Oduduwa was the progenitor of the Yoruba, and that Ile-Ife was the cradle of Yoruba origin and civilization. One legend claims that the Yoruba High God, Olodumare, created the Yoruba where they now live. According to this strand, Oduduwa was created at Ile Ife from where his sons spread to other parts of South Western Nigeria and beyond.

The second legend claims that Oduduwa was a crown prince of Mecca. He was one of the sons of Lamurudu, a one time king of Mecca. From Mecca, Oduduwa and his supporters journeyed over time until they got to Ile Ife where they settled. From Ile Ife sons of Oduduwa and his supporters dispersed to found other settlements and Kingdoms across Yoruba land.

Linguistic evidence according to Greenberg however shows that the Yoruba language belongs to the Niger-Congo language family, the origin of which does not go beyond West Africa.

Occupation : Because of the nature of their environment, the Yoruba are basically farmers. Among their major crops are cocoa, kola nuts, palm produce, and cotton. They also produce many food crops like yams, okro, banana and plantain. Apart from farming, many are traders, wood workers and professional civil servants and or administrators.

Belief System : The Yoruba, like other traditional peoples, worshipped a variety of gods before the introduction of Christianity. While most Yoruba are Christians, there are still a handful of traditional worshippers and a reasonable number of Moslems among them.

The Bini Cultural Group:

Location : The Bini People are otherwise referred to as the Edo. They live in the South South geo-political zone of Nigeria and constitute the major ethnic group in the present day Edo state.

Origin of the Bini People: The Bini, like the Yoruba have two theories of their origin. One of the traditions of Bini origin claims that the Bini were created where they are found now by Osanobua, the Bini High God. According to the legend, it was the youngest of the seven sons of Osanobua who became the progenitor and first Oba of Benin.

The other legend claims that Egypt was the original homeland of the Bini people. From Egypt, the founders migrated over time till they settled at the present day Bini. As they journeyed South West wards, the founders of Benin first sojourned at Ile Ife from where they continued until they got to the present location of Benin.

Linguistic evidence, however, does not support this claim of eastern origin as the Edo language is classified under the Niger –Congo language family which origin is in West Africa.

Occupation: Like their counterparts in Southern Nigeria, the Bini people are predominantly farmers. Their major farm crops are rubber, plantain, palm oil, and kernel. Their local food stuff includes cassava, yams, okro and red pepper (grain of paradise).

The Bini are also recognised as great wood workers. Objects like doors, stools, status and masks are carved out of wood. They also work on bronze and ivory. Many have taken to trading and many also are in white collar jobs.

Belief System: Bini people are traditionalist to the core. Although many have become Christians, a large percentage still practices traditional religion. A few are Moslems.

The Igbo Language Group:

Location : The Igbo constitute the dominant ethnic group in the South – Eastern part of Nigeria. Today, the Igbo locate mainly in Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states. A reasonable percentage of Igbo people also live in Delta, Akwa Ibom, Benue, Cross River and Rivers states. They are also the dominant group in Rivers state.

Origin of the Igbo People: The Igbo people have two traditions of their origin. While one claims that the Igbo were created where they are found now, the other traces the original homeland of the Igbo people to Israel.

The Eri tradition of Igbo origin claims that Chukwu, the Igbo High God, created the first Igbo man along Omambala River basin at Aguleri. From there waves of Igbo people migrated to settle in different parts of South – Eastern Nigeria and beyond. In support of Eri tradition, Idigo (2002:17) quoting (Gen, 46:17) says that “Eri was a descendant of the tribe of Gad (One of the twelve sons of Jacob) in the land of Israel.”

Another theory of Igbo origin tries to link The Igbo people with the people of Israel. Basden (1966) claims, that the word Igbo is a corruption of the word, Hebrew. He claims that the Igbo are one of the lost tribes of Israel. According to him, Igbo and Hebrew customs share a lot of similarities. Linguistic evidence, however, does not support this theory. Igbo language, according to Greenberg, belongs to the Kwa sub – group of Niger - Congo language family.

Occupation: Farming is the primary occupation of the Igbo man. His major crops include yams, cocoyam, cassava, palm oil, and kernel, rice, vegetables. Trading is another important occupation of the Igbo man. Many are also involved in crafts like pottery, basket, and mat making, carving and blacksmithing. Many also are in white collar and other public service jobs.

Belief System: Many gods were worshipped among the Igbo before the Christian era. Today, most Igbo people have become Christians. A small percentage still worships other gods. Islam has no hold in Igbo land.

The Ibibio Culture Area

Location: The Ibibio is one of the major ethnic groups in Akwa Ibom state (Okafor, 1989). The Ibibio country is bounded in the north and north east by the Ekoi, in the east by Cameroon, in the west and north – west by the Igbo, and in the south – west by the Ijo.

Origin of the Ibibio People : All Ibibio traditions claim that the people migrated from somewhere. Some theorists posit that the people migrated from the central Benue valley, moved south – eastward and first settled in Arochukwu. From there they moved further southwards till they got to their present abode. Other theorists suggest that Ibibio had their origin somewhere in southern Cameroon. According to these writers, the Ibibio moved in groups from Cameroon and while some moved on land, others moved by the sea until they settled in the general area of present day Ibibio land.

Occupation: Farming is the mainstay of the Ibibio economy. Most of them are farmers. Their farm crops include yams, cassava, cocoyam, beans, maize, pepper and fluted pumpkin. Palm oil and kernel processing is a major occupation of the Ibibio. Those who live by the sea are engaged in fishing while others engage in long and short distance trade. Pottery, weaving and wood carving are among the major crafts practised by the people.

Belief System: Traditional Ibibio community worshipped various god of their choice before the Christian era. A number of secrete societies were used to boost their religion. These included the Ekpo Onyoho, Ekpe, Ataata and the Ekong cults. Today, a greater majority of the people have converted to the Christian faith.

The Jukun Cultural Group:

Location and Origin of the Jukun: The Jukun or Kwararafa founded a kingdom which was centred round the Gongola - Benue basin. The origin of the Jukun is not clear. They claim that they are related to Kanuri of Borno. According to one of their traditions of origin, they came from Yemen with the Kanuri but broke into a separate party by the time they reached Borno. The Kanuri remained in Borno while they descended farther south and settled where they are now. There are several other traditions but nothing is yet certain about their origin.

The Jukun people are farmers. They produce food crops such as yams, maize and millet. Many of them are fishermen because they live beside waters. As warriors, they also love security jobs. That is why many of them are enrolled in the army and police force. The Jukun were adherents of traditional religion until the advent of Islamic Jihad.

The Nupe People:

The Nupe today live in the low basin between the Niger and Kaduna rivers. The kingdom was one of the seven bastard Hausa states. It is said to have been founded in the 16th century by the son of an Idah prince, Tsoede (1523 - 1531). He united the various Nupe ethnic groups into a state under him. Having established his capital at a place called Nupeko, he extended his power to the north and south conquering other groups beyond Nupe land. Presently, Nupe people live in Kogi, Kwara and Niger states.

Nupe kingdom is headed by Etsu Nupe. Nupe are farmers. Their major crops grown are rice, millet, melon, vegetables and yams. They also engage in livestock management and fishing and as a result they live along river basin.

Nupe have a famous tradition of craftsmanship in glass, ivory, wood and stone and these industries were important in its economy. Even today, Bida remains the centre of Nupe craftsmanship.

Over 90% of the population are Muslims though traditional religion still exist but are weak. The Nupe people have various traditions. As Muslims even though some are Christians, much of their culture is adopted from the Arab nations but they still hold on to much of their culture. Many Nupe people often have scars on their faces (similar to an old Yoruba tradition). Some are to identify their prestige and the family of which they belong as well as for protection, as well as jewellery adornment. But these traditions are dying out in certain areas.

Idoma Culture Area:

Origin ; The Idoma cannot be said to have a unitary origin. Many Idoma groups and village subsets have their own histories complete with stories about how their people arrived at their current location. As one can imagine, every changing of people through time makes it difficult to study Idoma history.

According to traditional history, Iduh, the father of Idoma had several children who each established different areas hence the expression – “The Iduh, the father of Idoma”. Further more, available genealogies indicate the existence of diverse ethnic groups who descended from ancestors other than Iduh. It was contended that while Iduh was certainly a migrant leader – he was not the “father” of the Idoma in the sense implied in the above traditions. Some Idoma claim an ancestral homeland called Apa, north east of present Idoma land due to pressures of Northern invaders as recently as 300years ago. The historical Apa was part of the ancient Kwararafa kingdom (Okolofa kingdom), a confederacy of several peoples.

Some stories suggest that Idoma have ties with the Igala people to the west, concluding that the two nations came from a common ancestor. Another group of people notably in the Southern region claims that their ancestors arrived at their present location from Northern fringes of Igbo land as a result of land disputes.

Location: Idoma inhabit the lower and western areas of Benue state, Nigeria and kindred groups can be found in Cross Rivers and Nasarawa states in Nigeria.

Occupation : Idoma are known to be warriors and hunters of class, but hospitable and peace loving. They therefore love security work and that is why they are many in the Nigeria armed forces. Idoma people live at the confluence of the Rivers Benue and Niger and as such, are fishermen and engage in boat construction.

Ijaw People:

The Ijaw (also known by the subgroups “Ijo” or “Izon”) are a collection of peoples indigenous mostly to the forest regions of Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers states within the Niger Delta in Nigeria. Some are natives of Edo and Ondo states also in Nigeria. Many are found as migrant fishermen in camps as far east as Gabon along the western African coastlines. They are believed to be some of the earliest inhabitants of Southern Nigeria.

Traditional Occupation and Lifestyle : The Ijaw were the first of Nigerians to have contacts with Westerners, and were active as go-between in trade between visiting Europeans and the peoples of the interior, particularly in the era before the discovery of quinine, when West Africa was still the grave yard of the white men because of the endemic presence of malaria.

The Ijaw people live by fishing supplemented by farming paddy – rice, plantains, yams, cocoyam, bananas, and other vegetables as well as tropical fruits such as guava, mangoes and pineapples and trading. Smoke dried fish, timber, palm oil and palm kernels are processed for export. While clans had powerful chiefs and a stratified society, other clans are believed not to have had any centralised confederacies until the arrival of the British. However, owing to influence of the

neighbouring kingdom of Benin, individual communities even in the Western Niger Delta also had chiefs and governments at the village level.

Although the Ijaw are now primarily Christians, Ijaw have elaborate traditional religious practices of their own. Veneration of the ancestors plays a central role in Ijaw traditional religion, while water spirits, known as *Owuamapu* figure prominently in the Ijaw pantheon. In tradition, the Ijaw practice a form of divination called *Igbadai*, in which recently deceased individuals are interrogated on the causes of their death. Ijaw religious belief holds that water spirits are like humans in having personal strength and in the traditional Ijaw system of belief is to maintain the living in the good graces of the water spirits among whom they dwelt before being born into this world, and each year the Ijaw hold celebrations in honour of the spirits lasting several days. Central to the festivities is the role of masquerades, in which men wearing elaborate outfits and carved masks dance to the beat of drums and manifest the influence of the water spirits through the quality and intensity of their dancing. Particularly spectacular masquerades are taken to actually be in the possession of the spirits on whose behalf they are dancing.

Kanuri Cultural Area:

Location : The Kanuri people live in Borno, Jigawa and Yobe states in the north eastern Nigeria, southeast Niger, Western Chad and Northern Cameroon. Kanuri people in Chad are called Kanembu and Manga in Niger. Their language is Kanuri, a member of the Nilo – Saharan language family. They are predominantly Sunni Muslim.

Origin : Initially, pastoral Berber, Kanuri were driven from North Africa by the Arabs, moving to the area around Lake Chad in the late 17th century, and absorbed immigrants from the Upper Nile. According to Kanuri tradition, Sef, son of Dhu Ifazan of Yamen, arrived in Kanem in the ninth century and united the population into the Sayfawa dynasty.

Religion: Kanuri became Muslims in the eleventh century. Kanem became a centre of Muslim learning and the Kanuri soon controlled all the sea surrounding Lake Chad and a powerful empire called Kanem – Borno Empire which reached its height in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when they ruled much of central Africa.

Igala Ethnic Group :

Igala people live astride River Niger and along River Benue. They inhabit Anambra, Edo, Delta and Kogi states. Due to their nearness to the rivers, they are fishermen. They also take farming as their occupation. Their chief food crops are maize, cocoyam, pumpkin cassava, yam, millet, guinea corn and beans.

Igala are adherents of traditional religion though as a result of European and Arabic cultures, some of them now convert to either Christianity or Islam. The traditional head of Igala kingdom is called Attah. They use to have three small cicatrization marks running from the side of their mouth upwards. The Igala are dark in complexion.

The People of Efik Cultural Area :

The Efik people are branch of the Ibibio, who in the early 1600 migrated down to the Cross River from Cameroon and founded numerous settlements in the creek town – Duke town and surrounding areas in coastal south eastern Nigeria in present Cross River state.

Although the Efik's economy was originally based on fishing, the area quickly developed into a major trading centre and remained so well into the 1900s.

The Efik are related to the Oron, Eket and Ikom people by common ancestors. A powerful bond of union among the Efik, and one that gives them considerable

influence over other tribes, is the secrete society known as the Ekpe, the invention of *Nsibidi*, an ancient African writing.

Bariba People:

They were former inhabitants of Borgou area of Benin and cofounders of the Borgu Kingdom. They were once classified as an outer family of Gur family. Bariba people live in Kwara state. They are mainly farmers and traders. However, their principal occupation is sculpting and carving using woods. They grow cotton and cocoyam.

The Bariba are ruled by Monarchs and Chiefs among the villages. They also have their apex ruler known as Oba. They are traditionalists and as such, each family uses to have its own deity. The Bariba are mainly known for their carved works and their unique ancient mask they wear during ceremonies.

Pongu People:

They were part of the primary settlers along the Niger River. They later separated from the vast Hausa group and formed their own Pongu group. They are found in northern part of Niger state. The Pongu are predominantly fishermen as they live along the banks. They are ruled by the Emir and practice Islamic religion. They are revered for their traditional medicinal practice.

Bitare Cultural Group :

Bitare originated from the near extinct Abong district and later moved to settle at Sardauna of Taraba state. They are mainly local craftsmen engaged in pottery, rope making and carving.

Bitare People are led by their own traditional chief and elders who act as presiding judges over commercial issues. Some of them are Muslims whereas others are traditional religion adherents.

Duwai Ethnic Group :

Duwai is one of the seven languages of the Chadic family indigenous to Yobe state and spoken by the Duwai people. Other ethnic group close to them is Bade. Duwai people are farmers growing crops like tomatoes, asha, dawa, maize et cetera.

The Islamic Duwai is under the Bade Emirate which headquarters is at Gashua. Duwai group is known for their facial tribal marks that shows one's family background in their area.

Oron Cultural Group :

Oron originated from Cross River, and while written information about them only exists in colonial records from late 1800s on, oral traditions have them in the region much earlier than this. Their language can be traced as far back as 1900.

They are found in the South Eastern part of Cross River. Due to the abundance of palm tree, in the area, they are mainly farmers. They are also fishermen and engage in fish net making.

Oron people are organised in villages being ruled by a group of village elders (Ekpo Ndem Isong) and the heads of extended families. Their decisions are enforced by members of the Ekpo society who act as messengers of the ancestors.

Oron religion is based on paying tribute to village ancestors (Ikan). This is done by performing the oghom ceremony done yearly. They are known for their carved art crafts which they carve using palm woods.

Mumuye Group:

Mumuye people are found in Yobe state. They are divided and moved into small communities after being chased during the Fulani holy wars which extended from 17th to early 19th century. They are mainly farmers and hunters with each village having its own hunting field. Their political system is based on extended family. They

practice traditional religion (animism). They usually make offering to the gods. The dancing of bush cow mask is known to be part of a secrete society whose main purpose is to ask the ancestors who is associated with the bush cow of abundance and agricultural fertility.

The Boga People :

The Boga people are one of the cultural groups found in Adamawa state. They live in the Gombi local government area of Adamawa state which capital is Yola. They were practicing traditional religion before the coming of the whites.

The major occupation of Boga people is farming as reflected in their two notable vegetation zones: the sub – Sudan and Northern Guinea Savannah zones. The communities living around bank of rivers practice fishing. They are dark in complexion.

Ibilo Cultural Group:

They migrated from the Republic of Benin and have a strong cultural bond with those in Nigeria along Niger – Benin boarders. They are found in South – Western Nigeria in Kwara state. They are mostly farmers and cultivate varieties of foods because of the auspicious weather and fertile soil.

Their political organization is much more monarchical in the olden days, which means, they are ruled by royal families. They believe strongly in deities before being converted to Christianity and Islam. Ibilo people do have tribal marks which distinguishes them from the rest of Nigerians.

Berom People ;

Berom people are largely concentrated in Jos, the capital of Plateau state. History has it that they migrated from somewhere in the Far East to settle in the Plateau area of Nigeria.

The early settlers were mostly farmers with an outstanding record of co-operation with the cattle Fulani. Farming and hunting were their traditional occupation before the advent of mining activities in the area. Today, they are found virtually in every area of public and private business.

They are traditionally animists and ancestral worshippers. They recently embraced Christianity and Islam.

Isoko Cultural Group:

Origin: Isoko, the language spoken by Isoko people is similar to that spoken by their Urhobo neighbours. It is generally believed that the Isoko originated from Bini Kingdom because of the powerful influence the Bini Kingdom had on its neighbours. The origin of Isoko people is shrouded in mystery, contradiction and vogue myths.

Location : The Isoko people live in the western Delta and are being surrounded by Ndokwa people in the north, Urhobo in the east and Ijaw people in the south.

Occupation : The Isoko land is blessed with numerous rivers, streams and creeks. As a result, they are pre-occupied with fishing activities, canoe building, and cultivation of both food and cash crops. Their food crops are: yams, cassava, maize, rice, and vegetable, potatoes while their cash crops include palm oil, palm kernel and rubber.

Religious Belief and Political System: The Isoko people are believers in traditional religion who take pleasure in worshipping their ancestral spirits and gods. Age is the basic political and social organization of the Isoko people. Ekpado, which is the highest governing council in Isoko land, is usually constituted by the eldest people.

The Tiv Land :

The Tiv People are said to have migrated from Far East. They occupy the valley of River Benue along the northern axis. They are found in Benue state and

some part of Kogi and Nasarawa states. The Tiv are farmers, practising shifting cultivation as a result of the expanse of land in their possession.

Family groups which are fragmented in nature form the administrative unit among the Tiv. The Tiv recognise Gboko as their traditional head. They also have tribal marks which distinguishes them from others.

The Fon:

The Fon are said to have come from Tado, a village in South East Togo near their boarder with Benin. They reside in Badagary in Lagos state and in Republic of Benin. They are mostly farmers and fishermen. The Fon people practice natural religion called *Vodu* and is polytheistic.

The Afade Ethnic Group :

Sometimes, Afade are called Kirdi along with Fulbe and Fuli language groups. History of Afade people as recorded stated that in the 1800s, the Kirdi tribes (Afade inclusive) resisted domination by the Fulbe people. Due to this, they fled to the Mandara Mountains, hills and isolated valleys where they still live till today.

The Afade language group lives in north eastern Nigeria along their borders with Chad. Their houses are grouped into small village settlements by clan clustered around mountains.

The Kirdi man's work includes crafting, leather making, basket making, spinning, weaving and building construction. The women make clay pots and grow crops on small plots of land while the men involve themselves in cultivation of crops like melon, pumpkins, beans, yams, cassava, et cetera.

They believe that the man is the head of his family and surrounding. They also believe in a single god head who was the creator of all things, who keeps his creation in order. They believe that their god only intervenes when order has been disturbed. They do not pray directly to this god but to their ancestors whom they believe intercede for them in times of crises. They believe that the earth is the mother of all things such as thunder, lightening, and black snakes. Each clan normally has a diviner who serves as a mediator between the people and the spirits.

The Tarok Cultural Area:

Tarok is a consortium of ethnic groups that came together and borrowed the language of the inhabitants of the Pe-Tarok stock who were residing in Funyallong Tunnual and settled all over Tarok land. Analysis of the migration pattern of the Tarok people presents Pesip of Keirswang clan as amateur of the Funyallong people. Pesip left his clan in Pe to migrate in search of greener pastures in Funyallong. Later, he was followed by his brother Kwangpe in Funyallong. However, finally, Dwal dan ancestors came to settle with them.

The leadership of the people is hereditary, thus the king must die before his son could succeed him. They believe in their ancestral cult. The ancestors, Orim are noted by their initiated males and post menopause women. Their activities are held around the graves all over Tarok. Orim comes out in the process of that in form of masked figures. The Tarok people are found in Langtang, Kanam and Wase local government areas of Plateau state. They are adherents of the three religions in Nigeria: African Traditional Religion, Christianity and Islam.

Djema People:

The Djema people are found in the North West Niger and adjacent areas of Burkina Faso and Nigeria. They are mostly farmers who grow a lot of millet, sorghum and rice as the area they are found permits such crops. They are governed and controlled by the Emir who exercises almost an authoritarian and monarchical authority overall their affairs.

Reasons for Nigerians to Live Together:

Nigeria as a modern state came into formal existence on 1st January, 1914. This does not however mean that the various peoples of Nigeria were brought together for once by act of amalgamation. As a matter of fact, the various peoples of what becomes Nigeria today had been in direct and indirect contacts with one another for hundreds of years before the introduction of Islam in Hausa land in the 15th century. In effect, long before the coming of the earliest Europeans to the Bights of Benin and Biafra, and long before the effective introduction of Christianity in the 19th century the various peoples of Nigeria had known each other and had shared much in common.

Peaceful coexistence characterised relationships among various peoples of Nigeria, the Hausa, Fulani, Kanuri, Igala, Jukun, Idoma, Tiv, et cetera, had had close socio-political and economic affinities long before the amalgamation. Not only did various groups establish ties of blood and kingship through marriages many, at different times came under a common political umbrella. Most importantly, people were closely related through long and short distances of trades. In such relationships, defined rules of friendly relationships as well as diplomatic etiquette were respected.. Without such cordial relationships, the trans-Saharan trade for example, could not have taken place. Trade goods from South to Hausa and Nupe, Igala et cetera, were transported to Hausa states like Kano, Katsina, and Zaria for onward transportation to the Maghreb.

In what is southern Nigeria today, people also established close links and ties of blood and kingship. In the south-east, the Igbo, Ibibio, Anang, Efik, and the Ijaw exchange goods, customs and traditions long before the advent of the Europeans, the House system and the Courts of equity. The Aros and other long distant traders, for example, operated between the Atlantic Coast and as far north as Nsukka long before the Christian era.

Far from being obstacles to contact and interaction the rivers Niger, Benue, Cross and others were great assets and other contacts. Through these rivers people from far and wide came into direct contact mainly for purposes of trade. Igala, for example, were of direct contact with the Igbo of south east as well as the Hausa of the north via the river Niger. The Cross and other rivers played useful role in bringing the various present peoples of Abia, Cross River, and Akwa Ibom States together.

Just like in the east, the south-western Nigeria were in direct contact long before the colonial epoch, the Yoruba, the dominant ethnic group were in direct contact with the Edo, Ishan, Nupe, Bariba, Borgu and Igbira. Kola nut for example, produced in Yoruba heartland found its way to far away Zaria state via Nupe country during the reign of Queen Amina in the 16th century. The Edo, Ishan, Urhobo, Ijaw, Isoko and Western Igbo exchanged not only trade goods but also customs and traditions. The Yoruba at a time evolved the great Oyo Empire which had great influence over most peoples of the south-west and beyond.

The western Igbo formed a bridge between the east and the west. Through the, Edo customs and traditions as well as trade goods reached the Igbo land before the Christian era. Such customs included the chieftaincy institutions found among the Onitsha and Ugwuta Igbo.

In spite of the fact that various peoples of Nigeria related closely and shared a lot in common there were still times when many people disagreed and consequently went to war. In the north, for example, the Hausa in finding their Hausa Bokwai states came into conflict with one another and with some of their neighbours. In the 19th century, the Fulani conquered the Hausa and ruled them. There were series of wars

between the Hausa /Fulani and the Kanuri who founded the Kanem-Borno Empire and the Sayfawa dynasty. The Jukun and the Idoma were bitter enemies for centuries.

In the west, the expansion of Oyo Empire brought a lot of conflict in the area. Its collapse in the 19th century brought more conflict. The rise and expansion of Bini Kingdom also generated a lot of wars in the region. And in the east inter group relations were characterised by peace and war as each group tried to assert its sovereignty and independence.

It must be noted that much of the wars fought in Africa since the 15th century were, to a large extent, caused by the advent of the Europeans. The trans-Atlantic slave trade which they introduced and encouraged was responsible for much of the wars many of which were fought to capture slaves for sale.

Summary and Conclusion:

It is not altogether to see Nigeria as a British creation. Long before the amalgamation of 1914, and long before Islam was introduced into Hausa land in the 15th century the various peoples of what becomes now Nigeria had known one another and had exchanged not only trade goods but also customs and traditions. The customs and traditions of the peoples have not been as divergent and opposed as people at times think. And that Nigerian nation has maintained her unity since independence in spite of the diversities is a proof that what unite Nigerians are more than what divide them.

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