



The Challenges of Social Justice and Ethnic Crises in Nigerian Society in the Light of Amartya Sen's Theory of Justice

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Abstract. The question of peaceful coexistence between Nigeria's various ethnic groups has been debated since the country's inception. Nigeria has experienced a number of political, economic, and ethnic crises that have caused ethnic divisions and disparities among its citizens, which have fueled rivalries because of the unequal distribution of the country's resources, which is the result of elite group manipulation of power. The article takes an analytical approach and applies the critical analysis tool to analyze political instability and ethnic crises in modern-day Nigeria. Viewed in the context of the numerous instances of injustice and unjust treatment experienced by the marginalized, disadvantaged, and vulnerable ethnic groups in Nigerian society by the governing class, the ethnic crises become more compelling. The results showed that one of the problems affecting Nigeria's stability as a country is ethnic conflicts. This research is founded on this idea. Following Amartya Sen's concept of justice will put an end to ethnic tensions. Through the realization process, human reason is able to distinguish between justice and injustice through Amartya Sen's Niti and Nyaya. The article came to the result that economic loss and rivalry between different ethnic groups have resulted from ethnic crises. Amartya Sen's Niti and Nyaya may be used by modern Nigeria to stop ethnic

tensions, and public reasoning can abolish injustice among the country's many ethnic groups.

Keywords: Ethnic crises, injustice, ethnic, Amartya Sen.

1. Introduction

There have been several conflicts between communities, ethnic groupings, and religious groups in many African nations, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, Somalia, Sudan, Burundi, and many more. Nigeria is not an exception. Ethnicity has been implicated in crises that have caused significant property and human damage in numerous parts of the nation. Over 250 ethnic groups and 120 different languages are spoken in Nigeria, a nation on the African continent. Christianity and Islam are the two main religions practiced in Nigeria, along with a variety of ethnic groups. Each ethnic group has viewed itself as an adversary vying for control of economic resources and decision-making authority. The common sense of being that characterizes ethnicity is the most important aspect in defining the group's boundaries and is crucial to comprehending ethnicity at any given period (Nnoli, 1980). Additionally, ethnicity frequently has a hidden class component that is used by society's elite to

maintain their privileges. According to Nnoli (1980), ethnicity is a social phenomenon linked to interactions between people from various ethnic backgrounds. According to Nnoli, ethnic groupings are social formations that are identified by the communal nature of their borders. He pointed out that these kinds of groupings could have different languages, cultures, or both. Nnoli asserts that the primary differentiating element in Africa and Nigeria specifically, has unquestionably been language. Because of the diverse ethnic groups, religions, languages, cultures, and institutional setups, Nigeria is regarded as a plural society. Over 250 ethnic groups have been recognized in this diverse culture, and they compete with one another for money and power. Ethnic conflicts are the outcome of this (Salawu & Hassan, 2011).

Ethnic conflicts in Nigeria have existed since the colonial and post-colonial eras. According to Ojo (2014), Nigeria's patriotic movement was thwarted by the colonial tripartite split of the country, which used physical borders to further divide ethnic groupings and turned ethnicity into a means of achieving political power. Due to the notable disparities in development within each area, this structure and other administrative choices placed a strong emphasis on ethnic nationalism and regional politics. The colonial division of Nigeria, which strengthened ethnic groups, the emergence of ethno-political consciousness, and the growth of ethnic/regional political parties, all showed that the British government purposefully hindered the growth and success of Nigerian nationalism, instead encouraging it as a strategy for gaining political power (Ebegbulem, 2011). The union of the distinct protectorates of Southern Nigeria and Cameroon with the protectorate of Northern Nigeria is said to have been the consequence of Lord Frederick Lugard's 1914–18 constitutional exercises, which were conducted without the express approval of Nigerians.

Owing to this move, Okoye (2005) believed that the creation of provinces and other divisions was based on the convenience and wisdom of imperial British authorities. This affected Nigerians' ethnic awareness. The British authorities used the two main rivers, the Niger and the Benue, to split the nation into three geographical parts, the North, East, and West. This division is also responsible for the ethnic conflicts in the country. According to Ojo (2014), the divide added to the nation's racial issues, which sums up the division's unfairness.

The Northern region was larger than the Eastern and Western regions combined, indicating that the regions were not equal. Second, the minority groups that are

prevalent in the three zones were not given enough attention when they were formed. According to a philosophical and historical study of Nigeria's ethnic issues, there has been a string of political unrest and shifting constitutional approaches throughout addressing the issue of ethnic diversity. Ethnic groups in Nigeria are currently at odds with one another on matters like the formula for resource sharing and power. To no effect, successive governments have looked for a long-term solution to the aforementioned issues of marginalization, inequality, and ethnic conflict.

2. Nigerian Ethnic Crises Dating Back to the Civil War's Eve

Nigeria is a contemporary and intricate heterogeneity of groups and cultures that evolved throughout the years of various historical experiences in various geographical places. A "simple geographical expression" has united these nations with disparate languages and philosophies. (Awolowo 1947). Despite over 60 years of formal independence and more than a century of marginalization, the country continues to face difficulties in maintaining its unity. Ediagbonya, Duyile, Nwachukwu, and Pelumi (2020). In the developing world, Nigeria is without a doubt a nation with enormous political and economic potential. The nation is home to several ethnic groups with a wide range of cultural traditions. The Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Fulani, Ibibio, Kanuri, Tiv, Edo, Nupe, and Ijaw are Nigeria's largest ethnic groupings in terms of population and geographic distribution. (Duyile, Buhari, & Ediagbonya, 2020). With Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe as president and Sir Tafawa Balewa as prime minister, Nigeria gained its independence in 1960. In 1963, Nigeria became a Republic. From 1967 until 1970, the nation was embroiled in a civil war. The British intended to develop infrastructure in the land space known as Nigeria in order to exploit the mineral resources in the soil and transport the agricultural produce for onward seafight to Europe. The process of reconstruction and rehabilitation was partially successful after the war ended. Nigeria can be seen in terms of its internal and external waters, which are the rivers and lakes bodies within its territorial land space and the seas and oceans within its border environs. The basic infrastructure in Nigeria is in a semi-comatose state which can be traced to the events during colonial times. As noted by Malam Abubakar Imam, "We despise each other, we call each other ignorant. The South is proud of its Western knowledge and culture – we are proud of our Eastern culture." (Alegbeleye, 2014) For instance, Nigerian Navy Commander Akinfemi Duyile (hydrography department) stated that "even though the Bakassi and the fishing settlements

historically belong to the Obong of Calabar" (Duyile, 2015), Nigeria does not even have a territory it created, and ethnicity is associated with land and kindred."

This accurately describes the situation in the early years of the country. Crises are not new to human societies; they are a part of human existence and as old as human history because they have existed in all areas of human endeavor. However, coexistence in Nigeria has not always been free from stress, tension, violence, and crisis. Nigeria has a long history of ethnic crises; since the country's recent democratic transition in 1999, there have been numerous violent clashes, which have resulted in a substantial loss of life and the destruction of property valued at billions of naira. These violent interethnic crises occurred from 1999 to 2013. Onodugo, Amujiri, and Nwuba (2015) noted that due of its destructive character, the ethno-religious crises and its multifaceted effects have impeded Nigeria's socio-economic growth overall as well as political stability, economic prosperity, and advancement. (Onodugo and others, 2015). In a political system where language and culture are the most important characteristics, ethnicity is a social phenomenon that shows up in interactions between members of various ethnic groups. In practically any society where there are multiple ethnic groups, ethnicity is normal. According to Alegbeleye (2014), ethnicity is the state in which members of a certain ethnic group believe they or others perceive them to have characteristics that set them apart from other social groupings.

A concept that is hard to define and even harder to understand is ethnic crisis.

The phenomenon of ethnic crises has existed for a very long time and is not unique to Nigeria. The term "ethnic crisis," also known as "ethnic war" or "ethnic violence," has been criticized by a number of academics. It is broadly defined as a political or social crisis that involves one or more groups that are distinguished by some ethnic identity marker. Researchers have attempted to conceptualize conflict in a variety of ways, and one of the most frequently cited traditional definitions of crisis views it as "... a struggle over value and claims to scarce, status, power, and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure, or eliminate their rivals" (Onodugo, Amujiri, & Nwuba, 2015).

3. Reasons behind Nigeria's Ethnic Crises

A number of scholars, including Ojo (2014), Nnoli (1980), Egwu (2001), and Ebegbulem (2011), to mention a few, have proposed that competition for limited resources is a key contributing cause to

Nigeria's ethnic conflicts. In a nation like Nigeria, whose ethnic groups are different, rivalry for the limited resources of the country exists. Here, governments operate in a way that favors one ethnic group over another, and practices like nepotism, tribalism, and preferential treatment exacerbate ethnic conflicts. Numerous elements, each with its own dimensions, can be linked to it. The following are some of the contributing factors: colonial legacy, boundary disputes, power and resource struggles, the inability of the traditional model to resolve crises, poverty, the perception of the government's lack of sincerity and fair play, manipulation of the social elites, and intolerance towards certain ethnic and religious groups (Ojo, 2014).

The following are ten main causes of ethnic crises:

1. **Conflicted Geographical Demands:** Conflicts over the use or exploitation of land and water resources have arisen throughout Nigeria between farmers and pastoralists, fishermen and pond owners, and others. A significant conflict between communities and ethnic groups has been the question of land resources as a contributing cause to ethnic crises. Nigeria's ethnic issue is fueled by the fact that every piece of land is owned by one or more ethnic groups.
2. **The requirements of occupations that are culturally bound:** Members of particular ethnic groups have learnt to survive in particular jobs in which they have also accomplished some preservation, according to several experts who have examined the interactions between a group's heritage, ecology, technology, population migrations, and physical environmental resources. In the northeastern and northwest regions of the nation, for instance, farmers and cattle rearers have been involved in violent conflicts over the restricted and precious pastures for their animals, as well as the crops and farms that the animals have damaged. These violent ethnic clashes have resulted in property damage and fatalities.
3. **Lack of Resources:** In a country with a population of over 10 million, there is fierce competition on both the political and economic fronts, as well as inter- and intra-ethnic crises in the race for political office.
4. **Cultural diversity and Strategic Use of Symbols:** Symbols are closely linked to the culture of the people, and ethnic symbols are protected as a shared heritage of the community or ethnic group. Therefore, any perceived disrespect or humiliation of any ethnic group's culture has resulted in a crisis; the Hausa and Yorubas in Sagamu in 1999 is a prime example.
5. **Spirituality and The ethnic background Problems:** Ethnicity crises rarely occur in a vacuum or in isolation; instead, they converge with other factors like

religion and class. In Northern Nigeria, however, the two ideas are so intertwined that conflicts between groups in the region are often quickly interpreted as ethnic or religious crises. Historical experiences have demonstrated that the majority of violent conflicts stem from the interaction of ethnic, religious, political, socioeconomic, and cultural differences. For instance, in volatile crisis areas in northern Nigeria, such as Kaduna or Kano, an Igbo or Yoruba Muslim may not be considered a Muslim by their Hausa neighbor, but rather as belonging to a different ethnic group.

6. Ethnicity Conflict, Ethnic diversity, classification: In Nigeria, ethnic consciousness is pervasive. When a person's identification decision affects substantial concerns for them or their community, national class interests become irrelevant. In Nigeria, it is well known that the middle and upper classes have exploited ethnic colors to incite ethnic conflict and rally support for politicians. Some academics have, for lack of a better term, characterized this tendency to blur the lines between ethnic, religious, cultural, or political issues—particularly during times of crisis and violence—as a "ethno-religious crisis" or identity crisis.

7. The Structural Foundation of Ethnic Conflict: A country's plurality leaves it vulnerable to crisis. Limited access to finite political, economic, and other resources is the cause of the crises. Therefore, in multiethnic nations like Nigeria, ethnic upheavals are not unavoidable.

8. Internally colonization: The population and political power of the various ethnic groups are not equal.

9. Inadvertent Repercussions of Political Evolution

10. External Factors

Based on the considerations indicated, the reasons of crises in the country may be explained from many perspectives. Scholars have proposed numerous theories for the current ethnic crisis in Nigeria.

4. Amartya Sen's View on Justice

Even though social justice has long been a topic of discussion, Sen claims that the political landscape in Europe and America changed as a result of the social and economic changes brought about by the European Enlightenment in the 18th and 19th centuries, and the idea was strongly backed by these developments. As a result, there are two distinct schools of thought and two distinct approaches to justice among the major philosophers. Among these, the first is the justice approach, which was first popularized by Thomas Hobbes in the 17th century and later adopted by prominent thinkers of various schools, including Rousseau, Locke, Kant, and Rawls.

The 'social contract' idea is a prevalent approach in contemporary political philosophy that emphasizes social justice mechanisms. This method is also referred to by Sen as the transcendental institutionalism method. A different perspective on justice is the impact of various institutions that were supported by Smith, Condorcet, Wollstonecraft, Bentham, Mill, and Marx. The comparative theory of justice contends that by contrasting various lifestyles under it, justice can be achieved (Sen, 2009:6-7). Instead of comparing justice and injustice in real societies, Sen argues that the transcendental institutionalism approach aims to diagnose what perfect justice is and define what the just are, without directly addressing real societies. Emphasizing that the approach to transcendental institutionalism is arrangement-focused, Sen, writes that "the results of this approach lead to the development of theories of justice that focus on the transcendent identity of ideal institutions" (Sen, 2009:6). Sen evaluates this aspect of this approach, which focuses on the fair organization of institutions rather than people and actual societies, as a contractual mode of thinking and states that a hypothetical social contract situation is assumed in this thinking mode. The obvious relevance of this social contract is to offer an ideal alternative to chaos/confusion.

Pointing out that the other approach to justice, the comparative justice approach, is a realization-focused approach, Sen points out that comparative theorists try to correct it by clearly showing the injustice in the world and that social realization (actual institutions, behaviors and other effects on human life) states that they focus on the results). "These theorists, instead of limiting their studies to the transcendent investigation of a perfectly just society, have conducted studies involving the comparison of existing or probable societies, and have directed all their attention to the abolition of injustice in the world" (Sen, 2009:7).

The realization-oriented approach, or comparative justice approach, is a key distinction between the arrangement-focused and realization-focused approaches to justice. It emphasizes people's real behavior rather than their compliance with ideal behavior. The realization-oriented approach asks "How can justice be developed?" instead of "How is a competent just institution?" as does the regulation-oriented approach (transcendental institutionalism approach). Instead of taking a transcendent path, the realization-oriented approach concentrates on comparison and comparison, focusing on the actual realization of justice in societies as well as on institutions and regulations (Sen, 2009:7-9). Sen contends that the dominant perspective on justice in

contemporary political philosophy is that of transcendental institutionalism, and he cites John Rawls as the representative of this perspective. According to Sen, the principles of justice can be clearly seen in Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*, where the norms of right behavior in the moral and political context are illuminating and our relationship with perfectly just institutions is fully defined / determined. Sen also identifies two issues with the transcendental institutionalism approach.

First, there can be an irrational consensus on what constitutes a just society, even in the face of rigorous standards of impartiality and open-minded examination (as in Rawls' initial view, for instance). Sen, claims that this is a transcending solution that has been agreed upon and that the viability of the result reached is the issue. The selection of the extremely unlikely ideal scenario from among potential options and the real selection requirements for a comparison framework of justice in the application of practical reason are two more of these issues. The repetition problem of research in terms of a transcendent answer is what Sen refers to as this (Sen, 2009:9). Sen's approach to justice attempts to demonstrate that Rawls' description of these principles of justice is incorrect. Rawls' theory of justice assumes that there is a hypothetical state of equality (the original position) at the beginning and that people who are ignorant of themselves will unanimously choose one thing when choosing the two principles of justice. Rawls does not explain why different alternative views on justice were not chosen.

The fulcrum of Rawls' theory of justice is blocked, according to Sen, who claims that other alternative approaches can easily dismiss Rawls's argument, which he developed to draw attention to objectivity, because it is not a useful and credible argument. Sen claims that it is impossible to reach a perfect consensus on what a just world is because justice can have multiple competing causes, all of which claim to be impartial. Sen is interested in how to reduce injustice even though we have different perspectives on an ideal system with a rational consensus. In this context, Sen views "the diversity of systems and lifestyles not as an error or mistake, but as things that signify human freedom" (Sen, 2009:12). The need for accuracy arises when negotiating within an imaginary original situation to determine the principles of justice in impartiality, as Sen (2009:16) contends that "there is more than one value and criterion system to think about justice." Sen (2009:54) asserts that the concept of truth is the fundamental idea of Rawls' theory of justice, stating that "The principles of justice in Rawls' formulation determine the basic social institutions that regulate society." "Justice as truth has been central to

political thought from the very beginning as a right" (Sen, 2009:55).

Sen compares Rawls to Kant at this point, stating that "Those who defend a universal law, as Kant did, accept that the characteristics such as not being emotional and being objective are shared by most people" (Sen, 2009:57). Rawls claims that the structural goal of righteousness practice is to identify appropriate principles that determine the unanimous selection of just institutions needed for the basic structure of a society. At this point, Sen discusses the variety of conflicting objective principles and attempts to clarify this by using the example of three kids with a flute (Sen, 2009:16): There is a flute, and three kids named Anne, Bob, and Carla will each get one of them. Anne claims she deserves the flute because she is a good flute player; Bob wants it because he doesn't have any toys, and Carla says. Sen emphasizes that each child in the example above has different reasons for owning the flute, and in this case, the decision about whom to give the flute to will be very difficult. According to Sen, different theorists such as utilitarians, economic egalitarians, and liberals will think differently about who should be given the flute. For example, economic egalitarians will support Bob because he is the poorest; liberals will want the flute to be given to Carla since Carla is the one who produced the flute; utilitarians will support giving the flute to Anne since only Anne knows how to play the flute and in this case she will get the greatest pleasure while playing the flute. According to Sen, for Rawls and his followers, only one of these children will be right and the decision will be made accordingly. The transcendental institutionalism approach, in which Rawls is also included, attributes to justice a necessity and universality that can be applied at all times and everywhere. Sen, who argues that this is not possible, emphasizes that in Rawls' model of justice, there is only one type of just society, which is defined by reference to principles. That is, plausible, reasonable answers to the pluralism existing in the modern world cannot be seen within this ideal form of Rawls and all other alternatives fail.

Sen contends that, in the case of the three children, giving a playing instrument to one of them always leads to a contradiction of at least one justice principle: denying Anne the instrument would result in human performance to end poverty; denying Bob the instrument would be incompatible with Carla's right to enjoy the fruits of one's own labor. Instead of talking about ideal solutions that might not work, the emphasis should be on selecting from among plausible options. "If we try to choose between Picasso and Dali, we should not do it by referring to the diagnosis that

Mona Lisa is the most ideal painting in the world," Sen (2009:16) tries to justify this decision. Sen claims that each of the three children's justifications in the "three children with an instrument" example demonstrates non-arbitrary justifications and various forms of impartiality. Sen contends that social negotiation, not any social organization, is the only way to resolve such a problem amicably. Sen emphasizes that this is possible by eliminating criteria that do not come from common sense to measure justice (Sen, 2009:14-15). Sen claims that the instrument example reflects various fundamental ideas about the nature of a just society that are defended impartially and considered separately, making it impossible to identify the institutions required for the fundamental structure of society and to establish the principles of justice altogether.

Since Rawls argues in his book *Theory of Justice* that people who come together in the initial situation will not choose other alternative ideas about justice and that the establishment of principles of justice will emerge in a single way, Sen claims that "it is very difficult to use the whole procedure of justice as the correctness developed by Rawls in his theory" (Sen, 2009:57).

According to Sen, Rawls' approach is an attempt to achieve a transcendent ideal. According to Sen, Rawls acknowledged later that it was difficult to get to a unanimous agreement on the one set of justice principles in the original stance. However, the theory of justice as truth has suffered greatly as a result of this unsolvable issue.

5. Ethnic Issues and Elite Theory in Modern-Day Nigeria

In order for the privileged members of society to maintain their privileges, ethnicity frequently has a hidden class component. The ruling elite in modern-day Nigeria is largely responsible for ethnic crises; they take control of the country and use its political and economic resources to further their own agenda, which leads to inequality and rivalry between Nigeria's many ethnic groups. Ethnic crises result from the oppressed masses' use of violence to make their voices heard after being silenced and dominated. Some of the propounders of this Elite theory are Jonathan Parry, Robert Michaels, Pareto and Mosca as well as St. Simon (Mazi Mbah, 2006:285). "Elite theorists emphasize the degree to which interlocking corporate and foundation directorates, old-school ties, and frequent social interaction tend to link together and facilitate coordination between the top leaders in business, government, civic organizations, educational and cultural establishments, and the mass

media," Johnson (2005) warns. He emphasizes further that this "power elite" has the ability to effectively dictate the main objectives, if not always the practical means and details, for all significant government policy-making. They can also control the economic resources of the nation's major business and financial organizations, as well as the activities of the major mass media and educational/cultural organizations.

Their economic resources, particularly their positions in the top management of large corporations, are thought to be the primary source of their power. This is in contrast to their ability to win over large numbers of people by attempting to "represent" the interests of larger social groups; in most cases, this Elitist group may not be the majority group, but their goal is to seize power, accumulate wealth, and exert control over the resources that are available. Elitism is discriminatory, pre-emptive, preventive, and savours of a divine right to say what politics ought to be. assert their political position while ignoring and snobing the general consensus and expertise (Mazi Mbah, 2006:284). Johnson (2005) states that while elitist theorists vary somewhat in how much agreement or disagreement there is within their ranks and how much genuine concern for the public welfare influences their choices of public policy goals, they all generally agree that a small number of elite groups, primarily from minority groups, control the nation and set the fundamental course of public policy. These groups are "movers and shakers" of the nation's political and economic resources, not the manipulated and helpless masses of ordinary voters who choose between candidates at election time.

In his definition of the elite, Mazi Mbah (2006:283) states that "In its general sense the elite denotes a group of persons who in any society hold positions of eminence in politics; it denotes specifically those who exercise preponderant political influence." He stressed further that they are political entrepreneurs, the establishment, and the governing minority. This ethnic group dominates and controls the power and resources for the betterment and enrichment of themselves, depriving some ethnic groups of access to power and available resources, causing disparities and unrest among the populace, resulting in division and crises among themselves. High levels of elite awareness or organization are characteristics of the ruling class. In addition to holding positions of power, they could be members of a caste, ruling class, aristocracy, or any other conscious affiliation. They may be referred as in Nigeria as the kingmakers, heavyweights, leaders of thought, the V.I.P., men of timber and calibre, or others who generally seem prominent in social and political issues. From the elite's perspective, politics is

about a select few controlling the whole society and making the major, crucial choices.

The elite approach to politics arises when there is a deliberate attempt and practice to exercise exclusive decision-making as a prerogative of social position or class. The ruling elite in Nigeria's political system are members of the various ethnic groups, and they control the political, economic, and resource aspects of the state in order to enrich themselves. They control the important sectors of the state by designating their royalists to lead those sectors as ministers, such as the power sector. The elite maintain their power through perpetuation until circumstances force them to step down. "They are either born to rule or made to rule" (Mazi Mbah, 2006:285). They see democracy as an easy political nomenclature because it gives the elite the option to form a caste. Since the masses are often thought to be disorganized, the interests of the small elite will be accepted by society. They typically control recruitment into their ranks, meaning that they believe that political power, like other social values, is distributed unequally, meaning that they can place people according to their share of any good wealth, skill, or political power (Mazi Mbah, 2006:287). Because they control economic resources and power, they choose who should hold public office, and they are frequently referred to as the Cabal.

Crises in contemporary Nigeria are traceable to the role and impact of the elite in contemporary political dispensation. Critical Analysis of Ethnic Crises in Nigeria has witnessed a number of ethnic crises that have resulted in the loss of life and the destruction of property. They do this by using their influence to turn the ethnic groups against themselves in order to cover up their selfish motive. Most of this elite group engages in nepotism and tribalism, and they introduce immunity clauses to protect themselves from the law. To a certain extent, the emergence of ethnic politics can be understood in the context of colonialism and some colonial practices and policies put in place by the British Government during colonialism. The various ethnic crises in the country have many facets, including resource exploitation, corrupt elites, and colonization, all of which contribute to the conflicts. The larger context of the violence described above must be located in the way that minority and majority relations have been conducted recently, as well as the way that various ethnic groups perceive the past while being blinded by the ethnic tensions of the present.

Although the British introduced a highly divisive and parochial system of limited representation based on political preference, ethnicity, and economic status from the very beginning of colonialism, this system has persisted to this day in many ways and is the

precursor to the current ethnic crises. The increasing likelihood of prolonged ethnic crises is potentially destructive to the extent that, if nothing is done, it could jeopardize the country's corporate existence. To date, there appears to be no single phenomenon in Nigerian history that demonstrates the incapacity of the various identities to coexist peacefully and pursue the goal of development. The nation's diversity has continued to threaten its progress and even its existence because of our orientation of non-commitment to the nation's ideal but rather to our various ethnic identities. The aftermath of these violent crises bears destruction, physical and mental devastation, death, maiming of people, destruction of property, and economic stagnation. The country is experiencing a recurring spate of violence that is deeply rooted in mutual suspicion and hatred among the various ethnic groups in the country.

This is apparent in the regular recurrence of ethnic and other crises that have beset the country since independence and particularly in the past two decades. These events endanger the country's fragile democratic institutions and limit its socio-economic progress by diverting much needed funding from development efforts to military and counter insurgency actions as well as to re-building devastated infra-structure. Ethnicity and religion, as well as caste, are socio-cultural indicators that frequently play an important and even strategic part in the nation's political landscape. A multitude of variables have played a role in Nigeria's ongoing ethnic crises.

Therefore, based on the various crises that were previously discussed, there are numerous ways to explain the causes of the nation's crises. Scholars have identified a number of factors, including competition for economic and political space, traditional authority, conflicting values and ways of life, religion and ethnicity, and religious manipulations. Unemployment and poverty, Northern Nigeria's history of implementing Jihadist Islam is a result of the government's security intelligence and law enforcement services' inability to hold those responsible accountable. Sharia law has been imposed in several northern regions of the nation, ignorance of the teachings of Islam and the Indigene and Settler Controversy (Egwu, 2001).

6. Conclusion

In Nigeria, tensions between different ethnic groups and economic losses are the results of the ethnic crises. Additional state and local government unit divisions were created in response to the examination of the "federal character" plan in order to better reflect ethnic

representation and recognition. Along with the rotation of state posts across ethnic areas, it also included an agreement on the proportionate representation of political parties, which was thought to reflect ethno-regional interest in the executive cabinet. These programs seemed to have been undermined, despite the fact that they were supposed to offer a sustainable solution to the ethnic issue and inequality. Nigeria's ethnic crisis can be resolved by implementing Amartya Sen's Niti and Nyaya principle, which he outlined in his book *Idea of Justice*.

This will eliminate ethnic divides and promote equality, harmony, and peace. A philosophical and historical analysis of Nigeria's ethnic crisis reveals a history of political instability and shifting constitutional approaches to resolving ethnic diversity. The ethnic groups in Nigeria are currently at odds with one another over issues like the allocation of resources and power. Successive governments have attempted, without success, to find a lasting solution to the problems of marginalization, inequality, and ethnic crises. The government has attempted, but failed, to prevent Nigeria's current ethnic crises. Maintaining political stability, peaceful coexistence, and social cohesion are all impacted by the problem of finding a common ground for social justice and fair treatment. How can we preserve unity, peaceful coexistence, and political stability in a society where different ethnic groups are sometimes at odds with one another, especially in light of Nigeria's current ethnic crises and instability? The Niti is a concept of a just society, a means of codification, and a procedural sense of justice; the Nyaya is a comprehensive conception of justice that has been achieved; it emphasizes attention to the finer points of the outcome and stands for a practical and comprehensive concept of justice. Sen's *Idea of Justice* addresses the concepts of social injustice and ethnic crises by laying out a workable formula for the equitable distribution of individual liberties, rights, and socioeconomic benefits, which include income, health, education, and other political rights. Sen's theory of Niti and Nyaya can end ethnic conflicts.

The main goal of Nyaya is to prevent the injustice of "big fish eating small fish," or *matsanyaya*. Justice's main purpose is to stop this from happening, and "justice in the fish world" shouldn't be allowed to infiltrate the human world. Sen, central acceptance is about societies reaching their own conclusions and achieving justice with Nyaya consciousness rather than criticizing institutions and laws. He calls for the differentiation of justice and injustice through a process of realization, emphasizing public reason through human reason, and highlights the necessity of

replicating genuine democratic opportunities and dialogue spaces in order to achieve this, which will abolish social injustice and bring about a system of equality and fairness that will eliminate ethnic division in the country.

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