

The Inevitability of Civil Society in Nation-Building: A Case Study of Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: The complex nature of building the Nigeria state is one that demands concerted efforts from governmental and non- governmental institutions. Nation-building is an organized and conscious craft directed towards the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policies, aimed at effecting growth and development of a state. Civil societies have contributed in this development by lending supportive hands to the government institutions in planning, advocacy and, capacity building free of charge. Being an aggregate of non-profit organization with the cardinal aim to speak and act in defense of the interest of the citizens of the state, the civil society remains a partner with the government in effecting the necessary transformation of the citizens. In view of the stated, the study aims to disinter and bring to the fore the contributions of civil society in nation-building. The study anchors on structural functionalism to explain the interface between civil society and government in nation-building. This being a qualitative study relies on secondary sources for data collection while content analysis serves as method of data interpretation. The study concludes that the animation needed to effectively overcome the task of nation building cannot be effectively and efficiently provided by the “traditional government” alone. Therefore, it study recommends the need for government to work hand in gloves with these civil society groups who are willing to bring in their wealth of knowledge from research to plan, execute and evaluate with the government for the best interest of citizens in terms of development and peaceful co-existence in the political system.

Key words: Civil society, nation-building, citizens, development, non-governmental.

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I. BACKGROUND OF STUDY

“Only by participating in common intelligence and sharing in the common purpose as it works for the common good can individual human beings realize their true individualities and become truly free”-- John Dewey

It is obvious that every political system is such a complex and dynamic structure that demands diverse efforts from many segments of the society to build. The task of building a nation is enormous, and one that must be approached with such a dexterity that should be anchored on mutual inclusivity to avoid any form of opposition that can cause a significant setback to the initiative. However, the responsibility of nation-building is basically that of two important segments of every human society; the government and the civil society, (non-governmental organization). It is a continuous development process, which is aimed at doing what is necessary to create sustained good standard of living for the populace of the political system. This remains the objective of active Government and Civil Society Organization in any political system. An objective civil society, (not one that has been influenced by opposition political party or government) can be a profitable partner with the government in the art of nation-building. Civil society refers to the people’s own organization outside government that interacts and relates on the basis of social values and culture (Anger, 2004).

Civil society also refers to the wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, political, scientific, religious, and philanthropic considerations. Civil society organization (CSOs) therefore refers to a wide array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations, professional associations, and foundations (World Bank, N.D).

II. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

In the history of mankind, the natural man has always desired to live for self. The penchant for acquisition, use of power and control over others has been the sole intent of homo politicus. In every political system, problems of acquisition of power and authoritative allocation of value always arise. (Easton, 1965).

Often, this has caused man to desire to exist like the leviathan as espoused by Thomas Hobbes. The concept and practice of despotism, tyranny, and totalitarianism by leaders has left much to be desired by the masses. The consequence of this action is usually not in the positive direction for the state and the people of the state as well. Chaos, civil disobedience, economic downturn, shades of criminality, destitution and hangry displays are usually the order of the day. The height of political and socio-economic instability at such time is usually negatively and regrettably infectious. This was exactly the position of Nigeria after Ibrahim Babangida announced his infamous “stepping aside” which after a short while, made way for General Sani Abacha. Nigeria, under Abacha suffered internal hardship and international alienation, being subjected to pariah status by many international bodies. It took the intervention of many civil society organizations and the G34 to secure democratic government for Nigeria.

The democratic government in Nigeria (1999-dated) has not been operating without disturbing realities. Issues of lack of internal democracy, massive corruption (Financial and Administrative), electoral malpractices, politically motivated assassination, thuggery, many election cases in the courts, economic woes which impede the process of good governance have plagued the democratic rule; a situation Civil Society Organizations consider as a big threat to nation-building. The recklessness with which every segment of government in the Nigerian federation operates, negating the efforts of non-governmental organizations like Civil Society Organization, on ways to make Nigeria a better nation, has heaped more misery making Nigerians victims of proportionate and disproportionate poverty. These inconsistencies have caused hard-to-mend cracks on the foundation of our nation building.

Research Objective

The study will be guided by a broad and specific objectives. While the broad objective will seek to reveal the covert importance of the existence of effective civil society in building the Nigerian nation, the specific objectives of this study will be as follows;

- 1) To investigate the efforts of Civil Society Organizations in building the Nigeria nation.
- 2) To ascertain if Civil Society Organizations are always in alliance with the Nigeria Government in building the Nigeria nation.
- 3) Assessment of the efforts of Civil Society Organizations in building the Nigerian nation.

Research Questions

- 1) What efforts have the Civil Society Organizations in Nigeria made towards building Nigerian nation?
- 2) Is there unity of purpose between the Nigerian Government and the Civil Society Organization towards the building of the Nigerian State; Does the Nigerian government view the Civil Society Organizations as a worthy partner or intruder?
- 3) With the presence of Civil Society Organizations in Nigeria, what does Nigeria stand to gain?

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The complexity of contemporary societies and the dynamic leadership impetus needed to keep the political system afloat cannot be guaranteed unilaterally by the ‘traditional government’ alone. It is interesting to recall that the civil society organizations are not for profit maximization. They get involved in public life to fight the course of the people through synergizing with the government of the day. They act like the mouth piece of the people. They speak as a group on behalf of the masses, especially when repressive approaches are adopted by political leaders. The governments of countries especially in the developed democracies do happily welcome them, seeing them as worthy partners in nation-building. This is partly because the CSOs are a group of technically sound and research based organizations whose recommendations to governments on way out of a particularly social problem are a product of scientific research. Seeing the inevitability of crises or conflict of interest in such a pluralist society like Nigeria and the observed inability of government resolving such crises alone, it becomes germane to consider this study a strong call for both government and civil society to close ranks and salvage Nigeria. Besides, the recommendation will add administrative values to government in terms of policy and strategy in nation-building, and will also be a useful literature for subsequent studies on the subject. Furthermore, it will be a useful addition to the body of knowledge.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The study is a qualitative effort. It relied mainly on secondary source as source of data. Content analysis technique is adopted for data interpretation.

Theoretical framework and literature review

The study adopted Structural Functionalism as framework of analysis.

This theory is basically the brain-child of Almond and Howell (1966) which they construed as “the observable activities which make up a system”. As functions deal with the consequences involving objectives as

well as processes of patterns of action, structures refer to those arrangements within the system which perform the functions (Das & Choudhury 2002:40). According to Ntete-Nua (2004:143) functions deal with the consequences of action while structures refer to those arrangements, which perform functions and roles. That is to say, in a socio political setting like Nigeria, where there is work (function) to be performed, there must be structure (capable hands) to perform the function. Structural functionalism explains the interconnectedness and relationship in a political system which needs the active cooperation of the two to fix the system, which in this context means the integration of resources by Government and CSOs to build Nigeria. Furthermore, the stability and good governance expected in Nigeria is a function of synergy and unity of purpose between the Nigeria Government and the CSOs which are the two most important structures in every political and social system.

Conceptualizing civil society

It is a strong, social sacrifice for people of diverse learning without state power and resources to form a group, or different groups, not profit-oriented, ostensibly to fight the course of humanity with their knowledge, strength, time, finance and without transactional indulgence. Etymologically, civil society goes back to Aristotle's phrase "Koinonia politike", occurring in his "Politics", where it refers it to a "community" commensurate with the Greek City State (polis) characterized by a shared set of norms and ethos in which free citizens on an equal footing lived under the rule of law (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia) retrieved on https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/civil_society. It is a body of people with specific interest tilted towards actualization of natural justice, equity and good conscience. Civil society includes the family and private sphere, referred to as the "third sector of society distinct from government (Ibid) Civil society includes charities, neighborhoods, self-held schemes, international bodies like the UN or the Red Cross; religions-based pressure-groups; human rights campaigns in repressive societies, and non-government organizations improving health, education and living standards in both the developed and developing nations (BBC, 2001).

The world of civil society is transformative and service-oriented, not transactional. Technically, no human society can develop to acceptable level with only the input of the conservative or traditional government/state. The activities of civil society appear stronger and more effective in a political system than weak opposition political parties. Civil society is the realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, self-supporting, autonomous from the state and bound by the legal order or set of shared rules... It involves citizens acting collectively in a public sphere to express their interests, passion, and ideas, exchange ideas, exchange information, achieve mutual goals, make demands on the state, and hold state officials accountable. It is an intermediary entity, standing between the private sphere and the state (Diamond, 1995: 9-10). Civil Society is a strong force that can right the wrongs of the political system through fighting repression and segregation of any type. In reference to the erstwhile humiliation of the colored people in America, one could recall the action of Rosa Parks and National Association for the Advancement of the Colored People (NAACP), then oldest and largest Civil Right Organization in the USA, formed in 1909 by Moorfield Storey, Mary White Ovington, and W.E.B. DU Bois. NAACP mounted pressure on the US government after the arrest of Rosa Parks on December 1, 1955. The famous Montgomery Bus Boycott by the Montgomery chapter of NNACF and the civic activism of the masses pursuant to freedom became a thorn in the flesh of the US authorities, and the rest is emancipation. NAACP widened the scope of the protest and gave it a formal background. Not too long, the practice became outlawed in the US. According to Koffi (2005);

The hallmark of successful and stable democracies is the presence of strong and freely operating civil society in which government and civil society work together for common goals for a better future, and at the same time, civil society helps to keep government accountable.

Civil society, whose target is to fight to keep the nation stable, peaceful, maintain equality before the law, and to achieve unobstructed good governance have been described as agent of development. The claim is substantiated by the creation of United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) in 2005, which has supported projects that;

"Strengthened the voice of civil society, promotes human rights, and encourage the participation of all groups in democratic process. It is the only UN entity that has democracy in its name; the only body with primary purpose of supporting democracy, empowering civil society; and one of the youngest entities in the UN system."

According to the United Nations, the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) has its projects in seven man areas;

- 1) Community Activism
- 2) Rule of law and Human Rights
- 3) Tools for knowledge

- 4) Women's empowerment
- 5) Youth Engagement
- 6) Media and freedom of information
- 7) Strengthening civil society capacity for interaction with government (UNDEF, 2005).

Civil society has been defined as a public ethical community of free and equal citizens, under a legally defined system of rule (Aristotle, cited in Imade, 2007). However, civil society stands as an arena in which people take common actions to pursue common objectives without reward of profit or political power (Essian 2010). A look at the activities of some of the civil society organizations in Nigeria and beyond points to the correction of ills of the government, and a spirited fight to set good political and social order that can ensure good governance in the polity. This is the most cherished aspect of their paper. Despite being polysemous in nature, civil societies remain only partially understood. Even the basic descriptive information about these institutions such as their number, size, and area of activity, sources of revenue and the policy framework with which they operate is not available in any systematic way (Ghaus- Pash 2005). Civil society in Nigeria has historically been keen to national discourse and also served as an important agency of social transformation, championing the cause of political freedom, civil liberties and popular empowerment of the people both during the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial period (Adejumobi, 2005).

According to John Mills, as cited in (Okpanachi,2009) the pursuit and actualization of democratic values which are the foremost interest of civil society organizations is often considered inherently more difficult in plural states than in countries in which the society see themselves as members of the same community. He reiterated that free institutions are impossible in a country made up of different nationalities. This statement is typical of the Nigerian situation where pluralism is at its height. This natural composition of Nigerian state calls for active civil society whose social engineering efforts are expected to reduce ethnic consciousness working at the detriment of national cohesion and national unity. In describing the rise of the civil society, the third sector, Nosaze (N.D) pointed a humiliating picture of incarcerated Nigerians, languishing in various prison custodies before the birth of CLO, the action he described as "the whole affair violated every liberal sensibility and humanistic morality".

In trying to present the civil society organizations as agents of social order, growth and development, it is pertinent to observe the stand of Hegel which of course is a contrary view. Hegel as cited in Odeh, (2012), sees Civil Society as a source of conflict that can spill over into the larger society. Odeh maintains that Hegel's thesis could be supported by the fact that not every civil society works for the success of democracy, pointing out that some actually work to undermine democracy. Examples of such category of CSOs in Nigeria according to Odeh are; Oduduwa People's Congress (OPC), and the Arewa People's Congress (APC). The reason for his position may not be unconnected with the strong ethnic consciousness found to be the underlying philosophy of the two CSOs. However, the instrumentality of civil society organization towards democratic comeback in Nigeria is obviously not questionable. Many of these groups like the campaign for democracy (CD), Civil Liberties Organization (CLO) Committee for the Defense of Human Rights (CDHR), Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) etc were instrumental to the restoration of civil rule in Nigeria. It will be recalled that between 1993 and 1999, in collaboration with the Nigerian Labor Congress (NLC), these civil society groups fought the Nigerian military to a standstill (Ojo, 2011).

What does it mean to build a nation?

It is important to note the consistency required in the act of nation building. In a pluralist society like Nigeria, the task of nation building is important, however, very difficult. The corporate and successful existence of any nation depends on the successful integration of the diverse society to achieve unity in diversity. This calls for a near total integration of cultural, religious, tribal, and psychological strata of the pluralist society in order to achieve single identity which will form the bedrock of further national development. Since the state cannot be better than the citizens of the state, it becomes very germane to start the work of nation building with human development. Nation building is like a harmonization process that must be continuous and being propelled by unity of purpose. It is a systematic and well segmented process which if properly and strategically pursued and implemented is capable of setting a nation on the pedestal of development and national unity.

In defining nation-building, a warning has been issued to guard against committing the "reductionist" fallacy. However, Olalekan (2015) submits nation-building;

Can mean the systematic process of making a people who hitherto are from different cultural, ethnic, religious, racial, or national backgrounds, to feel they belong together under a nation.

Nation building is the conscious and focused application of our people's collective resources, energies, and knowledge to the task of liberating and developing the psychic and physical space that we identify as ours. It involves the development of behaviors values, language, institutions and physical structure that elucidate our history and culture, concretize and protect the present, and insure the future identity and independence of the

nation. Nation building is the deliberate, keenly directed and focused, and energetic projection of national culture, and the collective identity (Akoto 2014).It conveys the theory and practices of creating an interface between the human and material components of a nation, thus generating the “complementarities” that are capable of ensuring national socio-economic and political stability.

It is important to emphasize that nation building just do not happen by historical accident; rather they are built by men and women with vision and resolve. Nation-building is therefore, a product of conscious state craft, not happenstance. National-building is always a work-in-progress; a dynamic process in constant need of nurturing and re-invention. Nation-building never stops and true nation-builder never rests because all nations are constantly facing up to new challenges (Gambari 2008).It is about building the tangible and intangible threads that hold a political entity together and gives it a sense of purpose (Gambari, Ibid). Nation-building is a calculated, procedurally-regulated and conscious efforts usually well thought-out and implemented by selfless and development-minded leaders, strategically directed towards creating national stability in all facets of the nations life, aimed at securing sustained development and good governance for the people. It can be successful only when it is championed by leaders who do not act for self, but for national interest. Such leader on the Africa continent as Nelson Mandela of South Africa, Mou Tse Sung of China, and Abraham Lincoln of the United States of America, are a few leaders who showed engraved and selfless interest in building their respective nations.

Characteristics of civil society and its efforts towards nation-building in Nigeria

Diamond (Ibid) has provided us with some outlines of the characteristics of civil society. We shall analyze them, including its efforts towards nation building in Nigerian.

1. An organized civil society serves as a check against the excesses of government, human rights violation, abuse of the rule of law, monitoring of the application of constitutional provisions. Organized and non-partisan civil society organization anywhere in the world acts as a strong opposition to any government whose policies are found to be in dialectics to constitutionalism. Responding to the gulf that existed between the public rhetoric of the regime on human rights and the gross violations of rights by its officials, a group of Lawyers and Journalists led by Olisa Agbakoba and Clement Nwankwo founded the Civil Liberties Organization (CLO) in October 1987 ostensibly to challenge the regime’s repressive human rights record. Beginning with litigating and documenting cases of human rights abuse by the police and Military officials and exposing the conditions in prisons and police jails, the group’s successes and challenges laid the foundation for the growth of the Nigeria’s human rights Movement (Shettima and Chukwuma, 2002).

Furthermore, the Sani Abacha junta was marked with reckless and brazen human rights violation, high-handedness and violation of rule of law with impunity. Citizens were herded into prison custody without trials for political interests. Activists and seekers of their fundamental human rights enforcement like Ken Saro Wiwa and other Ogonis were guillotined by the Abacha junta without fair hearing. The state of Nigeria at such time was wrapped in absolute fear as citizens, for fear of death and unlawful incarceration, would not speak boldly against the leadership infirmities of the Abacha junta. The bad socio-political situation was compounded by General Abacha’s penchant for self succession. At such time, there were very few and actively functional civil society organizations in Nigeria. However, it took the courage and gallantry of such Civil Society Organizations like Civil Liberty Organizations (CLO), Campaigns for Democracy (CD), Committee for Defense of Human Rights (CDHR), Transition Monitoring group (TMG), to confront the excesses of the juntas up to the period of the Transition program of Abdulsalami, when TMG became very active in monitoring the democratization process in Nigeria. The efforts of these civil liberty organizations contributed immensely to the return of democratic government to Nigeria. It is also on record that the well directed persistence and vehemence of the civil society organizations in Nigeria pressured the recalcitrant Abacha junta to release many political prisoners.

2) Increase the participation and skills of all the various segments of society and instills a sense of tolerance, thrift, hard work, moderation, compromise along the various competing parties in the society. Nation building calls for injection of positive orientation and values into the society, which is expected to impact positively on the behavior and attitude of the people. Civil society does this by campaigning for citizen’s acquisition of good values and ethical orientations that can promote stable and progressive society. One wonderful thing about many of these mentioned civil society groups in Nigeria is that, their interventionist activities do cut across every stratum of the citizens’ life. They have worked on Nigerians on the areas of religious and ethnic tolerance, which is a major issue in the pluralist nature of Nigeria. Sensitization of the citizens by civil society groups on the importance of life of moderation, hard work, healthy competition among different segments of the society, and the economic attitude of saving for the rainy day has helped to enhance the general well-being of Nigerians-a feat strongly described as part of nation- building. It could be recalled that almost all the Civil Society Organizations in Nigeria had for long been reminding our leaders on the importance of saving for the rainy day. Today is the rainy day, and the nation is in need because those economic warnings were not heeded by the government.

3) It serves as an alternative to political parties and can offer a refuge for those who are shut out from their rights due to non-membership of given political parties. The Nigerian society is such that some people are not carried along in the scheme of things because of their non-membership of certain powerful organization, may be the elite stratum. This reality may lead to the violation of the fundamental human rights of citizens. Civil society organizations have posed as alternatives for citizens who are not members of any political party to have sense of belonging in the work of nation-building. For instance, civil society organizations like Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Civil Liberty Organization (CLO), Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), have provided refuge for members and non-members not accommodated by the political institutions in Nigeria. Gana Fawhemi, the late lawyer and human rights activist, fought illegality in Nigeria with strong support from many CSOs in Nigeria, including the family units and religious units.

4) It can serve as recruiting ground for, and training prospective members of the political or economic classes to enhance the quality of participants in government. In effect, it is a leadership recruitment field. Civil society is known for thoroughness and professionalism in its engagements. It is a strategic organization that is always bent on making development impact, human or material. In Nigeria, for instance, civil liberty organizations have organized trainings, workshops, and symposia for prospective political actors to inculcate professional ethics and unwavering dedication to nation building. Committee for the Defense of Human Right (CDHR) has equally trained both prospective political office seekers and political office holders on the need to respect the fundamental rights of the citizens. Most strikingly encouraging is the ability of CDHR to educate and enlighten Nigerians on the need to stand on their rights in the face of any kind of intimidation by the executive elements of the state, especially when Nigeria was under the siege of praetorianism. The Nigerian CSOs have passed much useful information to the business sector and the management of Nigeria economy like the banks, economists, bankers, ministry of Finance, budget department, as contribution towards better management of the economy. Essentially, this endeavor is to update the knowledge of the participants in government. Furthermore, the effort is capable of producing prospective employees with good leadership quality that can steer the State to the path of prosperity, unity and national development.

5) It has a role in mitigating the excesses of fundamentalist extremists and maximalist who tend to have a very narrow view of life. It also provides other alternative for negotiation within a multi-faceted society. The Nigeria society is extensively diverse and multi-cultural. The heterogeneous nature of the nation obviously explains why conflict of interests is common. Often, the agitation for interests does bring the parties to a crossroad. In Nigeria, such agitations have taken extremist dimension, thus, making the nation absolutely vulnerable to incessant threat of secession, and other security concerns. Such extremist agitation like in the Niger Delta has caused economic woes to Nigeria because of the destruction of oil installations resulting in serious shortfall in oil production. Besides, the activities of the dreaded Boko Haram militant sect in the Northeastern part of Nigeria have equally created a conflict situation that challenges development of Nigerian nation. The civil society organizations have been mediating and providing alternatives for negotiation in order to bring lasting peace in Nigeria.

According to Idumanye (2012) Civil Society is a “space” whose function is to mediate between the individual and the state. In a state like Nigeria, there are basically three segments of human society; the state/government, the business sector and the civil society which is regarded as the “third sector”. This mediation usually cuts across the political (inclusive of human rights issues), economic and socio-cultural perspectives. The strategic input of the civil society strengthens the machineries of government in terms of strategic policy initiation, implementation and evaluation. Proper execution can bring socio-economic and political stability to the nation. A typical and more recent example of Civil Society being a mediator between individual and government (not in Nigeria, though) is the case of Edward Snodden. The Amnesty International and another Civil Society Organization have set up a website named www.pardonsnodden.org to persuade President Obama to pardon Edward Snodden before he vacates office on 20th January, 2017. Civil society has been widely recognized as an essential “third” sector. **Civil Society can further improve good governance, first, by policy analysis and advocacy, second, by regulation and monitoring of state performance and the action and behavior of public officials, third, by building social capital and enabling citizens to identify and articulate their values, beliefs, civil norms and democratic practices, fourth, by mobilizing particular constituencies, particularly the vulnerable and marginalized sections of the masses to participate more fully in politics and public affairs, and fifth, by development of work to improve the wellbeing of their own and other communities (Idumange,2012).** Active civil society organization partners with the state to deliver good governance to the people. This is usually achieved in two ways; one, by lending its voice directly to the state on policies necessary for the happiness of the citizens. Two, by mobilizing, and arming the people with the basic awareness programs that will make them better participants in the political system. The wealth of

knowledge of the civil society has proved to be a strategic support to many governments, especially in the developing world.

It is important to remember that in endeavoring to guard against threat to democracy, the civil society organizations in Nigeria stood tall to defend the Nigeria democracy after the demise of President Musa Yar'Adua. Two CSOs; Save Nigeria Group and Enough is Enough Group, pressured the government of Nigeria to recognize the constitutional provision that if a sitting president dies; the vice president automatically takes over. This challenge led to the employment of "Doctrine of Necessity" which finally led to the swearing in of Vice President Goodluck Jonathan as the President of Nigeria. According to Odeh (2012) the civil society organizations in Nigeria have contributed to nation-building in the following ways;

- (1) Guarding against democratic threat
- (2) Influencing public policy
- (3) Responding to social interests/empowering citizens
- (4) Ensuring credible election.

Problems and prospect of civil society organizations in Nation building

The efforts of the Civil Society Organization in nation building have been fraught with over whelming challenges, which seem to reduce its efficacy in building the Nigeria nation. These challenges include;

1. **Government patronage:** Some Civil Society Organizations in Nigeria are directly enjoying the patronage of the State. This patronage negatively affects the civil society organization in the discharge of their duties. The patronage of government produces undue influence on the civil society. They tend to tactically support the state during conflict of interest between the state and the citizens, especially on policy matters. Due to the fact that such civil society organizations enjoy the patronage of the state, it will continue to treat the unpopular policies of the state with favorable bias instead of leveling constructive criticism to persuade the State to abandon her unpopular policy. The Nigeria Union of Journalist (NUJ) has been reported to have fallen into this category, though not for corrupt reasons. The reason for their vulnerability is its close contact with the government for correspondence and reportage work, advertisement and sundry jobs. The synergy between the state and such civil society organizations affects the quality of its activism in the state. Furthermore, such collaboration, if not objectively managed could negatively affect the vociferous and objective degree with which CSOs dissuade government from adopting bad policies.

2. **Lack of unity and cohesion:** Civil Society Organizations in Nigeria lack common voice in decision making and implementation. This bane is always cashed in on by the state to further derail the activities of the organization it considers not supportive of its policies. A critically examine of the modus operandus of the Nigerian Labor Congress (NLC), reveals it lacks the unity and cohesion capable of producing unity of purpose which will help it partner professionally and objectively with the government in nation-building. The Nigerian Labor Congress has always been enmeshed in leadership struggle both at the national and state levels. Sometimes, conflicting reports of its activities depict a disconnect between its unity and objectives. These inconsistencies open them up for government's control and ridicules.

3. **Inadequate funding:** Inadequate funding of the civil society organizations has either delayed or denied its impact in nation-building. Availability of funds will help to mobilize them to actively engage in researches that will equip them with state-of-the-art development information and strategies. It is also note worthy that development conscious state can support the funding of civil society organizations without strings attached. This is in recognition of its support in nation-building. Unfortunately, this appears not to be the case in Nigeria, and perhaps other developing nations. Owing to the fact that CSOs are non-profit organization, its funding and financial survival is always difficult.

4. **Lack of state support and partnership:** There are basically three sectors that drive a state; the government of the state, the business sector and the Civil Society Organization (third sector) of the society. Since the state cannot unilaterally build the nation, the most result-oriented decision is to support and form cohesive partnership with the civil society. The problem is; how does the state see the existence of civil society? Does the state see the civil society as partner or opposition? The answer to the question will determine whether the state will support and partner with CSOs. However, the 21st century democracy and nation building cannot work effectively without active CSOs. Furthermore, it is a near impossibility for any civil society organization to work effectively without being recognized by the state as its partner in nation building. Support and partnership in this context should be understood to mean state allowing the CSOs to freely play their roles without molestation by the state agents, as far as they operate within the ambit of the law. It also connotes that the state should respect, recognize and work with the inputs of the CSOs in policy formulation, implementation and evaluation.

5. **Corruption and personal enrichment:** Corruption, though of many types, is a common concept among the developing countries. One thing (given the Nigerian experience) is that corruption is the major problem to nation-building. Corruption could be financial, political, and administrative in nature. The bane of Nigerian

development is the corrupt attitude and aptitude of the leaders. Corruption could mean compromising the ethics and standards of an institution for personal gains. However, corporate and non-corporate corruption aim at personal enrichment and the impact is anti-nation building. Civil society organizations in Nigeria have been plagued by corrupt practices, perpetrated by the leadership. They do this by distorting rules, neglecting procedural regularity and creating administrative haze in order to have a lot of leeway for personal enrichment, against corporate interests. Corruption and quest for personal enrichment make the CSOs more transactional instead of transformative; a situation that cannot support nation-building. Some CSOs in Nigeria have been caught misappropriating the foreign financial support meant for development of critical areas of people's life. One effect of corrupt CSOs is the reduction of the quality of services to Nigerians. However, there is very strong hope that these inconsistencies and challenges will be remedied. The existence of democratic government which hopefully will get better by the passage of time is expected to understand the important roles of civil society in nation-building. When this understanding is achieved by the state, the partnership between the CSOs and the government will be more effective. Besides, seeing the effective mobilization and delivery of goods and services by the CSOs to the people, the government has been convinced of the good intension of the CSOs in nation building. This conviction is expected to encourage a partnership between government CSOs for nation-building. As more CSOs spring up to liaise with existing ones, better articulation, project execution and policy implementation in conjunction with the state will be achieved. It is therefore appropriate to observe that the success of CSOs in contributing to nation-building depends largely on their ability to secure the support and partnership with the state. Given the need for CSOs involvement in the 21st century nation building, the State cannot afford to keep the CSOs away from the exercise.

V. CONCLUSION

The need for civil society organizations in every political system cannot be over-emphasized. From the Nigeria context, at least from independence to date, civil societies of various kinds have intervened for the citizens each time government goes unduly tough on the citizens. The civil society organizations have been regularly engaged in the act of mediating between the people and state on issues of human rights, credible elections, infrastructural and social development, rural development, policy formulation and implementation. Others include, rule of law, constitutional amendment, legal reforms thought to strengthen democracy, economic and labor matter domestic and foreign issues. It is very important to recall that three years after Nigeria's flag independence from Britain (1963), the Nigerian CSO student body in collaboration with other professional bodies picketed widely, calling for the abrogation of Nigeria-Anglo defense pact. The force behind such success was the CSO. Nation-building being a gradual and continuous process demands updated strategies as new challenges of good governance confront the state from time to time.

The most important function of the state is nation-building. Thus, the success of every political dispensation is measure by the vibrant economy, social justice, security of life and properly, increase in employment and job security, rule of law, fundamental human right, stability in the labor sector and the quality of life (standard of living) of the citizens. The achievement of these factors remains the cardinal objectives of active civil society organizations and that of a responsible and responsive government. The quantity and quality of work that awaits the state and civil society organizations in nation-building calls for strong synergy, trust, and integration of resources in order to achieve such feat.

VI. RECOMMENDATION

In view of the importance of civil society in nation-building, the study recommends as follows;

1. The state should accept the civil society organizations as worthy partners in nation-building, while the civil society organizations should as well accept to work with government. This will encourage integration of ideas, synergy and unity of purpose which will aid national transformation. In this case, the state should allow the CSOs to be represented in the executive agencies of the state, such as; the EFCC, INEC, SON, ICPC etc.
2. The civil society groups should regularly engage in research and development (R&D) ventures to find the most cost-effective and reliable strategies for nation-building. This quality will draw governments' attention to their roadmap to nation-building.
3. The state should be courageous enough to be part of the funding of active civil society organizations since they are part of the think tank usually involved in the strategic planning of the state. With adequate funding, CSOs will perform better.
4. The civil society organizations should run open door policy to accommodate the views of individual citizens. Professional citizens are capable of being the source of strategic initiative to the CSOs. This can be effective if the non-member's views are accepted.
5. Civil society groups in Nigeria should partner with international counterparts especially from the developed countries information and intelligence sharing, not only on financial assistance. This will help them to be

regularly updated on how best to execute the project of nation building. They should think ahead of the state in order to remain relevant in nation-building.

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