Sapientia Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Development Studies (SGOJAHDS), Vol.3 No.2 June, 2020; p.g. 402 – 411; ISSN: 2695-2319 (Print); ISSN: 2695-2327 (Online)

POLITICS OF ETHNIC IDENTITY: EMERGENCE AND PROLIFERATION OF ETHNIC MILITIAS IN NIGERIA

CHUKWUEMEKA NWOSU, PhD
Department of History and International Studies
Faculty of Humanities
Imo State University, Owerri
Phone No: +2348037112023
EMAIL: barrchukwuemekanwosu@yahoo.com

Abstract
Politics of ethnic identity has become the order of the day in Nigeria since the return of civil rule in 1999; and it has resulted in the emergence and proliferation of ethnic militias in Nigeria. Before the 1990s, ethnic militias were indeed unknown to Nigerian politics, except for the Skirmishes of the Adaka Boro rebellion of 1966 in the Niger Delta area and whose activities were not only perfunctory as well as short-lived. Ethnic militias are essentially youth based groups established for the purpose of protecting and advancing the parochial interests of their ethnic groups, and whose activities sometimes involves the use of violence. In another genre, ethnic militia is the extreme form of ethnic agitation for self-determination, as various groups assume militant posture and gradually metamorphose into militia groups, each of which bear an ethnic identity and purpose to act as the machinery through which the desires of its people are sought to be realized. Also ethnic militia has been defined as an irregular or paramilitary group usually consisting of civilians who might have received some form of informal military training and are armed with small arms and light weapon. Nigeria has been described as suffering from "Crisis of Independence, Crisis of Government, Crisis of Development and Crisis of Indiscipline (electoral and otherwise)". During 1999-2010, the critical press and other publications saw Nigeria as a failed, failing or wailing state. There was equally inequality in the distribution of the federal cake to the diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria especially the Igbo who lost the Nigeria-Biafra War in 1970 despite the "No Victor No Vanquished" phraseology by General Yakubu Gowon. Also affected by the marginalization were the minorities in the Nigerian state. It was against this backdrop that the emergence and proliferation of ethnic militia became prevalent.

Keywords: Politics, Ethnic Identity, Emergence, Proliferation, Militia.

Introduction

Politics of ethnic identity has become the order of the day in Nigeria since the return of civil rule in 1999, and it has resulted in the emergence and proliferation of ethnic militias in Nigeria. Before the 1990s, ethnic militias were indeed unknown to Nigerian politics, except for the skirmishes of the Adaka Boro rebellion of 1966 in the Niger Delta area and whose activities were not only perfunctory as well as short-lived.

Ethnic militias are essentially youth based groups established for the purpose of protecting and advancing the parochial interests of their ethnic groups, and whose activities sometimes involves the use of violence (Adejumobi, (2002). In another genre, ethnic militia is the extreme form of ethnic agitation for self-determination, as various groups assume militant posture and gradually metamorphosed into militia groups, each of which bear an ethnic identity and

purpose to act as the machinery through which the desires of its people are sought to be realized (2006). Also ethnic militia has been defined as an irregular or paramilitary group usually consisting of civilians who might have received some form of informal military training and are armed with small arms and light weapon (Sesay, et al).

Nigeria has described as suffering from "Crisis of Independence, Crisis of Government, Crisis of Development, and Crisis of Indiscipline (electoral and otherwise)" (Tamuno, 2011:5). During 1999-2010, the critical press and other publications saw Nigeria as a failed, failing or wailing state (Ajayi, 2009). There was equally inequality in the distribution of the federal cake to the diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria especially the Igbo who lost the Nigeria-Biafra War, in 1970 despite the "No Victor No Vanquished" phraseology by General Yakubu Gowon. Also affected by marginalization were the minorities in the Nigerian State. It was against this backdrop that the emergence and proliferation of ethnic militias became common and prevalent.

The main thrust of this paper is to assess the emergence and proliferation of ethnic militias, their activities and the consequences on Nigeria.

Emergence and Proliferation of Ethnic Militias in Nigeria

Infact, as earlier stated except for the evanescent Adaka Boro-led rebellion of 1966 in the Niger Delta, ethnic militias were largely unknown, to Nigerian politics, before the 1990s. Thus, due to combination of factors, socio-economic and political, ethnic militias emerged and proliferated at such an alarming dimension that they and their activities became a dominant and increasingly vexatious aspect of the nation's politics and existence, as from the 1990s onwards.

In Nigeria, politics of ethnic identity became an underlying factor in the emergence and proliferation of ethnic militias. Besides, an enduring sense of national identity and unity is still missing among Nigerians, in spite of the official adoption of federalism since 1954. A sizeable proportion of Nigerians feel disappointed and betrayed by corrupt local, state as well as federal government officials. Maladministration at all levels have in fact produced a situation that promotes ethnic identity politics. Undoubtedly, the age-long triumvirate struggle for power among the Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa majority ethnic groups have entrenched recurring protestations against exclusion and marginalization such that the Hausas have become puissant and hackneyed as the monopolizes of political power and the Yoruba and Igbo as the beneficiaries of Western education. The superabundance of the minority ethnic groups in Nigeria, and who are largely on the receiving end of poor governance and contest, remains bitter and hurt in terms of status as second class nationals. Worse still, the political elite have vested interests in promoting the politics of ethnic identity because it re-directs focus from fundamental challenges of statehood and the inadequacies of individuals to a blame game that stereotypes the various ethnic groups (*Crisis Group Africa Report*, 2006).

Indeed the prevailing background above gave a boost to the formation and emergence of ethnic militias as well as similar organizations as a reaction to the failure to enthrone equitable distribution of power, resources, and social justice among its constituent units in the Nigerian state. In the reconstruction of Nigeria history, the post independence era has been dominated

by military rule that repressed and suppressed civil society groups and the press they perceived as the bulwark of pro-democracy struggle. Put differently, the protracted military rule was the key factor that facilitated the emergence and proliferation of ethnic militias in Nigeria. The *Crisis Group Africa Report* (2006:15) contended that:

> Ethnic militias emerged in the 1990s as civil society struggled with the emotional, psychological and the financial fatigue that accompanied years of combating unchecked military rule, especially during the brutal reign of General Sani Abacha.

A Schismatic History of Ethnic Militias

In fact, ethnic militias and their activities have become widespread across Nigeria, since the commencement of the new democratic dispensation in 1999. Writing Keynote Address: Nigeria at 50: Gaudeamus Igitur? Tamuno (2011:5) contended that:

> I was invited to deliver that National Silver Jubilee Anniversary Lecture by a military regime…but, by the time I gave it, his government had been overthrown by another headed by a military president…Both leaders gave me absolute freedom to choose my topic and, in the latter case, complete freedom of expression. I then spoke on "Nigeria: Its People and Its Problems" Twenty five years later, I do not want to repeat myself, though core issues discussed then are still with us and, so far unresolved. Some of the core issues I raised then dealt with what I called "Crisis of Independence, crisis of government, Crisis of Development and Crisis of Indiscipline (electoral and otherwise)".

In the mist of inexorable change, in fact, one had every reason to feel that any doctrine on Sameness or Repeatability, unlike experiments and observations in the Natural Sciences, was in serious doubt so far as History is concerned. Although much water would pass under the bridge, one event after another, in history that does emphasize the uniqueness of historical events in time and place. More so, that element of constant change we have to reflect on in our historiography. This was the background to politics of ethnic identity and the emergence and proliferation of ethnic militias in Nigeria. It is cumbersome to determine their number or generalize their aims, although we are going to make an attempt here to discuss the most organized ones in the Nigerian environment.

The main theme of this paper is to examine the influence of ethic militias to national development and nation building in Nigeria. In other words, the work will assess the effect of the emergence and proliferation of ethnic militias in Nigeria with special reference to National development and Nation building.

MOVEMENT FOR THE ACTUALIZATION OF THE SOVEREIGN STATE OF BIAFRA (MASSOB)

The acronym MASSOB, mean, Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra: simply put MASSOB was a separatist movement. MASSOB was formed on the 13 September, 1999, with the main objective of reanimating the erstwhile Secessionist State of Biafra which was proclaimed by Lt. Col. Chukwuemeka Odumegbu Ojukwu, as an

independent sovereign state of the name and title of "The Republic of Biafra" on May 30, 1967. Over 30,000 Igbo civilians as well as other Easterners were massacred by the military-led mob in Northern Nigeria between September 18 and 24, 1966. Consequently, Easterners that are more than a million who were displaced persons returned to the region mutilated, maimed as well as demented for life. The magnitude, scope and execution of the Killings attained genocidal dimensions. In fact, the dead were returned headless, mangled, and naked with their throats ripped off.

Against this backdrop, MASSOB has often been involved in incessant confrontations with the Nigerian State and the police, and more often resulting in a plethora of deaths on both sides. Chief Raph Uwazuruike, on the 27th May, 2000, mobilized over ten thousand youths in Aba as well as made an attempt to launch a sovereign state of Biafra with its national anthem, currency, flag as well as its own constitution. He contended that MASSOB was established to provide protection for the Igbo against dangerous attacks, particularly by the operators of Sharia Laws in Kaduna state in Northern Nigeria. Between December 2000 and April 2001, the group had bitter encounters with the Police following the seizure of North-bound fuel tankers by MASSOB youths in reaction against alleged imbalance in the distribution of petroleum products in the country to the detriment of the southeast (*Nigeriafirst.org*, 2006).

Furthermore, MASSOB on the 26th of August, 2004, mobilized the Igbo people in a civil protest that expected them, as well as the cessation of all commercial activities as well as closed all offices from carrying out their normal duties. The clarion call on the Igbo was acceded to by a tumultuous large numbers of Igbo across the country thereby grinding commercial activities to a standstill during the period under survey. The organized another mass protests in various Nigerian cities in opposition against the arrest and detention of its leader Chief Raph Uwazurike and other members of MASSOB. The group at various times implemented rules on residents of states considered to be Igbo states or Biafran territories. Within the Igbo states, for instance, it implemented the official pump price of fuel in filling stations. In the commercial city of Onitsha where house rent was becoming overwhelmingly exorbitant, MASSOB pegged house rent for landlords. Those landlords who failed to comply with MASSOB order and accordingly defaulted were abducted and severely dealt with. It also outlawed the census exercise of 2006, contending that these were Biafran territories and as such Igbo should not be counted as Nigerians. Thus, those Igbo who disobeyed the order were given the beating of their life. By refusing to be counted, many Igbo in non-Igbo speaking states gave their solidarity to MASSOB by refusing to be enumerated. Lastly, the militia took on the maintenance of security in Onitsha, and the settlement of disputes between warring groups across Anambra State (Obianyo, 2007).

The movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) under the leadership of Comrade Uchenna Madu has berated the British High Commissioner, Mr. Paul Arkwright for allegedly kicking against the restoration of Biafra. The group's reaction followed Arkwright's statement, saying the British government would not support secession or breakup of Nigeria (*Daily Sun* Newspaper, 2017). Madu, in a release, said MASSOB was surprised that a learned man like Arkwright who knows that Biafra agitators have right for freedom of speech should also know that self-determination is guaranteed in the United Nations Charter on Human and Peoples Right, to which Nigeria is a signatory. According to

Comrade Uchenna Madu, nobody can stop Biafra because God, history and humanity are on our side, Biafra revolution is indestructive (*Daily Sun Newspaper*, 2017).

Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) is a group that leads and calls for Biafrans' freedom from Nigeria. Its main aim is to create an independent state for the people of Old Eastern Region of Nigeria through referendum. The Indigenous People of Biafra was founded in 2012 by Nnamdi Kanu, who has resurfaced the issue of independence of the Indigenous Biafran Population from Nigeria. The group has issued calls for a peaceful settlement of their grievances through a referendum in the Nigerian States that were part of the old eastern region.

Infact supporters of Biafra independence are from the Igbo, Izon (Ijaw), Anang, Igbanke, Ishekiri, Urobo, Igala, Idoma, and other ethnic groups within the map of defunct Biafra State (Mahr, et al 2019). Also, IPOB claims that Biafrans are marginalized by the government in Abuja through lack of resource distribution, poor investment, and an unfair heavily militarized presence in the east. The group rose to prominence after previous Biafran Independence Organizations weakened. However, the Nigerian government has been cracking down on IPOB members who peacefully protested due to Kanu's arrest and incarceration notwithstanding various courts' rulings for his release.

Biafra had previously existed as an Independent Republic declared by Lieutenant Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu for three years, 1967 through 1970. Thus, the result of tensions between Biafra and the federal government resulted in the Nigerian Civil War that went on for three years. Moreover, there were an estimated one to 3.5 million deaths that were heavily civilian causalities caused by starvation and death on the side of Biafra. In this, regard, in 1970, the Biafran forces surrendered through the armistice brokered by the defunct OAU now AU.

Undoubtedly, the IPOB supporters have cited historical events such as the 2016 election of President Donald Trump and Britains vote to exit the European Union as proof of international support for "self-determination" (Wikipedia, Http://www.ipob.org; https://ipobinusa.org, 2016). According to many sources, Donald Trump's Victory provides hope for the IPOB group in their ability to secede from Nigeria. Trumps political interests are in line with supporting Biafra, because of oil pursuits. U.S. oil company outputs in Nigeria have been cut by militants in the Niger Delta who have continually attacked pipelines. IPOB, therefore figures contend that it is within the United States economic interest to support the Biafran secessionist movement due to agitations in the region although, as of today Trump has made no public statement in support of Biafran self-determination.

Amnesty international released a report detailing that countless IPOB protesters were killed between the 29th through 30th of May 2016, during a governmental operation wanting to prevent IPOB members marching from Nkpor Motor Park to a rally (Maya, *Special Report*). More so, the Nigerian army claims that they were acting in self-defence, and the death count lies at five instead of fifty. These killings have not been investigated by Nigeria, despite urgings from Amnesty International. The editor of pro-Biafran media outlet, 'Voice of Biafra' Nnabuike Nnadede stated that the Igbo people suffer from a lack of resources and investment

from the Nigerian government. The main reason for their protests was because they want the opportunity to vote for independence.

The Bakassi Boys

Thus, in response to the increasing menace of armed robbery in major markets in South-East Nigeria, particularly Ariaria International Market, Aba, by persons tagged "Mafia", the Bakassi Boys emerged. Indeed, the name Bakassi was derived from an area of the Ariria Market that was so-called, because like the Nigerian-Cameroon border, used to be the source of bitter rivalry between two local governments in Abia State. Following the mass robbery, rape, and killings orchestrated by the "Mafia" during their invasion of the Bakassi section of the market in July 1990, some youths, particularly the shoemakers mobilized and organized themselves into a resistance force against such criminal activities (*Nigeriafirst.org*, 2006:2).

From the outset, the traders themselves funded the group their efforts and aid from the state government as well as some "well-meaning individuals," who made voluntary donations. In 1990, it was estimated that an initial numerical strength of about five hundred youths and middle aged men and by 2001, the number had increased considerably. After they had successfully checkmated the excesses of the "Mafia", the Bakassi won substantial public applaud and acclamation. Further successes in Aba and elsewhere in the southeast conferred general acceptability on the militia so much that the former Governor of Anambra State, Chinwoke Mbadinuju integrated them into the states security system under the name Anambra Vigilante Services with the official approval of the state legislature (Babawale, 2001:4).

Without due regard for the rule of Law constituted a substantial source of concern for all and sundry, given the seemingly unlimited puissant and incontestable and indiscriminate execution of suspects by the militia Bakassi Boys.

Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND)

The acronym MEND means Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta. In January 2006, MEND emerged with an increasingly militant and radical demand by the Niger Delta peoples for resource control, self-determination and unmitigated secession. Mend has operated a constantly changing agglomeration of Niger Delta groups, from the beginning, some of which are manifestly committed to the struggle against persistent economic underdevelopment, environmental pollution and political marginalization of the region and its people. In Delta state alone, a study conducted in 2007 discovered 48 recognizable groups, having over 25,000 members with an arsenal of over 10,000 weapons. It further gave an estimate of about 60,000 members of armed groups in the Niger Delta as a whole (Asuni, 2009:3).

With coherent strategies as well as content for the conservative leaders it perceives as traitors of the Niger Delta cause, MEND became radicalized and for its astuteness in terms of its tactics. In a bid to achieve its demands and aspirations for compensation for environmental degradation, local control of oil wealth as well as the release of their leader, Asari-Dokubo, the militia launched simultaneous or continuous discharge of firearms on oil installations causing a reduction in Nigeria's oil output by about 25% in February, 2006. However, the group kidnapped nine expatriate oil workers and after a lot of entreaties the foreign oil

workers were released in March and threatened fresh fusillade of attacks on oil installations if their terms, conditions and warranties are not met. The militia group detonated a car bomb in a military barracks in Port-Harcourt, River State Killing two people as well as seriously wounding six persons on the 19 April, 2006. They have carried out their operations with substantial media and technical sophistication and an advanced complex fire power. It also succeeded in pushing crude oil price to seventy dollars per a barrel, through its threats of attack delivered through email. Similarly, the Port-Harcourt car bomb, which was its first incursion into urban areas, was detonated by cell phone (*Crisis Group Africa Report*, 2006).

Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP)

The Acronym MOSOP, mean, Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People. In 1990, MOSOP was found with the objective of achieving political autonomy as well as partaking in the greater share of oil revenue derived from Ogoniland for Ogoni people. MOSOP demanded for a fair share of Ogoni resources to be used for Ogoni development, through the Ogoni Bill of Rights proclaimed in 1990 under the Leadership of Ken Saro-Wiwa. The Ogoni people also asked for self-determination among others. The youths of Ogoni constitute a substantial number of members and they are an oil-producing minority ethnic group of Rivers state in Nigeria. The oil minorities increased their opposition to domination by the major nationalities and devised new strategies aimed at intensifying their claims and grievances against the Nigerian state, and this development was sequel to the federal government take-over of complete ownership and control of oil, and the stifling of the derivation principle as from 1969. Against this background, MOSOP therefore developed a well defined ethnic agenda and worked modalities and solid organization for pursuing their goals.

MOSOP, through the avenue of various global bodies and conferences, and International Syposium (sic), successfully pushed the Ogoni case to the front burner of global discourse (Obi, 2000: 87-88); and also created awareness with regards to the environmental degradation caused by oil mining companies and emphasized the marginalization of the Ogoni people and community. The MOSOP group since the early 1990s organized peaceful rallies against the oil companies, especially Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), and the Federal Government. The protests soon took a violent dimension, because their aspirations did not achieve the desired objectives, and consequently resulted in the blockading of oil installation, sabotage of oil pipelines, physical assault and kidnapping of oil company workers. The protests which resulted in or assumed violent dimension led to cataclysmic clashes between the Ogoni people and the country's security agencies, and which left in its wake widespread killing of protesting Ogoni people. A good example was the state repression of MOSOP-led Ogoni uprising of 1990-1993 during which whole villages were completely sacked by the military (Obi,2000:88). In November, 1995, the Sani Abacha Military regime drew public outrage and brought substantial international attention and focus on the pathetic, traumatic and jarring experience of the Ogoni people as a result of the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa alongside eight other members of the Ogoni leadership.

Egbesu Boys of Africa

The Egbesu Boys of Africa derives the name "Egbesu" from the mythical god of revenge of the Ijaws who are the dorminant ethnic group in the Niger Delta scattered across Bayelsa, Delta, Rivers, Ondo, Edo, Akwa-Ibom states and up to the present Benue State in areas like

Wurukum, Wadata and North Bank Makurdi. Thus, this militia is the military wing of the Ijaw Yational Congress (IYC) which is the avant-garde of the Niger Delta struggle against economic exploitation as well as marginalization by the multinational oil companies and the Nigerian state.

As a result of the Kaiama Declaration of 11th December, 1998, the Egbesu Boys came to prominence. However, there were earlier proclamations such as the Ogbia Charter and Ogoni Bill of Rights which preceded the Kaiama Declaration and it represented a modest articulation as well as presentation of resource control. By that declaration, the Ijaw people proclaimed, sharpened and popularized the term resource control and therefore prepared the grounds for the current debate on the issue (Oronto, D.).

Undoubtedly, the declaration issued an ultimatum, in the immediate period, for the instant withdrawal of all military personnel from the Niger Delta region. Furthermore, the Egbesu Boys proclaimed that any oil company that made use of the security services of the Nigerian Armed Forces personnel would be perceived as an enemy of the Ijaw people and society. In the course of its struggle against ecological degradation of Ijaw communities and the exploitation of their resources by the federal government, the Egbesu militia has been alleged to have sabotaged oil installations, kidnapped oil company staff, and invaded police stations (Babawale, 2001:5). The Egbesu Boys and the Nigerian Armed forces encounter led to the destruction of many lives and property in Ogoniland.

The Odua Peoples Congress (OPC)

The Odua Peoples Congress, according to its founding President, Dr. Fredrick Faseun, was established to defend the rights of every Yoruba person on earth (Babawale, 2001:4). OPC emerged in August 1994 as a result of General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida's annulment of the June 12, 1993 Presidential elections widely believed to have been won by Chief M.K.O. Abiola, and OPC was considered to be one of the most radical groups in Nigeria. As a result, many of the Yoruba people perceived the annulment as evidence that the Hausa/Fulani dominated military regime in Nigeria were determined to perpetuate their marginalization and were not ready to relinquish power. The OPC, in its determined effort to pursue its avowed objective has most times been enmeshed in confrontation with the Nigerian government. The catalogue of confrontations between the OPC and the Nigerian Police overtime showed that both sides have suffered a great deal of causalities during their clashes. In Ilesha, Osun State in October, 1999, there were clashes between police and the OPC militias. In the Ajegunle area of Lagos, in the month of October similar skirmishes occurred in which 23 persons died. A clash, earlier in July of 1999, an encounter between the OPC and Hausa settlers in Shagamu, Ogun State, which led to the death of 50 people, and the Hausas in Kano embarked on a retaliatory attack in which over 100 persons died. The OPC and Hausa traders in the Mile 12 area of Lagos state had another confrontation in which about 114 persons also died. The litany of clashes continued, in October, 2000, between the OPC and Hausas in Apapa, Agege, Oworonshoki and many other parts of Lagos state in which over 100 persons died. Earlier in January, a clash between OPC militias and the police led to the death of the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) of Bariga, Lagos state, Mr. Afolabi Amoo (Babawale, 2001:4).

The Influence of Ethnic Militias on National Development and Nation Building

It is trite to state that the influence of ethnic militias as well as their activities on national development and nation building can be challenging for any given state whatsoever. On the one hand, ethnic militias have constituted themselves into pressure groups in Nigeria. Against this background the government of Nigeria oftentimes were of the view that they are terrorist or criminal organizations and as such, through legislation, have attempted to ban or proscribe their activities, viewing it, to be counterproductive to good governance and the growth of economic development. Although, this paper is not designed to promote lawlessness in any way, however, posits that the increase in ethnic militias in Nigeria is an indication that there are issues the government needs to get right or address without further delay. There has been constant call for the Nigerian government to restructure the affairs of the country; and governance, so as to address a lot of imbalances in the federal system.

In Nigeria, there had been incessant killings and destruction of lives and property in different parts of the country for instance, in Southern Kaduna State in Zango Kataf, where there appears to be ethnic cleansing. There had been a lot of clarion call to stop the killings and Carnage. The police have not lived up to its calling to protect lives and properties. It is in circumstances like this, that ethnic militias try to take care of the security challenges facing the country. This is especially true of Lagos and Anambra States, where the OPC and Bakassi Boys respectively, successfully reversed the trend, due to the overwhelming fear and insecurity among the people in these areas.

The activities of the ethnic militias undermine the sovereignty, integrity as well as the legitimacy of the Nigerian nation-state. Their activities had negative impact on nation-building as well as national development. Their activities are designed to represent ethnic and sectional interests, which are inimical to the unity and progress of the nation-state called Nigeria.

More so, their role equally undermine fundamental human rights, and constitutes threats to the rule of the law, and consequently, resulting in the breakdown of law and order. These ethnic militias have been involved in the illegal arrests, prosecution as well as execution of innocent unsuspecting citizens without the police being able to bring the culprits to book.

In the Niger Delta area there had been violent agitations by ethnic militias operating with light and heavy weapons with threats to federal government for secession as well as call for self-determination, due to the imbalance in the sharing of the oil revenue. The activities of the ethnic militias had impacted negatively with respect to political and socio-economic impact on Nigeria's nation-building and national development.

Furthermore, violent agitations by ethnic militias have cost the Nigerian government a whooping capital flight, in terms of bunkering, disruption of oil exploration, vandalizing of the oil pipelines and facilities. Incessant escalation of violence became the order of the day in the Niger Delta region. During these periods of violent agitations, expatriates working for oil companies were kidnapped and ransoms running into millions of naira were usually demanded by the abductors; and in some cases the expatriates lose their lives to these ethnic militias who are determined to ensure that the Nigeria economy is crippled. All these cataclysmic upheavals caused by the activities of ethnic militias in the Niger Delta region in

particular, and Nigeria in general, affects the socio-economic development and leads to political instability in Nigeria, thereby affecting nation building and national development.

Conclusion

The joy and optimism felt by Nigerians at independence fluttered away on account of the ineptitude of the leadership, corruption, regime profligacy and the rabid use and abuse of power and privileges. In conclusion therefore, it is against the backdrop of regime profligacy, the use and abuse of power which resulted in the marginalization of most ethnic groups by Hausa/Fulani government in Nigeria; and resulted in the emergence of ethnic militia was the extreme form of ethnic agitation for self-determination, as various groups assumed militant posture and gradually metamorphosed into militia groups, each of which bear an ethnic identity and purpose to act as the machinery through which the wishes and aspirations of its people were sought to be realized. And these anomalies in the Niger Delta by ethnic militias constituted a serious threat to Nigeria's security, democracy, sovereignty, national development and nation building.

REFERENCES

Adejumobi, S. (2002). "Ethnic Militia Groups and the National Question in Nigeria," Social Science Research Council Quarterly (Brooklyn, SSRC).

Ajayi, O. (2009). Nigeria: Africa's failed Asset? Ibadan, 2009, Passim

Asuni, J.B. (2009). Understanding the Armed Groups of the Niger Delta (New York: CFR, 2009).

Babawale, T. (2001). "The Rise of Ethnic Militias Delegitimisation of the state, and the Threat to Nigerian Federalism.

Badmus, I.A. (2006). "Ethnic Militia Movements and the Crisis of Political Order in Post Military Nigeria".

Crisis Group Africa Report (2006), Nigeria's faltering Federal Experiment (Dakar/Brussels.

Daily Sun Newspaper (2017). "MASSOB berates British High Commissioner over Biafra" in Daily Sun, Friday, December 15, 2017.

Emmanuel Maya, "Special Report: Inside the Massive extrajudicial Killings in Nigeria's South-East", *Premium Times* Nigeria. Retrieved 13-05-2016.

Mahr, Oluwatosin Adeshokan, Krista, "The Dream of Biafra lives on in underground Nigerian radio broadcasts," latimes.com. Retrieved 2019-05-13.

Nigeriafirst.org, (2006). Ethnic Militia Groups of Nigeria Societies.

Obi, C.I. (2000)."Oil Minority Rights and the Question of Democratic Stability in Nigeria" in Journal of Cultural Studies, Vol. 2, No. 1.

Obianyo, N.E. (2007). "Citizenship and Ethnic Militia Politics in Nigeria-Marginlization or Identity Question?- The Case of MASSOB" Paper presented at the 3rd Global Conference on Pluralism Inclusion and Citizenship, Salzburg, Austria.

Oronto, D. "A Community Guide to Understanding Resource Control", Urbobo Historical Society.

Sesay A., et al (eds.), Ethnic Militias and the Future of Democracy in Nigeria.

Tamuno, N.Tekena (2011). "Keynote Address: Nigeria at 50: Gaudeamus Igitur?" in Bawuro M. Barkindo, Folasade and Phillip Akpen (eds.), Nigeria at Fifty: Issues and Challenges in Governance (Makurdi: Aboki Publishers).

Wikipedia http://www.ipob.org/; https:www.ipobinusa.org/ 13-05-2016.