



Ikpakya

The Unifier

A PREMIER PUBLICATION OF
AFO YOUTH MOBILITY
DECEMBER, 2022

Featuring among others:



Reminiscences & Prospects
with AYM Grand Patron,
The Odagyo of Eloyi,
Alh. Abubakar O. E. Kana



Meet the Pan-Afonist,
Major General
Assoc. Prof. Shu'aibu Ibrahim



Footprint for the Success
of Afo Youth with
Hon. Muh'd Abubakar Muh'd
SSA to Nas. State Governor

Uniting the Afo Nation through a panacean discourse



NATIONAL ANTHEM



**Arise, O compatriots
Nigeria's call obey
To serve our fatherland
With love and strength and faith
The labour of our heroes past
Shall never be in vain
To serve with heart and might
One nation bound in freedom
Peace and unity.**

**Oh God of creation
Direct our noble cause
Guide thou our leaders right
Help our youth the truth to know
In love and honesty to grow
And live in just and truth
Great lofty heights attain
To build a nation where peace
And justice shall reign.**

Editor's Desk

Ikpakyá (the Unifier)

The maiden publication of the Afo Youth Mobility better called “Ikpakyá” (the Unifier) is in a class of its own. Although it is the first of its kind, this edition is a masterpiece of writing boasting top-notch articles and professional publications on contemporary issues in the Afo Nation and other topic of interest not only to Afo people but even those who desire to know more about the Afo Nation. Interestingly, the articles are in line with the aims and objectives of Afo Youth Mobility and the prime desire of the association to forge a path of unity for the Afo Nation. Afo Youth Mobility given birth to in the earlies of 2020 was conceived with the credence of raising an institution that is all encompassing in scope. Operating with its mechanical exuberance and an augmented wisdom from the elders and elites, AYM sets out to address the aching contemporary issues depleting the principal substance of unity, peace and development within the Afo Nation.

The selling point of this edition is unarguably the juicy interview granted to the journal by the Senior Special Assistant to the Nasarawa State Governor, Hon. Muhammad Abubakar, an exemplary Afo Youth. The interview presents footprints to the Afo Youth as it sets out to restructure their mindset towards being productive to their respective community and charting a course of sustainable development for the Afo Nation.

Besides, this edition partly revolves around nostalgic feelings as it features reminisces from an Elder Statesman, Alh. Abubakar O. E Kana, the Odagyo of Eloyi as well as the Prospects of the Afo Nation.

Anybody who is privileged to get a copy of this journal should not miss out on the anecdote that chronicles the life of the Maj. Gen. Shuaibu Ibrahim, a pan “Afonist” and his legacies of service to humanity.

Put simply, “Ikpakyá”, which is an Afo term for “The Unifier” is devoted to fusing the disjunct sections of Afo communities that was authoritatively compelled to separate by political differences, chieftaincy and land disputes, and the shameful nomenclature dichotomy. Not only does Ikpakyá unites, with its armoury of resourceful articles like “The Role of Skills Acquisition on Youths Unemployment in Afo Nation”, it extends to offering its own quota in addressing holistically the Chieftaincy Tussle and Political Quagmire in Afo communities. Ikpakyá also in a stride to unravel tangled knots in up-to-date issues spoke on the effect of open defecation, promotion of girl child education, moderation of the menace of drug abuse with Afo Nation as a case study and health hazards of skin bleaching, among.

By the time you finish your perusal of this premier edition which qualifies it for the quintessence of the year, you cannot help exclaiming “you live and learn”. Read! It is but an appeal not an order.

YUSUFIBRAHIM KANA
Chief Editor



AFO YOUTH MOBILITY; FOR A UNITED AFO NATION.

John F. Kennedy once said; ask not what your nation can do for you, ask what you can do for your nation. On that premise, Afo Youth Mobility (AYM) was conceptualized and established on 23 April, 2020. As the name implies, AYM is a forum encompassing the Afo youths from all the regions of the Afo Nation; the *eki* regions to the *ambu* regions and administratively, from Udege Development Area to some parts of Loko Development Area and Agwada Development Area.

The association was formed on the ideology that "we must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools." In deed, Afo Youth Mobility was conceived to fortify the bonds between kinsmen, to preach the spirit of togetherness. Nothing can be achieved without unity and that is one of the major aim of the association, to foster and enhance unity amongst Afo youths in particular and the Afo community as a whole.

Familial ties are restored and friendships are strengthened when unity is a priority. Thus, at AYM, the goal is to bring kinsmen together through organizing seminars/workshops, outreach, round table dialogues and other unity enhancing activities.

In addition, Afo Youth Mobility seeks to uphold, revive and strengthen the Afo Cultural heritage including our values and traditions. The Afo people had a distinct way of administering justice and festivals that showed the richness of culture. They were adorned in beautiful cultural apparels. However, there is now a disconnect with the roots and the worth of an individual is tied to his/her roots. Hence, AYM is committed with reconnecting the Afo people back to its roots, their is no identity loss.. Suffice to say AYM intends to encourage those beautiful ideals of the Afo people and dissuade some of the archaic barbaric acts.

Similarly, the creation of awareness is

sacrosanct to the existence of AYM. There are so many sensitive issues that has impeded the growth of Afo nation. Our youths and elders have taken to consumption of psychotropic substances for succor. You find some people still defecating in the open and exhibiting other unhygienic practices. Politics of regression, of do or die has come to stay on Afo lands. Education especially that of the girl child is yet to stand on its feet. To create awareness is to liberate, to free from the shackles of doom and misinformation. That's yet another mandate of Afo Youth Mobility.

Moreover, Afo Youth Mobility is equally receptive to the plights of the youths, their clamour for gainful employment and to be productive. That is why AYM is championing the cause of the Afo Youth. Malala Yousafzai said, "let us raise our voice not so that we can shout but so that those without a voice can be heard." Hence, AYM is the voice of the Afo youth, advocating on their fundamental human rights.

Interestingly, the world has moved on. The Afo Nation cannot afford to be left behind. Technology has taken over almost everything. Farming is mechanised and innovative. Jobs are becoming digital. Afo Youth Mobility seeks to ensure the Afo people are in sync with current trends brought by cutting edge technology. It is a responsibility AYM saddled on its back to enlighten the Afo people to leverage on the opportunities that abounds using technology because with it, unimaginable benefits can be achieved.

Overall, Afo Youth Mobility is an agent of community development. Life is a circle of contribution. I contribute. You contribute. We contribute and collectively, we make the community progress. AYM wants to drive development into all the regions of the Afo Nation through drilling of boreholes (to ensure water hygiene), erecting toilets (to prevent open defecation and the scourge of epidemics), organizing career talks and orientation (for secondary school students), organizing seminars (to promote peace and unity) and a host of other initiatives that will

ensure development and prosperity reaches all the nooks and crannies of the Afo Nation.

A C C O M P L I S H M E N T S A N D PROSPECTS

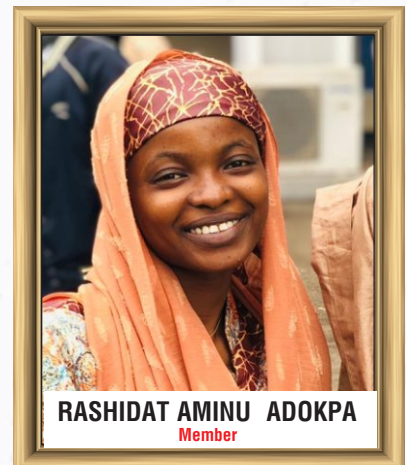
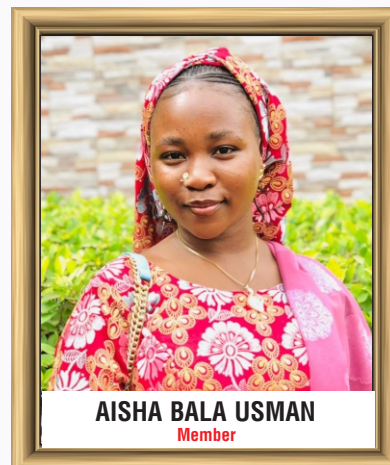
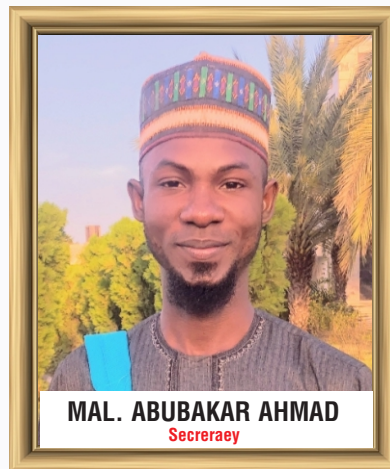
Since its inception two years ago, Afo Youth Mobility has organized three summits. The first summit held at Kana Township Hall had presentations by Dr. Aminu Abubakar Ph.D and Dr. A. A Ebini Ph.D on the unity of the Afo Nation. A drama was incorporated depicting the forces stalling the growth of the Afo Nation and subsequently those forces that can propel the growth of the Afo Nation. There was a debate on the Girl Child Education being more crucial than the Boy child. To close the curtain on the first summit was a panel discussion on the role of youths in the development of the Afo Nation.

The Second Annual summit that took place at Apawu Kuri focused heavily on charting the way forward for the Afo Nation with the Overseer, Agwada Development Area, Hon. Adamu Agye and Dr. Usman Apawu taking turns to dissect the issues. Alh. Abubakar O. Kana chaired the occasion even as Alh. Abdullahi Owuna hosted the occasion. There was a drama on the role of unity in the Afo Nation.

The third Annual Youth Summit of Afo Youth Mobility that took place at Akum in honor of Maj. Gen. S. Ibrahim (Fmr D. G National Youth Service Corps) had the theme "investing in the Afo Youth" and featured the launching of magazine and presentation of awards to deserving sons and daughters of the Afo Nation.

Moving ahead, Afo Youth Mobility wants to go beyond mere rhetoric to actions, to being at the forefront of every activity that will augur well for the Afo Nation. Until then, the prospects and future is looking bright for the association.

Magazine Committee



From the Desk of the Chairman

All thanks are due to Allah (SWA) whom have in his infinite mercy spared our lives to witness this auspicious occasion, the maiden having held sometimes last two years in Kana with a remarkable success. We give glory to God for directing us towards that path and thus far. I want to also appreciate the presence of our respected elders whom have despite their tight schedules, choose to be in the midst of their children and grand children and have an interface with them, engage and interact and also bless them.

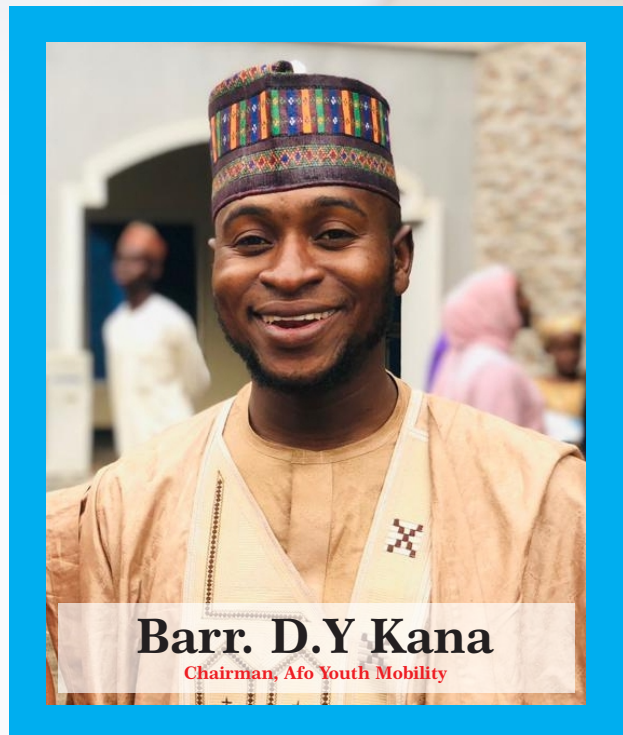
Of course, I am indebted to appreciate the paper presenters whom despite the short notice, were able to come up with brilliant papers which impact would be engraved in the hearts of the targeted audience and other invited guest, and also to all those whom from the bottom of their hearts prayed with utmost joy and also contributed to the actualization of this event, without which this event would have been a mirage.

My unalloyed appreciation goes to my teaming and supportive excos for their tireless commitment towards the actualization of this event and the confidence reposed in me in an acting capacity, to give back to the society what it has given to us.

The theme of this years event is **INVESTING IN THE AFO AFO YOUTH.**

Before I proceed, I would like to reference the saying of God in his noble scripture that: Oh mankind! We have created you into different nations and tribes so you may know each other. In consequence, it is God's own decision that we belong to the Afo tribes and not otherwise, hence occupying the feat and location we are in now.

Afo as a tribe, while growing up was the envy



Barr. D.Y Kana

Chairman, Afo Youth Mobility

of other tribes, owing to its large network, discipline, unity, togetherness, respect for constituted authorities, respect for elders, hard work, wisdom and rich cultural heritage. Our political strength was recognised as far back as in the 70s, wherein despite the success of any of the leading contestants during the Jos Plateau, without the votes from Edege, any candidate who sings the song of glory does so at his peril. Edege, a region densed with the population of the Afos was a force to be reckoned with.

May I also recall our judicial authorities under the auspices of the Adaweji and that all local disputes are resolved through him, even before the emergence of the modern judicial system. Language is the only thing that God bestow on us and if utilised appropriately would yield great fortunes.



I weep, when I remember also those periods we loved one another and when ever the enchantment "Kyaa moo" is said, we all respond with a sound and reverberating positive "eeeeehhh" from the bottom of our hearts. These are times when my father is also your father and vice versa. When there was no differences, no dichotomy amongst us, we were not told which house or which not to visit, we were all one, when we all assemble money from the reserve we have made to sponsor some selected individuals to school irrespective of their affiliation to us, all we were interested in is, nkyo ku ojiri?

When we rally round any of the Afo candidate whom emerge in our political airspace, to support him in all means possible until success is assured irrespective of his political party and otherwise.

Those were the best of times and growing up, it was something I relish but soon, an outbreak occur. We later became endemic, it began surreptitiously, slowly killing our tribe. It is a disease that touches every stratum, it murders societal sanctity, damaging every fibre of the bond that united us, this disease annihilated the good in our culture. The disease came in three forms: self interest, lack of respect for elders, and lack of patriotism and show of commitment to the tribe. Today, we find our tribesmen having serious rift over what name do we call our tribe, either Ajiri, Eloyi or the alien name, Afo. I say the form does not matter but the content. We have abandoned our culture, and culture is the customs and costumes, manners and mannerisms, philosophy and ideology of the people, culture is the way of life of the people as rightfully said by Yusuf Maitama Sule of blessed memory. We must hold firmly to the rope that binds us.

This event which is drafted today is to celebrate one of the Afo Finest breed, a quintessential patriot, an epitome of generosity, a bridge builder of the Afo People, someone who has fire running in his belly but humanity in his heart, a true definition of a kinsman, I call him "Ada" meaning father but other calls him the "General"

The decision arrived at to honour him was never a subject of debate amongst both the youths and the elites because of the

intimidating records of ineschewable providence, the type that gladdens the heart and soul, and together we say "*gbagba é yé duma. Kin gbédé adá. osu-ukpo la to nyo eyi mo.*"

I would appreciate warmly our parents and also encourage them to further unite themselves, and that the lack of unity and the show of love is giving our enemies an edge to leverage over us. Today, we are no longer what we were, the institution of family is breaking down, respect for elders and constituted authorities which used to be our cardinal principle in our society is now at its lowest ebb. My dear parents and elders sitting in our midst today, you must put our heads together to fight this virus, as you are the vaccine to this pandemic. We leave this task unto you and we pray God intervene, as what does not break you, makes you stronger.

A man who calls his kinsmen to a feast does not do so to redeem them from starving. They all have food in their houses. When we gather in the moonlight at village ground, it is not because of the moon, every man can see it in his own compound. We come together because it is good for kinsmen to do so. Therefore, let us continue with the team spirit of togetherness. Let's smile not because we don't have problems but because we are stronger than the problems. Alone I can smile but together we can laugh, alone I can enjoy but together we can celebrate, alone I can talk but together we can speak. Let's promote things that unites us, rather than things that cause disunity. Unity is great strength. Everybody is important according to their own unique purpose.

And finally to our teeming youths, we urge you to be peace loving, law abiding, culturally inclined, and to imbibe the spirits of our founding fathers and be the ambassadors of the Afo Nation, and most importantly, use our knowledge viz a viz the wisdom, maturity and experience of our parents and integrate it with our dynamism, radicalism and youthful exuberance as the new breed without the old breed would breed greed. Never look down on anybody except you are admiring his shoes.

Thank you all.

BARR. DAUDAYAHAYAKANA
Chairman, AYM



MAL. ABUBAKAR AHMAD
Secretary



BARR. D.Y KANA
Chairman



ABDULRAHMAN O. HUSSAIN
Financial Secretary



ISHAKU OKAH SULEIMAN
Vice Chairman (Onda/Kana Ward)



Abduljalil Zubairu
Vice Chairman (Koya/Kana Ward)



JOSHUA EMMANUEL EKPO
Vice Chairman (Odu Ward)



BAKO MUHAMMAD KABIR
Vice Chairman (Agwada Ward)



Comr. Jamilu A. Akum CNS
Vice Chairman (Akum Ward)



Ahidu Ahmad Angala
Vice Chairman (Udeni Gida Ward)



RASHIDA MUSA AGI
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Yahaya Khalid Kaika
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Publicity Secretary



ABDULLAHI ESHIMUTU
Agam Ambassador



ABUBAKAR ABDULLAHI OBAGU
Agwada Ambassador



ISHAQ RABI
Igwo Ambassador



IBRAHIM ADAMU OGU
Udege Mbeki Ambassador



COMR. KABIRU SHUAIBU KANA
Kana (Ungu Epo) Ambassador



Hussaina Haruna
Onda Ambassador



Comr. Aliyu Abdulaziz Ogah
Apawu Ambassador



HABIB DAN-ZAINAB
Udege-Kasa Ambassador



AZAMU JOSPH KWOKU
Maraban Udege Ambassador



Obagu Munir Eteagbo
Odenin Gida Ambassador



COMR. AHMED CHINDO
Kana/Nasarawa Ambassador



COMR. ADAMU YAKUBU
Akum Ambassador



**Reminiscences & Prospects
with AYM Grand Patron,
The Odagyo of Eloyi,
Alh. Abubakar O. E. Kana**

1. You set the pace by becoming the first graduate and thus, pioneered university education in Afo Nation, how did the journey begin?

The journey was very rough for me judging from my background. Born at a time when the elders were unwilling to send their children to school, it proved a very herculean task for me to be enrolled into school. My saving grace then was coming from a royal background. The standard practice then is to have the first child of the Osu enrolled in school.

Eventually, I was sent to school, becoming the second set of people in our land to have exposure to western education. My father died in 1948, thus it was my Uncle who gave me my first shot at school. I was forced to attend school, a situation that left my Mom no choice but leave our house in Agbolo to Oriki. I followed my mother to Oriki though. A very unpleasant situation happened to me, I woke up to the rooster crow and picked up my gown only to discover that termite ate the gown I left hanging on the wall. I had to use my wrapper to

cover where it was torn and trek to Agwada.

Incidentally, I scaled through elementary education having spent 4 years (1955-1958). Furthering my education amounted to another hurdle because the only advanced school around the axis was Laminga Senior Primary School. Interestingly, only five of us got the very competitive slots into Laminga from Agwada Primary School. I began life in Laminga which was a boarding facility with the likes of Alh. Musa Obakpa, Alh. Abubakar Agbo, Alh. Musa Owuna, Mal. Isyaku Ewulo. Leaving home was tough but we derived joy through the bonds forged from cordial relationships with people of distinct communities and from different backgrounds.

At that time, being a medical doctor seemed like the better prospect and it was something I coveted too. However, my headmaster had other plans for me. To him, I was going to be a great teacher. He prevailed on me and I enrolled into Teacher's College, Keffi. Upon completion, I became the headmaster in Gurku, Karshi and later Garaku.

When the third College of Education was established in the north, I decided to quench my thirst for tertiary education. Initially I applied for the Teacher's Advanced College, Kano to study Mathematics and Geography but as fate will have it, I became one of the pioneers of Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto. I read English and Islamic Studies in Sokoto. After graduation, The then Sultan of Sokoto, His Eminence, Alh. Siddiq Abubakar wanted me to remain in Sokoto but I insisted on coming home and impart knowledge to my people. Being a muslim, I cited the hadith of the Prophet "seek knowledge even if you have to go as far as China" to the Sultan and further asked him if he were to be sent to China and China insist he does not come home, will he be happy about it? He consent to my plea and consequently, I came back home.

I got interviewed by the Ministry of Education, Benue Plateau and got my letter of appointment. I was posted to Obi Local Government and that was another challenge because Obi was largely unfamiliar to me. I was on secondment in Obi and thus, my salary was from Benue Plateau State. I became good

friends with HRH Mustapha Agwai, Late Emir of Lafia. When Keffi Local Government Council was planning to establish its Secondary School, I alongside HRH Sylvester Ayih, Late Abaga of Toni lobbied for the school to be sited at Garaku. We were overpowered and the new school was established in Uke. I and the Late Abaga of Toni were the first educationist in Kokona. Before I left Obi though, the Late Emir of Lafia insisted that I should not be allowed to leave, otherwise they risk their school becoming rotten. It is interesting to note that the former Inspector General of Police, Muhammad Abubakar Adamu was my student in Obi.

While I was in Obi, I wrote an interesting play and when there was an advertisement by the British Council in collaboration with Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, I submitted it and it went on to be the best in Nigeria. I became a sensation and my name was ringing in the news and everywhere. In September, 1975, I left Obi to advance my studies in ABU Zaria. Meanwhile, I was the first Afo Man to buy a car but when I got admission into ABU Zaria, maintaining the car became impossible so I sold it and bought a motorcycle. I would ride the motorcycle then from Keffi to Zaria. I did my teaching practice in Government Girls College, Kwoi, Kaduna State. It took me three years to complete my degree and become the first graduate in Afo Land. Afterwards, I proceeded to University of Jos for my Master's degree in Educational Management. My life has consequently being spent in knowledge acquisition and giving back to the community. In a nutshell, that's how the journey began to my new role as an elder statesman.

2. How would you describe describe your life growing up as a child in the ancient Kana village and what did you think we the later generation missed?

Growing up as a child in the ancient city of Kana was full of mixed feelings. There were moments of joy and those of tribulations. I was born by a blind mother and father, a condition that emanated from river blindness. My father died in 1949, long before I was sent to school.

I had a relatively comfortable upbringing having lived in a royal house where traditional marvel and beauty is at it most. I was initiated into the various cultural society in hierarchical

order (and in accordance with age progression). First, it was the *eya*, then the *eme eshi*, the *oyi*, the *oshi*, the *eshi* and *ayes*. All of them formed the *odudu* cultural societies.

At the time, the training of the female child was primarily at the hands of her mother, the grandmother and other women in the community whereas that of the male child lies with the menfolk. Back then, the child was trained by the community. Beautifully, it was a norm that if one derail from the accepted moral, an older person from anywhere in the community could discipline him. Discipline started from the family to *udaba* (family compound), *agirika* (area) and by extension, the *kusé* (community). It was a largely traditional society.

The Adaweji was always there to enforce the law and it was dispensed forthwith. So, ours was a decent society that had respect for elders and constituted authorities. We had no interference or any communication whatsoever with Keffi, therefore no exposure to western civilization. The absence of external influence left us with nature in its purest: the tranquil silence, the beautiful view of celestial objects in the night and the melodious sound of birds chirping.

Kuvo was the largest farmlands then and we would go to the farm, engage in farming activities and come back home for domestic duties. No one slept in the farms as obtainable today. Through the *oga uweshi* rites, we paid visit to neighboring communities and establish friendship ties and develop love for kinsmen in the other communities. One fascinating thing about those days is you dare not take the wife of another person. *Inzeshi* was prevalent and it fortified the bonds between friends. It was the reciprocal exchange of spouses for marriage purposes. A friend could marry the sister of his friend and vice versa. An interesting marriage practice was also *izhema*: *izhema* is a system of marriage where a man can abduct a lady he likes at any festive gathering to his house and later inform her parents through his local chief for peeper marriage rite.

I feel what the later generation missed first is the upright training we got. We were punished there and then for any wrongdoing. Now, the upbringing of a child is not a communal affair because you risk the wrath of a father if you

discipline his child. Besides, the days of the *Adaweji* curtailed societal crimes and entrenched the law. We had a very simple lifestyle and the various stages of cultural education ensured we had a fun filled life. The new generations have a disconnect with that beautiful life.

3. Our tribe has been battling with a frustrating controversy of nomenclature on the name of our tribe, between Afo, Eloyi or Ajiri, what is the everlasting solution to this?

The solution to the controversies surrounding the nomenclature of our tribe can be referenced to the tribal map of Nigeria. Having undergone series of research, the map captured Eloyi, not Ajiri or Afo. Worthy of note is that the map was not written by Alh. Abubakar Odu Egya Kana.

Let me elaborate on the origins of the three names, starting with Ajiri. The term Ajiri came from the root phrase Otukpa u-wa Akiri, which is the name of people who supply salt to the Afo lands. The salts were brought all the way to our lands by the *Akiri* people from Awe and Keana. As a result of phonological differences, our people found pronouncing "*akiri*" difficult and instead, could only call it "*ajiri*". So, it became *otukpa u-wu ajiri*. That was how our people arrived at Ajiri. Today, we have our people bearing Ajiri especially those from the ambu (plain) regions. Yet still, the people of Akum and Udeni prefer to be called Eloyi people.

On the other hand, Afo came from a sentence made by our traditional chiefs in Ngazargamu, the then headquarters. When there was controversy and chieftaincy tussle, our people decided to migrate out of Ngazargamu. As they were leaving, the King of Bornu Kanem empire send his council of chiefs to plead with our people to come back. They tried their best but our people were resolute on not going back. So, they went back and reported to the King of Bornu Kanem Empire who said "*aho nasadiya*" which means "leave them alone to rest" in Kanuri Language. Those present at that time started calling our people "Aho". However, our actual nomenclature is Eloyi.

I started seeing this actual nomenclature in a formal document at the NYSC orientation camp in 1978. In the camp, we were giving a handbook that contains the history and the compendium of all the languages and what is

recorded in that book as our tribal name is Eloyi. Let me suggest that our people should revisit the history books where they can get first hand information about the things I said.

4. Political and chieftaincy dispute is tearing the Afo Nation all asunder, how can these persisting problems be permanently resolved?

First of all, we have to ask ourselves how have we been moving, what brought the political and chieftaincy disputes? Chieftaincy tussle is what drove us from Ngazargamu and hitherto, the issues are far from resolved. These issues are primarily a controversy of leadership, not just chieftaincy affairs, because even the *agirikas* are affected. For instance, when you are in Ishata, your close relations will say you must be the *obeze* (interior minister) and your distant relations might counteract and form a new *agirika*. Hence, it was more of a leadership problem, rather than chieftaincy alone because *obeze* too tore people apart. So, ours is a complex problem because a little misunderstanding resulted in the formation of a new *agirika* and that is why we have a lot of *agirikas* scattered across the Afo nation. Well, the solution is as simple as following the tradition and adhering strictly to religious precepts. The Muslims should hold fast to the tenets of their religion while the Christians should commit to the injunctions of the scriptures, the same goes for traditional religion.

5. How do you wish to see Afo people in the next decade or century?

I must be very frank with you, there would be a lot of changes. First of all, religion will play a huge role in the decades to come. Growing up, all we knew was the traditional religion but today, we have foreign religions: Islam and Christianity. These two religions are in contention with our language and they will triumph eventually. For example, if you consider our *agirikas* today, there are very few traditionist and give it a little more time, they are bound to convert to either Islam or Christianity. As much as I wish that our tribe withstand the test of time, the truth is there would be a lot of cultural deterioration due to the dominating forces of Islam and Christianity. This will cripple our cultural



**Meet the Pan-Afonist,
Major General
Assoc. Prof. Shu'aibu Ibrahim**

Shuaibu Ibrahim, DSS, Ph.D., MTRCN, (born 13 July 1967) is a Nigerian Army general and the former Director General of NYSC, a position he assumed on 10 May 2019 and his tenure ended in 2022. Prior to his appointment as the 18th DG of NYSC, he was the Registrar of the Nigerian Army University, Biu, Borno. In 2007, he was decorated with Forces Service Star (FSS), in 2012, Meritorious Service Star (MSS), whilst in 2018, he was decorated with Distinguished Service Star (DSS). He is a member of Historical Society of Nigeria (HSN) and Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (MTRCyN).

Major General Shuaibu Ibrahim is a native of Akum village in Udege Development Area of Nasarawa LGA, Nasarawa State, Nigeria. From 1985 to 1989, he studied History (B.A.) at University of Jos. From 1991 to 1992, He studied History (M.A.) also at University of Jos. From 2002 to 2007, he studied History (PhD.) from University of Abuja. In 2007, he finished his PGDE at Tai

Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State.

Upon joining the Nigerian Army, In 1994, he attended Nigeria Army Education Corps (NAEC) Young Officers Course, which was followed by Infantry Young Officers Course in 1996. In 2004, he attended Training Development Advisers Course (TDA), which was followed by NAEC Officers Executive Management Course in 2013. He has worked at different places and has worked on different assignments. Firstly, he was posted to Institute of Army Education (IAE) as a Research Officer, where he researched and produced Briefs and Journals for the Nigerian Army. From 1996 to 1999, he was posted to Director General of NYSC, where he worked as a military assistant to the then DG of NYSC.

From 2000 to 2004, he was posted to the (Nigerian Defence Academy) (NDA), where he taught Year 1 and Year 2. From 2004 to 2009, he was posted to National Defence College (NDC) where he acted as a Staff Officer/Military History. From 2009 to 2011, he was posted to Nigerian Army School of Education, where he was a Senior Instructor. From 2011 to 2012, he was posted to the Headquarters of Nigerian Army Education Corps, where he served as a Staff Officer 1, Books Resources Procurement. From 2012 to 2014, he was posted to Command Secondary School, Suleja, Niger, where he served as the Commandant.[6]

From 2015 to 2018, he was posted to the Nigerian Defence Academy, where he served as the Head of Department (HOD), History and War Studies. From 2018 to 2019, he was posted to the Nigerian Army University in Biu, Borno, where he was the Pioneer Registrar. On April 26, 2019, he got his highest appointment, when he was appointed as the Director General of the NYSC. Over the years, he has written, authored and co-authored Books and Journals. Major General Shuaibu Ibrahim is



Footprint for the Success of Afo Youth with Hon. Muh'd Abubakar Muh'd SSA to Nas. State Governor

1. May we have a brief of your biography

Let me start by saying my name is Muhammad Abubakar Muhammad from Apawu Kuri (Apawu Kasuwa) in the family of Late Muhammadu Eya of blessed memory. I was born in 1985 in Maiduguri where I eventually started my elementary school in Maiduguri International School. When I finished my elementary school, I continued in El-Kanemi College of Islamic Theology, Maiduguri for my secondary education. In Maiduguri. I was living with my uncle; Alhaji Usman Muhammad Eya, a younger brother to my father. Growing up with my uncle was a blessing that impacted positively in the responsible life I can boast of today. For this, I always extend my endless gratitude and prayers to him.

After our stay in Maiduguri, we resettled Lafia and here, I completed my secondary education in Al-Iman Secondary School, Lafia. The quest for tertiary studies led me to the Faculty of Natural and Applied Sciences, Nasarawa State University where I studied Pure and Applied chemistry. Upon completion, I was posted to Command Secondary School, Chikun in Kaduna State for my compulsory National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) programme.

My entrepreneurial journey started when together with some of my peers, we started a petty trading of selling dates with just a measure of *Mudu* in the quarters of Alhaji Ali Ndume Mosque during Ramadhan. During the fasting period, a crowd of people mostly troop into the mosque and this presents a favorable environment for our business to thrive. The idea of selling date then, was conceived out of the yearn for financial independence and selfreliance.

After my NYSC, my uncle opened up a grocery store for me in Suleja where I sell soft drinks in a wholesale. It was during this period that I married my dear wife. The hunt to explore more business opportunities drove me to the traveling agency where I joined LukamTravels & Tours in Abuja.

While still faring with the traveling agency and grocery, a friend who works with Muhammad Abacha Delta Prospectors in Lafia got transferred to Kano and was asked to suggest a trusted, dedicated and competent person that would replace him. He recommended me to the company and I was appointed as transportation manager, managing the company's trucks on a monthly salary of 25,000 naira. This marked the start of my journey in the private sector.

I was transferred to the company's branch at Hadejia in Jigawa state after working

for three years in the company. At this point, I was still multitasking between the company's schedules and traveling agency and so I could not proceed with the transfer. I quit my job with the company and concentrated solely on the traveling agency but this time with MBI Travels & Tour Ltd., Kagarko in Kaduna State alongside one of my bosses who is now late.

At some point in time, I advertised my business to Engr. Abdullahi Alhaji Sule, the then Group Managing Director (GMD) of Dangote Sugar Refinery PLC and he started patronising me for his travels. We went along so good and so I approached him with a proposal to establish my own traveling agency. He gladly accepted my proposal and offered financial and technical support for registering the agency. Being an exclusive owner of Fairfield Travels & Tour was accompanied with a load of challenges. In a business partnership venture, responsibilities are shared as a team. However, as the proprietor, I had to deal with office work and the road trips, the to and fro between Lafia and Abuja. To God be the glory, I was able to surmount the obstacles.

I got the opportunity to discuss with Engr. A A Sule and I told him about the hitches with particular reference to scheduling, he smiled and requested that I submit my CV to him in his home town in Gude. About the same time, there was a vacancy in Dangote. So, I went for an interview and was subsequently selected. I detested Lagos but as I was employed there, I accepted it in good fate and reported for work taking charge of third party vendors, preparing their payments as a logistics officer in Dangote.

I ventured into Nasarawa State politics while still in Lagos in a solidarity support

for my boss, Engr. A A Sule. The immeasurable life support he gave me in my time of need informed my decision to give him my unalloyed support. The campaign permutations stretched up to a year and within this span, I had to travel to and fro every week from Lagos to Nasarawa State. Eventually, Our efforts were crowned with successes by the Almighty and a good number of people are benefiting from our investments.

2. As a youth, your life will be described as a successful one. What do you think the Afo youths should learn about your success story?

There is a lot I think the youth, most importantly the Afo youth can learn from my life. I do not read biographies or autobiographies of people to trace exactly their life voyage, expecting to be like them because I know that it is not feasible. The opportunities, level of thinking (IQ) and conditions presented to them are most likely to be different from the ones that will be available to me.

One has to just define what he or she wants out of life and be determined to actualise his goals and visions. For progressive and prosperous adventure, youth must cast off their minds from luxuries and have fate that what is for you was never meant to miss you. The absence of the love of material things makes the heart and mind light for the task ahead.

As a youth, there should be the instinct to believe in oneself and never be too dependent on someone except God. If you depend on someone, the next thing is expectations, and consequently, disappointment creeps in immediately. There is this popular adage that: "do not depend too much on anyone because even your own shadow leaves you when you are in darkness". It should be worth noting that God is the Architecture of all



blessings in this world but the process of achieving those blessings is on our hands. You can be socially connected with the bigwigs but for the Almighty's approval, all effort will prove abortive.

It is very important for the youths to be focused, the betterment of people's lives should drive the pursuit for success. Plans should be set with the mental attitude that success can only be attained if others succeed and people's failure also amount to your failure. The restlessness that this thought presents will disturb you to constantly do more because of the high expectations people have on you.

It is almost impossible to record success without the respect for elders and favorable approach to all classes of people; rich, poor, smart and dull. This at least, will earn you respect even from people that do not have regard for others. Besides, respect is reciprocal.

Last but of course not the least, our actions must be guided by the dictate and fear of God. This will forestall participation in anything that will harm others and other illicit acts of envy, cheating, hate and others alike.

These invariably are the set of rules that had pushed me to this point and are still yet motivating me to catch up to my aspirations. I think if youth, specifically

Afo youth will emulate also from these suggestions, success is guaranteed.

3. It will interest the Afo youths to know what was your biggest challenge and how you overcame it.

On a personal note, I do not have any biggest challenge because the entire life itself is a bag of challenges. The moment goals are set, what ensues are challenges and both the goals and the challenges must be faced squarely. I do not hence, have regret for anything that comes my way because I believe that whatever comes my way, whether good or bad is from the dictates of God, and so, I embrace it wholeheartedly and move on. I fondly tell people that in my business sojourn, I encountered lots of scary and jaw breaking challenges that would have made me quit. There was a time I lost over 11 million naira at a go, all of which were people's investment. Not a single penny was mine. Through resilience and the prayers of people especially those I was quick to come to their aid, I kept pushing and Alhamdulillah, those days of despair were are long gone.

You know, one is bound to certainly succeed in life if the core agenda is the desire to put smiles on people's faces. The prayers of those people will counteract any approaching impediment in life.

4. It is a norm in Nigeria, that once a person's kinsman is at the helm of affairs anywhere, he expects special regards in term of kind or cash benefits. What should Afo youth expects from you as a Senior Special Adviser (SSA) to the Nasarawa State Governor?

My ambition is to see the Afo Nation reach the pinnacle of development. I will do my best subsequently, at any slight opportunity to see that the dividends of

government projects extend right through the nooks and crannies of Afo Nation without discrimination to any of the regions. Certainly, I must skip what is beyond my control not because I do not have the willingness but that my hands are tied. I am saying this because of a common mentality that once someone is in such position, nothing cannot be done which is far from the truth.

To be honest though, there are opportunities and we are to the best of our abilities utilizing them. What we expect from our kinsmen is, to know that we can not dish out all the available slots to Afo people. As someone within the leadership structure of a multi-diverse state like Nasarawa State with different tribes and religions, I have to make sure that all parties are carried along.

Not to mention but few: I have secured job opportunities to some Afo youth, some of which I personally do not know, facilitated the renovation of dilapidated school structures in Afo communities and a host of other things.

I just have to do my best, if not for anything but for posterity's sake where I will go back home, rest assured that I have discharge my duties to the best of what is expected of me as Senior Special Assistant to the governor of Nasarawa State. InSha Allah, my people will not regret that I occupied this position and I will also not regret being in this position once I must have exited.

5. Is there anything else you would want to share with the Afo youth?

Here, I would want to emphasize on unity; unity of purpose, of togetherness, for the success of the Afo Nation. This is because in a short while, the youth will relief the elders and leaders of Afo in the vanguard of affairs. Without unity, our people will be left at the mercy of underdevelopment and lack of inclusion

in government. Unity should be the watch word because love, passion for progress are all gifts that always accompany unity. Only after unity can social development like portable drinking water, hospitals, schools, roads, electricity and other social amenities be effortlessly introduced into the Afo land. It is quite unfortunate that ours is a situation where an *Ambu* man will question the progress of the *Eki* region and vice versa. I will like to cite an example here. There was one time when some Afo stakeholders paid a visit to His Excellency, Engr. A. A. Sule to protest the exclusion of one of theirs in the state government political appointment on the basis that the already selected Afo man is from the other region distinct from where they came from. Very disheartening! This can be attributed to the disunity between the two large groups of Afo communities, *Ambu* and *Eki*

Sometimes ago, there was leadership tussle between the Afo youth. I told them instead of expending their precious energy in fighting each other, they should channel this energy to seek for benefits for the Afo people.

Youth must not be engulfed with just personal gains. National interest should be the youth's utmost priority. Blessings of the Almighty can only be assured if all struggle are dedicated to the collective development of the people.

My dream is to see the Afo people chanting the slogans of unity and actually work towards that because we cannot commit ourselves in words alone and then in our actions, we are proposing things that is further tearing us apart.



OPEN DEFECATION SENSITIZATION

Open defecation is a practice whereby individuals pass faeces outside their homes in areas such as fields, farmlands, gutters or rails (Mehta, 2008). Worldwide, about 1.1 billion individuals defecate outdoors and this practice is said to be widespread in Asian and African countries (WHO/United Nations Children's Fund, 2012).

Sanitation remains a major public health concern with an estimated 40% of the global population lacking access to safe sanitation and 15% still defecating in the open places (WHO/UNICEF, 2013). The failure to effectively contain and manage human excreta is associated with a wide range of health problems and a large disease burden (Prüss-Üstün *et al.*, 2008; Boschi-Pinton *et al.*, 2008). Recent systematic reviews have found that sanitation interventions can be effective in reducing a range of important health outcomes, including diarrhoeal diseases (Waddington *et al.*, 2009; Cairncross *et al.*, 2010) and soil-transmitted helminth infections (Ziegelbauer *et al.*, 2012). A number of studies have also suggested that poor sanitation may be associated with adverse nutritional outcomes via different pathways, including diarrhoea (Checkley *et al.*, 2008) and gastro-intestinal disorders such as tropical sprue (Haghighi *et al.*, 1997) or tropical enteropathy (Humphrey, 2009). In 2015, 965 million people had no sanitation facility and were therefore forced to

defecate in the open (WHO/ UNICEF, 2015). The average proportion of 'open defecators' in developing countries is 16%, and in the least-developed countries 20%, most of these open defecators are poor and live in rural areas. Nigeria is among the countries with the highest rate of open defecation ranking 2nd in Africa and 5th globally in 2010 (WHO/UNICEF, 2012). According to WHO/UNICEF (2012) reported that 34 million Nigerians practiced open defecation in 2010. A report by Abubakar (2008) highlighted that in 2015 about 46 million Nigerians engaged in outdoor defecation, bringing Nigeria from 5th position to 3rd position in prevalence of open defecation globally. The World Development Indicators in 2016 also confirmed that open defecation practice in Nigeria had risen from 24% to 25.1% of its population in 1990 to 2015 respectively (World Bank, 2016). In October 2019, The Nigeria Minister, Mr Suleiman Adamu of Ministry of Water Resources in a forum on sanitation organized by Organized Private Sector, disclosed that Nigeria now ranks 1st in the world in open defecation prevalence with about 50 million Nigerians practicing open defecation (Vanguard, 2019). This indicates that open defecation is a burden in Nigeria.

1. Causes of Open Defecation in Nigeria

In Nigeria – poverty, lack of toilets and lack of awareness of the dangers associated with open

Geographically, the land of all the Afo adjunct communities put together, one can conclude that it is outrightly small relative to other sister tribes. The Afo people move into the *Eki* (hilly) locations because of chieftaincy disputes, threat from foreign turbulence, population pressure, potential farmlands spotted by wandering hunters, and the recent colonial influence. To avoid attacks, they claim fortress in rocky hills.

For all these years of discomfort, the Afo people reside on the rocky hills with no claim of the land beneath. Not until around 1900, where they were encouraged or forced to leave their hill sanctuaries and move to the lower land, where farming was better and the people more accessible to administration. By this time, agricultural activities was booming but unfortunately, the larger part of the lands where either already occupied or claimed by other tribes that live in sympatry with the Afo people geographically. An average Afo man preferences peace and thus, shy away from any possible disturbance(s). It seems the trouble an Afo man is running to shy away from, sadly has stronger legs and speed. The monster in the disturbance an Afo is running away from had caught up and eating voraciously from his peace.

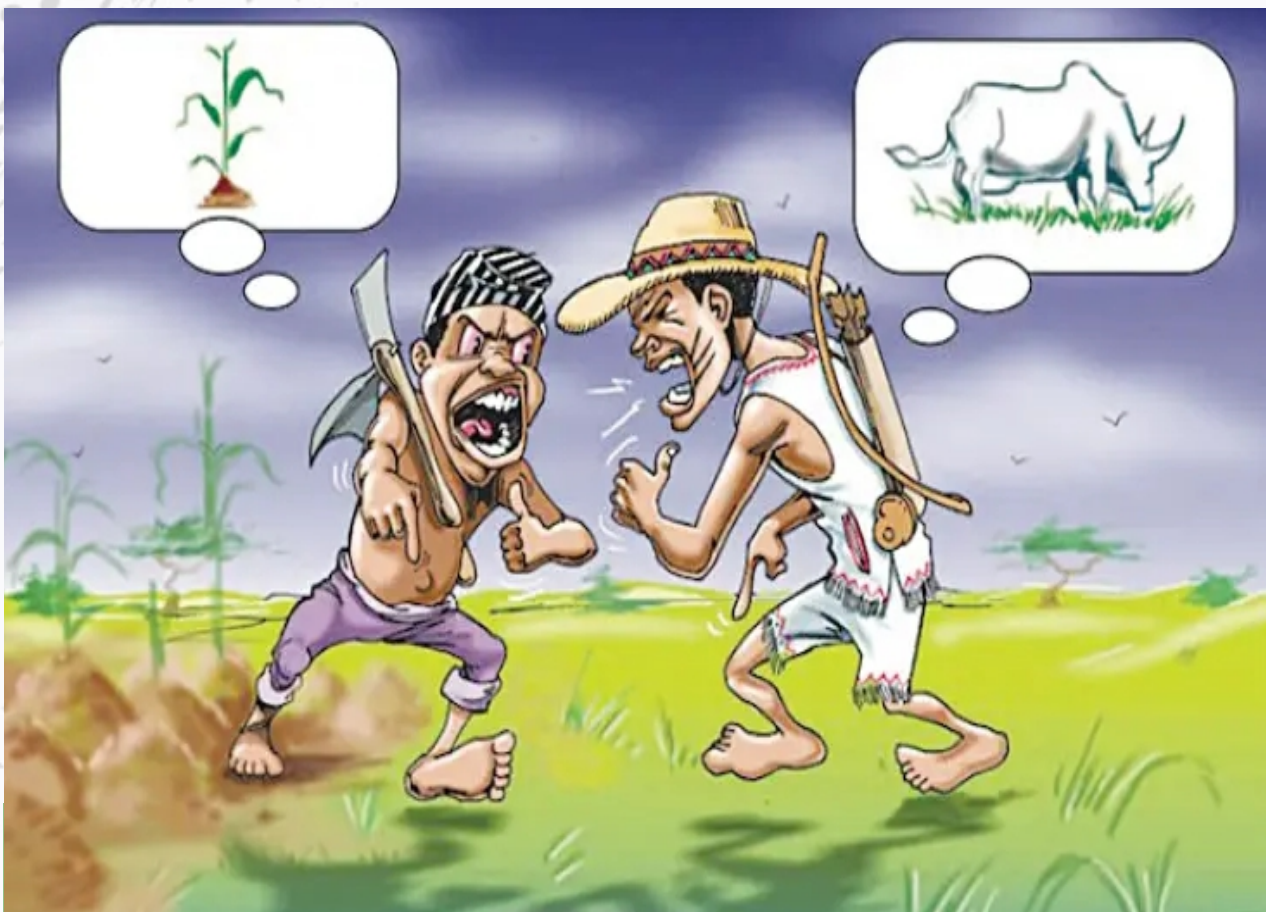
The herdmen dominating force, in an urge to expand their grazing areas and the farmers counter reaction from the boom in population and a bid to prevent trespassing certainly over time is resulting to a friction. In the entire country, the security atmosphere is not the type one can take home and this further propel issues that should have been swept under the carpet in a normal ground

The climate dynamism from the favourable to critical rainfall compels the herdsmen to forage en masse with hundreds of cattles all over the country. Their movement is to an extension down the tiny green pasture of the Afo lands. In

those days, the cattle routes within the Afo locality were enough spanning from the *Eki* (hills) to *Ambu* (plains) because the population was relatively small. Hence, farming activities was also not elaborate. Sadly, the availability of grazing areas was gradually been exhausted by the increase in the number of nomads trooping in and by the increasing population of the Afo residents. These two functions intersected at a point and create a spark. A horrible spark that is ending in bloodshed. Another bone breaking issue is this; the herdsmen graze from the Northern part of the country to Middle-Belt on a permanent residence and some on a transitory settlement before they continue their voyage for a green browse. Here, there is a kind of symbiotic relationship between the farmer and the herder. The farmer a sort leased out the farm land to the herder for a while of months to settle with his cows. The dung dropped by the cattles nourish the land with manure for the farmers consumption during cultivation period. This realtio created strong ties between them especially with the hospitality of the Afo man.

The problem started when the farmer discovered the modern fertilizer that is more effective than the manure from the herder's animal droppings. The herdman unluckily, could not move with the modern trend of devising new methods of grazing without the partnership. The symbiotic relationship was unavoidably pulverised in that, the other party no longer wants to participate. In as much as the farmer no longer need the association, makes the herder a parasite and friction was created, the one that leads to blood shedding.

Fermer-Herder clash is a concern that is ravaging the entire nation's rural communities and resulted to the love lives and properties that can not be wholly compensated. One way to curtail these bedeviling issues is to watch control the



AFO FARMER AND THE HERDER; WHY THE CLASH?

Geographically, the land of all the Afo adjunct communities put together, one can conclude that it is outrightly small relative to other sister tribes. The Afo people move into the *Eki* (hilly) locations because of chieftaincy disputes, threat from foreign turbulence, population pressure, potential farmlands spotted by wandering hunters, and the recent colonial influence. To avoid attacks, they claim fortress in rocky hills. For all these years of discomfort, the Afo people reside on the rocky hills with no claim of the land beneath. Not until around 1900, where they were

encouraged or forced to leave their hill sanctuaries and move to the lower land, where farming was better and the people more accessible to administration. By this time, agricultural activities were booming but unfortunately, the larger part of the lands were either already occupied or claimed by other tribes that live in sympatry with the Afo people geographically. An average Afo man prefers peace and thus, shy away from any possible disturbance(s). It seems the trouble an Afo man is running to shy away from, sadly has stronger legs and speed. The monster in the disturbance an Afo is running away from had caught

defecation were identified as the major reasons for open defecation practice (Ngwu, 2017)

1.1 Poverty and Lack of Toilets

Poverty and lack of latrines can cause individuals to defecate outdoors. It could be argued that a poor person is highly unlikely to afford some basic human needs such as building a toilet facility. The United Nations (UN, 2014) stated that open defecation is a glaring indication of poverty in its extreme in any country where such is practiced. (Ewodage, 2018) and the World Poverty Clock (World Poverty Clock, 2018) precisely on the 25/06/2018 reported that Nigeria is the country with the most extreme poverty rate worldwide (at 87,008,170 million individuals in extreme poverty). Based on this rate of extreme poverty, individuals may be unable to afford basic amenities like latrine. Therefore, the government and other Non Government Organisations, both local and international should create jobs to improve the standard of living of its populace to enable them afford facilities like toilets thereby minimising open defecation

1.2 Lack of Awareness on Dangers of Open Defecation

Lack of awareness on dangers of open defecation was identified as a cause of the prevalence of open defecation in Nigeria. In 2018, 2019 and July 2020 3, 14 and 27 local government areas (LGAs) respectively out of 774 (LGAs) in Nigeria were confirmed to be open defecation free by UNICEF (Adebayo, 2018; Adebawale, 2019; Onabolu, 2020). The 27 LGAs declared open defecation free are as follows: 6 LGAs each from (Benue, Cross Rivers and Jigawa State), 5 LGAs in Katsina State, 2 LGAs in Bauchi State and 1 LGA each from Osun and Akwa Ibom State. These communities certified open defecation free benefited from the Community Led Total Sanitation campaign (health promotion campaign in the community on open defecation) which helped to instill a positive behavioural change. This demonstrates that awareness creation via health promotion campaigns is vital in the fight to end open defecation.

2. Adverse Health Effects Of Open Defecation

The adverse health effects of open defecation can be divided into acute effects and chronic effects. Both cause a high burden of disease and a

large number of premature deaths, especially in children under five years of age. These adverse health effects of open defecation occur because open defecation results in massive faecal contamination of the local environment; consequently, open defecators are repeatedly exposed to faecal bacteria and faecal pathogens, and this is particularly serious for young children whose immune systems and brains are not Acute health effects of open defecation The principal acute adverse health effect of open defecation is infectious excreta-related intestinal disease, of which diarrheal diseases are the most common. Diarrheal diseases were the third cause of death in children under five years of age in 2015 in low-income and lower-middle-income countries, resulting in 499,000 deaths (8.6% of all U5-deaths), and a disability-adjusted life year (DALY) loss of 45.1 million years (8.5% of total U5-DALY losses) (IHME, 2016). One of the commonly ascribed reasons for high incidences of diarrheal diseases is a poor water supply, poor sanitation, and poor hygiene, especially poor hand-hygiene (WHO, 2014). The burden of U5-disease in low income and lower-middle-income countries in 2015 due to no hand washing-with-soap was a disability-adjusted life year loss of 26.4 million years (5.7% of total U5-DALY losses); the corresponding figure for unsafe sanitation was a disability-adjusted life year loss of 26.6 million years (5.7% of total U5-DALY yet fully developed losses) (IHME, 2016). The World is not good at hand washing: Freeman *et al.* (2014) estimated that globally 81% of people do not practice safe hand washing. A further acute health effect of open defecation is adverse pregnancy outcomes, such as increases in low birth weights, preterm births, stillbirths, and spontaneous abortions (Padhi *et al.*, 2015).

Chronic health effects of open defecation, there are five principal widespread chronic health effects most probably due to open defecation: soil-transmitted helminthiases (STHs), increased anaemia, giardiasis, environmental enteropathy and small-intestine bacterial overgrowth (SIBO), and stunting (low height-for-age) with accompanying impaired cognition.

3. Impact of Open defecation in Nigeria

3.1 Impact on Health

Open defecation affects the health of individuals. About 88% of diarrhoeal diseases reported among children in Nigeria are linked to

open defecation (National Population Commission (NPCF, 2014; Oloruntoba, 2014; Yaya, 2017). There is also evidence that children living in areas where open defecation is practiced have retarded growth (Paul, 2011; Lin, 2013; Robert, 2013). Additionally, close contact with faeces of humans could give rise to other diseases such as typhoid, worm infestation and cholera all of which are contacted through faecal-oral route (ingestion of water or food contaminated with faeces) (WHO, 2017). UNICEF linked the Nigerian outbreak of cholera to open defecation practices (Adagbada *et al.*, 2012; WHO, 2017). In 2018 (January to June) Nigeria recorded 11,696 cholera cases with 0.79% deaths (NCDC, 2018). Hence, open defecation is a serious problem that needs to be tackled in order to prevent disease outbreaks.

3.2 Impact on the Economy

Open defecation affects the economy, Water and Sanitation Program (WSP) Nigeria (WSP, 2012) reported that due to poor sanitation, NGN455 billion is lost annually by the Nigerian government. The Nation (The Nation, 2017). Nigeria loses 1.3% of annual GDP to poor sanitation [online]. The Nation; 2017, also reported that about 1.3% of the Gross Domestic Product is lost annually in Nigeria due to an unhygienic environment. It could be argued that, in the event of a disease outbreak, the economy will likely be crippled as the government will have to spend more money containing an outbreak of disease rather than using it to improve the standard of living of its populace. On the locals residing in the area of endemic open defecation, millions of Naira is spent in curing the diseases contracted as a result of open defecation. This shows that open defecation causes economic loss through disease outbreaks.

3.3 Impact on Agriculture

Open defecation affects agriculture. A study by Singh *et al.* (2007) concluded that due to open defecation practices on farmlands, some bacteria from faeces can inhibit the germination of seed of crops. WSP (2012) affirms this and emphasised that contamination of products of agriculture and growth inhibition of crops by bacteria from faeces can cause economic loss. Agriculture is one of the major sources of living for some Nigerians and provides employment for about 30.5% Nigerians (National Bureau of Statistics Nigeria, 2010). This crop germination inhibition due to infection of the soil by open

defecation practice suggests that fewer or no crops may be produced by farmers. Therefore, open defecation needs to be tackled to prevent this possible economic loss, loss of source of livelihood and poverty.

3.4 Impact on Water Bodies

Open Defecation contaminates sources of water. During the rainy season, there is possibility of the rains carrying the faeces from the farmlands or fields into the streams, rivers or other water sources (FMWR & UNICEF, 2016). This pollutes the water sources and if ingested could cause diseases in humans such as cholera (WHO, 2017) and can also affect aquatic life. For instance, Campell (2019) maintained that pollution of water by sewage causes hypoxia (reduced oxygen), retarded growth/reproduction and death of aquatic animals. This is due to deprivation of the rivers of the necessary oxygen which the aquatic life needs for their sustenance.

3.5 Impact on the Environment

Open defecation affects the environment **where it** could cause global warming (adverse change of climate/increased temperature) as a result of the release of gas (methane- greenhouse gas) from the faeces into the atmosphere (El-Fadel and Massoud, 2001; WHO, 2010). This raised climatic temperature levels could make air pollution worse causing respiratory infections and other diseases (NRDC, 2016.). Hence, there is a need to protect the environment by putting an end to open defecation practices.

3.6 Impact on Security

Open defecation puts the security of women and girls at stake. There is evidence that girls and women who go outdoors to pass faeces encounter sexual molestation, rape and even death (O'Reilly, 2016; Tong, 2017; The Indian Express, 2018). High rates of secondary school absenteeism of girls have also been reported due to lack of latrines (O'Reilly, 2016; UNICEF; 2017) and safe places to defecate or use during their menstrual period. This shows that women and girls are more vulnerable to the dangers of open defecation, hence should be protected through government's construction of gender friendly latrines in public places and schools.

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AN ELIXIR TO THE AFO NATION'S INHOSPITABLE POLITICS

It sounds paramountly important to first, shade a light to some key words of the topic at hand i.e. 'ELIXIR AND INHOSPITABLE.'

Merriam-Webster Dictionary sees elixir as a magical liquid that can cure illness and extend life while Oxford Dictionary sees it also as a magical liquid that is believed to cure illnesses or make people live forever. By the above two (2) definitions, we can contextually say that elixir is a remedy, solution or panacea that is claimed to cure diseases and prolong life, indefinitely. Inhospitable on the other hand is seen as an act of ungenerosity and unfriendliness to friends, guests, relatives and humanities in general. The above definitions have simply pinpointed to us the focus and the direction of this very article.



POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF AFO PEOPLE FROM 1999 TO DATE.

Afo people have been into active participation in politics from 1999 to date. It was fortunate for them to have their son as the executive and democratically elected governor of Nasarawa State who served for two consecutive tenures from 1999, 2003, and 2007 which was His Excellency Alh. Dr. Abdullahi Adamu, the Adaweji of Afo Nation, former Senator, Nasarawa

West and the incumbent APC National chairman. Since the political invention in Nasarawa State, Afo people have not been totally left behind, but got fixed in one or two offices of all the previous and present administrations. Some of which were Commissioners, SAs, SSAs, PAs, PSs and other related offices. Famous amongst them were; Hon. Abubakar Okirga, Hon. Sule O. Koku, HE Alh. Halilu Bala Usman, Hon.

Haj. Talatu Umar Ogbayi, Hon. Ibrahim Awuna, Mr. Joel Olubo, Hon. Joseph Osu Ogbere, Hon. Danladi Madaki, Mal. Yahaya Ibrahim Ogba, Hon. Abdulkarim A. Kana, Hon. Samuel A. Egya, Rt. Hon. Sani Shuaibu, Hon. Mohammed Abubakar, Mal. Isah Mohammed Eya, Haj. Hashiya Ahmed in their respective offices of representations. Aside that, Udege/Loko has been producing Afo sons in the

state House of Assembly, likewise Kokona West (but, only one or two tenures). Kokona, Keffi and Nasarawa LGs were so many times taken over by Afo people as chairmen.

Present Political Situation of Afo People

The present political situation in Afo land is very questionable, weakening, enfeeble, discouraging, pitiful and almost avoidable for many obvious reasons. These are among others:

1. Lack of Political Dividends: Politics is all about deriving some worldly dividends to be benefitted from after working for it and that can come via divergent ways. Politics in Afo land is very enfeeble for the fact that there are no many obvious benefits to write home about.
2. Lack of Empowerment: John Maxwell said and I quote "Leaders become great not because of their power, but because of their ability to empower others". Those that were opportuned to be in power have totally neglected the younger ones in the aspect of employment and empowerment. Amassing wealth for selves and immediate family members is now the order of the day so also favoritism and nepotism. As a political leader, one of the ways to be great and get holistic loyalty from people is to empower them. This empowerment can come through different ways depending on one's ability, siklls/certificate.
3. Selfishness: A too much love to selves has created a great confusion and disunity in political cycle of Afo land. Leadership is supposed to be transitional and rotational in nature. In a situation where an individual feels not to release or relinquish a certain position for others to do as well, it becomes so condemnable.
4. Enviness: As others are so egocentric in nature, always want themselves alone and not others to succeed, there are lots of others out there who are fully loaded with envy. They do not want to applaud others for encountering anything called success. This is very bedeviling, it raises alarm, create great disunity and inhospitality.

Remedies

Having noticed some of the factors that give birth to inhospitable politics in Afo land, how then can we create an enabling and profitable political ground in Afo land? To be precised, we must avoid all the aforementioned factors:

1. Avoid politics of money. By following material things, we end up voting wrong candidates that will just mess up throughout their tenures.
2. Avoid politics of rancor and vendetta.
3. Go for politics of decency, decorum, altruism, sincerity, friendliness and togetherness.
4. Let us beware generally that politics is said to be a game of number, Afo people that are situated in the western part of the state; Keffi, Kokona and Nasarawa LGAs to be precised are amongst the highest populated citizens in the entire state. Their immense contributions in politics cannot be over emphasized, it is high time they are fully remembered and carried closely along in all ramifications. As for the political leaders within Afo localities, "an idle man is a devil's workshop" engage your constituents in one thing or the other and have a rest of mind, applauses and encomiums and that will stamp on you and your generations (even unborn) legacies that you can be remembered for.

Finally, we pray for good Leaders with focus, mission, vision, determination, good and profitable plans for their citizens.

U. S. EGYA

(DAN-HAJIYA, THE HON. TEACHER)



ANNIHILATING THE AFO GIRL CHILD INFERIORITY IN EDUCATIONAL PARTICIPATION

In the history of mankind, education has formed a continuum and a basis for the development of society. Through the development of attitudes, values, and capabilities, both of knowledge and skill, education provides resilience for all to respond to change of situations and enables all to contribute to social development and building the nation. Thus, education is one of the basic means of human and cultural self-realization as well as a means of realizing the productive power of a nation. Education is the bedrock for the full promotion and improvement of the status of women, especially the Gild child. it is the

basic tool that should be given to women in order to fulfill their role as full members of society. 10.5 million Nigerian children are out of school and about 60 percent are girls" (UNICEF, 2014).

Considering the advent of education in other Nigerian tribes, the Afo tribe comparatively are just recently educated with a few number of graduate population. This is even worse when the education of a girl child is taken into account. The Afo communities has a community structure that was tamed for an intense patriarchy which only pave way for a girlchild to farm and marry. These girls suffer from lots of harms, insecurity and negative

influences caused by some inherent traditions and socio-economic factors which deny her right to quality education, freedom, dignity, opportunities, and self-worth; which makes a girl child become vulnerable and hinder her full development as a human person, unavoidably, also negatively affects her contribution to the society.

Researches have shown that girls without education are denied the opportunity to develop their full potential and to play a productive and equal role in their families, their societies, their country and their world at large.

Girls' education has been viewed as a primary predictor for a number of development indicators including national fertility rates, infant mortality, family income and productivity. World Bank economists have recognized girls' education as single development intervention with the greatest individual and social returns. It is not only important as a social indicator or an engine for economic development leading to a greater level of health, economy, security, liberty and participation in social and political activity, but can possibly yield higher rate of return than any other investment available in developing world.

In Afo land, parents' attitude towards Afo girl child education is an important factor in determining their academic performance and achievement. Favourable and optimistic attitude of Afo parents towards education is a pathway for value reorientation and poverty eradication. Although, an indicator shows that parents' level of education, customs, traditions and socio-economic status, can negatively affect their attitude towards the educational demand of children especially the Afo girl child. This challenge can

seemingly be surmountable by enrolling them in acquisition of soft and flexible skills to make them self reliant and independent. Comparatively, it remains imperative for Afo parents to enroll their girl child up in school upto secondary school level and beyond at least to enable her become self reliant if utilized carefully. No doubt In the recent years, the concept of education is beginning to be equated with learning, irrespective of where, when and how often it occurs. Family involvement in education has been identified as a beneficial index in girl child learning. It is a key component of national educational policies and early childhood programs.

Seemingly, it appears to be a natural phenomenon for parents to consciously embark on training the male child but it is ideal to merge it with the future of what parents can foresee. No girl child is born without certain distinctive abilities which if properly harnessed through Education, can make her an outstanding success no matter her level of education. Most of them possess the qualities to become entrepreneurs and therefore, these qualities and talents need to be developed accordingly by exposing them to education. Nigeria is aware of the need to create an enabling environment for rapid development and poverty eradication.

In essence, a wake up call goes to Afo nation to be committed in or fight for Afo girl-child education. This can be achieved when the girl child is properly guided and counseled through formal or non formal education for her betterment and the nation at large.

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THE BACKGROUND OF AFO POLITICS



Politics emanated from the Greek word, Politika, 'affairs of the society' is the set of activities that are associated with making decisions in groups, or other forms of power relations among individuals, such as the distribution of resources or status. Politics of one sort or another is as old as the human species himself. However, western politics began with the ancient Greeks. One of the first major works that discussed politics was *The Republic* by Plato. In his

book, he described his vision for an ideal society.

Up until fairly recently, politics had little to do with democracy or elections. Power was concentrated on the hands of a relatively small group of people who achieved their power via hereditary privilege, violence, or religious traditions. Over the past 200 years, democracy have grown and spread worldwide, and today in more countries power is largely about elections and satisfying the needs and wishes of the people living in

a particular society.

Harold Lasswell viewed politics as, who gets what, when and how in the society through peaceful coexistence of varied interests.

Karl Marx defined politics as the conflict that exists between two classes in the society i.e. the bourgeoisies and the proletariats over a limited or scarce resources while our wants are unlimited.

Here are ten (10) reasons why politics is important and how they influence human life in all its ramifications:

1. Politics help people to understand their rights.
2. It affects every aspect of daily lives.
3. In a way, politics provides a voice and platform to people.
4. Moreso, politics determines laws and decisions.
5. Invariably politics governs society Constitution.
6. Also, politics enacts change in a society.
7. The establishment power and how it is controlled is dictated by politics.
8. Politics creates a sense of identity.
9. Politics influences the way people think and behave.

From the above, according to Mao Zedong. However, the common trend is the opposite of Mao's definition where people are good in playing politics of bitterness so much that, cordial family ties and community relationships are broken down, progress and development is at the detriment of national interest. Thus, the Afo communities are far left behind. Untill this restraining acts are corrected, community development will never be in sight within the Afo communities.

The following are recommendations that if adopted, the political atmosphere of the Afo communities will be favourable for a national interest that will yield sustainable development:

1. That politics should not be seen as a do or die affair. No matter the situation, the rules of the game should be respected: politics for development.
2. Citizens should as matter of fact put forward the issue of national interest first at the detriment of individual interest.
3. After an election, the winner should not be arrogant and boastful that he/she has made it by his unshared effort with the exclusion of others. Correspondingly, the one who lost should not be discouraged from the system. Rather, he/she should be patient and also bear at the back of his/her mind that hard times are not permanent, happy days will certainly rejuvenate.
4. There should be political tolerance to enable the system to survive as the case maybe.
5. The ones that lost elections should be able to accept the outcome in good fate in order for peaceful development and continuity of the system. Not in instance where people do not embrace defeat in a contest that a winner must emerge. This initiate rifts within a community that is always cumbersome to reconstruct.
6. Learn from the actions of others and create an effective replica for the betterment of the community. For example, the experience of USA elections where Mrs. Hillary Clinton had a mass votes from Americans as against the lesser votes of the then President Donald Trump but because the electoral college was not in support of her candidacy, Hillary lost the elections. She conceded defeat for a peaceful America.

Politics is best viewed as either a system of give and take or vice versa. Therefore, it should be understood that both winning and loosing are two sides of the same coin, just like life and death all attached to every giving system.

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ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF MINING IN UDEGE DEVELOPMENT AREA

Due to human activities and exposure, certain activities lead to endangering of the environment. Hence, it is important to understand what an environment is within this context. A portion of the total surroundings in contact with the system boundaries is known as the environment. This is a place which includes the human surroundings where daily activities are carried out, among which include mining.

According to National Geographic Society, mining is the process of extracting useful materials from the earth. Some examples of substances that are mined include coal, gold, or iron ore, columbite among others.

Also, due to the abundance of solid minerals and metals in Nigeria it continues to make the nation one of the wealthiest in the world. Over 120 different minerals are beneath the country's surface. They are profitable,

lucrative, and one of the most globally demanded minerals which are in vast volumes in Nigeria is the rich presence of Columbite Ore. Columbite Ore minerals are rocks containing Columbite, which has a formula $\text{Fe}_2\text{Nb}_2\text{O}_6$. It is a soft, grey ductile and transition metal. Columbite is refined by froth floatation of the ore, roasted with Lithium, and final extraction using electricity. When used as an alloy, it is used to form weldable steel for heat-sensitive detective devices and radio transmitting valves. Being a niobium mineral that is common, columbite it makes for an ore of the industrially useful metal. Niobium, Nb, is used in alloys for improved strength. Columbite, also called niobite, niobite-tantalite and columbate $[(\text{Fe}, \text{Mn})\text{Nb}_2\text{O}_6]$. Columbite and Tantalite together are called Coltan.

The profit margins on the sale of Columbite or columbite Concentrates to international

buyers can be anywhere from 15% to 110% depending on if you're the miner or are purchasing from the mines. China is the top importer of Columbite in the world. Columbite is usually found alongside Tantalite. Columbite mining or processing can create a great source of employment.

Columbite minerals and Columbite Concentrates prices are calculated in kilograms and metric tonnes. The Columbite concentrate is the pure Columbite extract from the rock (ore) itself. There are Columbite deposits in Plateau, Kogi, Kano, Kaduna, Bauchi, Nasarawa and a few other states in Nigeria. They're found in the Northern and Southern parts of Nigeria.

All over the world, international buyers are always looking to purchase Columbite Ore from Nigeria because of its quality, abundance, and price. They come into the country on a regular basis for meetings with commodity trading companies and miners to see how they can establish long-term relationships and to guarantee a steady supply of the commodity every month for at least one year. Depending on what they agree, a decision will be made on which supplier or suppliers to go with, issue an Irrevocable Corporate Purchase Order (ICPO), sign a contract, and start transacting.

The massive demand for this mineral or concentrates in Nigeria by international buyers makes venturing into the export of Columbite Ore minerals or concentrates from Nigeria to several countries around the world a lucrative export business to start up. This natural occurring resource is found in udege development area of Nasarawa LGA of Nasarawa state. The mining is still active and going on in every cranes of udege development area. It provides employments to the large population of udege development area, despite it danger which is unknown to the people.

Therefore, in the process of extraction of columbite or mining of columbite negative impact which affect the individual and environment is exposed. Some associated negative effects of artisanal and small scale

mining include: loss of mineral revenue through smuggling, food insecurity, destruction to surface and underground water through toxic contamination and pollution caused by mud and sediments, air, noise pollution and radiation, Among other necessary factors which is usually overlooked but is dangerous to human and the environment is radiation. Radiation is energy that comes from a source and travels through space at the speed of light. Background radiation can also come from outer space and the sun. Other sources are man-made, such as x-rays, radiation therapy to treat cancer, and electrical power lines. . Most of it forms naturally from minerals. These radioactive minerals are in the ground, soil, water, and even our bodies. This show that mining is important and also dangerous to our environment since in the process of extraction of the mineral resources a radioactive material can be technically activated. Certain studies demonstrated that when an environment is exposed to radiation, the outcome may result in excess Cancer disease occurrence in the population which could lead to death.

A simple method of reducing the impact of mining in our society or environment includes; Lower-Impact Mining Techniques:

1. Reusing Mining Waste.
2. Eco-Friendly Equipment.
3. Rehabilitating Mining Sites.
4. Shutting Down Illegal Mining.
5. Improving Mining Sustainability
6. Monitor and regulate small-scale miners

Create alternative employment opportunities, which is the most important. Also, radiation impact assessment, background radiation benchmark and radiation awareness should be carried out in the respective environment before commencement and after to help solve future challenges.

KHALID YAHAYA KAIKA

Auditor, AYM.

CHIEFTAINCY TUSSLE; ILLUMINATING THE PATH.



It is widely believed that the origin of the Afo people can be traced to the Arabian Peninsula precisely Yemen. They later migrated and settled in Ngazargamu, a city founded by Mai of Bornu, Ghaji Dunami. Afterwards, they left Ngazargamu as a result of Chieftaincy wranglings to the Kwararafa-Apa kingdom. Further disputes made them migrate to their current places of abode. So, it has been a cankerworm, one that has followed the Afo people throughout the years to their present locations. Sadly, we are yet to move on from it. There are still skirmishes here and there and some districts without the Osu.

It is quite a pity that at this time and age, we are yet to find a lasting solution to the Chieftaincy disputes. We have allowed selfish interest prevail over the collective good. Posterity shall not be fair to us if we fail to solve the lingering chieftaincy tussle over the years. We must make efforts to unite our

people otherwise, we invoke the wrath of nature.

For the records, with the exception of the Qur'an, hadith and perhaps the scriptures, everything is prone to change. It is the only thing that is constant. There is this maxim: The law is made for man, not man for the law.

When a law ceases to serve its purpose, it is either amended or changed. In some instances, a new law is enacted to keep up with the call of the times. That is why the Nigerian Constitution went through stages of developments from Sir Frederick Lugard Constitution to the Sir Clifford Constitution and to what we now use.

Meanwhile, we continue to cite history. However, Dan Brown rightly stated that history is always written by the winners. When two parties clash, the loser is obliterated, and the winner writes the history books - books which glorify their own cause and disparage the conquered foe. As Napoleon once said, 'What is history, but a fable agreed upon? To an extent, that is why history books are being altered and we see old and new editions. We must understand that history starts somewhere, ends and starts again. Therefore, the Afo Nation should start a new chapter anchored on fairness and justice. Everyone should have a sense of belonging.

Now, during my Senior Primary School days having passed through Laminga Senior Primary School in the early sixties, I remember quite fondly the encounters with Mallam Awoda who was a little unstable psychologically. Yet, one would be amazed by the coherency of his thoughts at times. In those days, when you give him alms and mentioned that you're doing it because of the Sarkin Nasarawa or Sarkin Laminga, he will reject it outrightly. Meanwhile, if you present the same alms to him and attribute your act to the Almighty God, he will gladly receive it and bless you even. And then, he will add that "Babu Sarki sai Allah" -meaning there's no King but God.

Any takeaway from that? Yes, all power belongs to the Almighty. So, why are our people blinded by power? Why can't we find a common ground. Woodrow Wilson, the 28th President of the United States once stated "If you come at me with your fists doubled, I think I can promise you that mine will double as fast as yours; but if you come to me and say, 'Let us sit down and take counsel together, and, if we differ from each other, understand why it is that we differ, just what the points at issue are,' we will presently find that we are not so far apart after all, that the points on which we differ are few and the points on which we agree are many, and that if we only have the patience and the candor and the desire to get together, we will get together."

May I suggest that we set up a panel consisting of reputable people amongst us, people of unquestionable character that are led on by the truth. Their first assignment should be reconciliation of the warring parties. The people should lend them all the necessary support as they set up a conflict management and resolution mechanism. Similarly, we should be ready to shift grounds and compromise, inculcate the spirit of give and take for the progress of the Afo Nation. In deed, the only way out is through dialogue. It is said that a problem shared is a problem halved. Let us understand that we have a duty to the Afo Nation which is speaking with one voice.

In conclusion, we must remember the day when neither wealth nor sons shall benefit us, except to those who come before Allah with a pure heart.

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AFO: A DISTINGUISHABLE HERITAGE OF LOVE, DISCIPLINE AND HOSPITALITY

Every traditional society has its distinct culture, language and norms which defines it. The Afo people are no different. They are characterized by a longstanding legacy of a rich cultural heritage. In all spheres of life, the Afo people have a bewitching aura about them stemming from their hospitality, altruism, refreshing candor, compassion and friendliness. The Afo people are famed for their independence and being custodians of a truly refined custom with myriads of rites and festivals.

On account of their close lineage with the Kanuri people, the Afo people had Kanuri tribal marks, triple vertical marks on the cheeks, ribs and backs which can still be seen on an insignificant number of the olden Afo men. In addition, the Afo people were once inhabitants of the Kwararafa-Apa Kingdom along with the Agatu and Alagos and thus, it should not be surprising that they share some words (similar in meaning) with those languages.

The rural communities of the Afo people who are the preservatives of some certain customs and costumes is not centralized or stratified but a fluid one where each village, made up of several extended family compounds built with varying sections (agirika). It is governed by a group of elders (igabo) who elect an overall chief (osu) from one of the ruling families which alternate in the

succession line. The chief's successor or Kaura/ madaki is chosen by the chief from the ward alternative to his own in consultation with the council of elders. The osu carries an emblem of office, the tail of a buffalo (izga/ unze) handed to him from the dead chief's possession. The council of elders known culturally as the igabo is a body of men whose function is to advise the chief to try cases. The council usually comprised men of wisdom, as it incorporates the elder statesmen in the various agirika.

A very prominent authority in the Afo community is the ogado/eji who had the final authority on the customs of the people. He is the nearest to the ancestors and is often the eldest inhabitant. The ogado or eji orders the performance of planting and harvest and communal rites and is usually invoked to appease the gods in cases of disaster, war etc. Furthermore, justice was dispensed forthwith. As the Afo judicial system focused mostly on deterrence over retribution, the rate of crime was minimal. The principal component of the judicial system is the court, consisting the chief and the village council. However, where there were serious cases, the Adaweji, the intermediary between the spirit world and the community was called upon. His word was final and he entrenched justice without sentiments or any sense of bias.

In a similar vein, masquerades were performed by men with their bodies partially or completely disguised under specially

made netted or woven costumes, fiber skirts, drapes, gowns or ordinary cloth pieces, with or without face masks, helmet masks or headpieces, some with their feet and hands showing and in some cases, carrying ceremonial paraphernalia or sticks for beating people. Some were silent, others such as Eya spoke using voice disguises and they were accompanied by attendants and interpreters. They either danced or sped around a section of the village or to surrounding communities. They came out mainly during the dry season when there were no farming activities, representing local spirits associated with the village, for the new year or to celebrate the deaths of important male elders. These masquerades provided pleasure (owa) to the people as they were accompanied by some form of music and rhythms played on drums, pot drums, flutes, rattles and songs.

Until very recently, the upbringing of a child in the Afo society was a communal affair. It was not left to the parents of the child alone. If a child commits an offence, he can be disciplined by any older person in the community. Primarily, the training of the female child rests on the shoulders of the mother, grandmother and in fact all the womenfolk in the community. The same goes for the male child. That is not to say there is no overlap between the two. Besides, the rites of passage among the Afo people ensured the shaping of productive and community oriented responsible adults. Through those rites, the child is taught all the ways of adulthood, the rules and taboos of the society, moral instructions and social responsibility. Some of these rites of passage include the eya, the emishi, the egbuduru and alalumu.

Meanwhile, the crafts practiced by Afo men and women gave the rural dweller a certain self sufficiency in domestic, agricultural and ritual goods; buildings, cotton cloth, basketry, farming tools, pots, shrines, musical instruments and masquerade costumes. Aside from being predominantly farmers (producing the finest yams and growing both food and cash crops), the Afo people practiced weaving, dying, pottery metal works and assorted carvings. The blacksmiths of Alakyo (Agam) were exceptionally brilliant metal workers whereas the men of Kana had no equal in

weaving. Cotton was also grown, processed into threads and sometimes dyed with indigo by men and women. Similarly, wood carving and moulding of material of intricate shapes and contours was common artwork among the Afo people. The pottery women of Igwo had no comparison in the production of pots and other clay items for various purposes.

Correspondingly, marriage among the Afo people represents an institution that helps both the bride and groom actualize their life's mission and objectives. As a result, marriage served not only as a form of recreation and procreation but to fortify the ties of family and build on the love for kinsmen. The purpose of marriage was more on the collective than the individual. A wife is not just married to her husband but his immediate and extended family. Therefore, it is not uncommon for brothers to inherit the wives of their brother upon demise. Exchange marriage was a common occurrence then as it involves the arranged and reciprocal exchange of spouses (inzeshi) between two families. Whenever a marriage is arranged between a daughter from a family and a son from a friend's family, something akin to that is planned between the groom's family and a son from the bride's family. Some other forms of marriage in the Afo society includes the bride price or labor on in-laws farms by the prospective groom or elopement which was very rare because it was considered a taboo since it is bereft of the parent's blessings.

In conclusion, the Afo people is richly blessed and its endowment makes for the most beautiful sites and landscapes in Nigeria. A tourist will be marveled with the spectacular range of hills that extends from Agwada through Kana and Onda Villages. Another site to behold is the enticing natural rock formation along Nasarawa – Udege – Loko road. The historical Omadegye rock that houses a lake at its base presents a serene environment to unwind and savour nature in its element best. Despite the many shortcomings of the Afo Nation, it has never been found wanting in hospitality as it redefines it. In deed, a adventurer will never regret the Afo Nation as a choice location.

MALL.ABUBAKARAHMAD,
Secretary, Afo Youth Mobility.



THE ROLE OF SKILL ACQUISITION ON YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN AFO NATION

The Afo people, like any other ethnic group in kwararafa empire have a strong Social organisations that led to the survival of the people. It was observed that Afo people have historical background on skills acquisition for centuries. Unfortunately, while the 21st century comes with lots of advancements, it is conveyed by lots of challenges of which unemployment is leading. A majority of Afo population dwells in rural communities and statistically, three quarters of the world's poor reside in rural areas where decent work deficits are particularly severe. This is further exacerbated by the

lack of access to Social protection and negative attitude to learn and acquire skills.

It might interest you to know that technicians who never saw the four walls of the university earn more than university graduate through vocational skills. With the high rate of unemployment and other social services that has ravaged our communities. Afo youths from both genders are required to acquire new skills through Entrepreneurial training programmes.

Skills acquisition is pivotal and a key factor in tackling the challenges of rural poverty. By providing

employability and enchanting income earning opportunities. Skills acquisition can lift women and men out of poverty and promote sustainable rural livelihood.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Skill is a special ability or technique acquired by special training in either an intellectual or physical area. Skills can include listening, communicating, organisation, design and programming. Skills allow individual to select the most appropriate behaviour or action to suit task requirements.

In conjunction, skill acquisition can be defined as

the art of learning to do something in order to earn a living and or to survive. Thus, skills can be acquired from several sources depending on the skills and the environment. For instance, a person who is interested in acquiring the skill of repairing cars, motorcycles or anything motor related would likely acquire such skill from professionals in that field.

Vocational skills typically refer to skills and occupations that you gain toward becoming knowledgeable in a specific trade or profession. Acquiring one or two vocational skills is a vital first step to entrepreneurship. Most successful business owners and entrepreneurs in Nigeria started by acquiring a vocational skill or training that is in high demand in the society. Today, over 5 million young people in Nigeria are jobless, meaning that a young person is three times more likely to be unemployed than an adult

WHAT ARE THE IMPORTANCE OF SKILLS ACQUISITION IN OUR COMMUNITY?

Skills is like a key used in opening door of fortune. As water is very essential to human life, so is skill needed in our rural communities. Learning vocational skills helps to ensure food security and rural development both of which are important when fighting poverty. Skill acquisition strategies must look not only at households but also at communities and territories.

Providing training in vocational skills plays an important role in equipping young people and adults with the skills required for work and social integration. Yet, Afo leaders in government often pay little or no attention to skills training for youth and adults. Policy to reduce poverty also implies building a system able to meet this specific demand. Adequate incentives and support mechanism are needed to stimulate and improve the training capacity of the non-government provider.

Importance of skills acquisition include:

1. **Crime reduction:** It reduces Crime rate because people will begin to think on their daily duties to make money when they have a job they call their own. Skills acquired in schools and other levels can significantly help to reduce crime rates and unemployment our communities. People begin to think of many dirty activities they can perform to acquire money and make life comfortable. Community and political leaders are advise to organize skill acquisition programmes to avoid crime by the populace
2. **Self Employment/Empowerment:** the state of working for one self as a result of freelance. The piece you are reading now is written as a result of the skills acquired by the writer. A self employed person can never go hungry because the skills he/she acquired provides food for daily consumption.
3. **Job Opportunities:** Those who has many skills start the chance of gaining many jobs from different organisation. Finally, skills open door to greatness, a skillful person speaks with confidence while non skillful man is full of fear and uncertainty. Types of skills that can be acquired by the youth include vocational carpentry, hair dressing, mechanic, repair of GSM handset, wrist watch. Also, some skills are entrepreneurial such as small scale business which include operation of kiosk, buying and selling of spare part etc.

Community pressing problem due to lack of adequate skills:

1. Inavailability of trainee to develop the technical skills for poor farmers and the unemployed youths.
2. The inavailability of vocational schools or centres that can respond to the learning needs of local environment and the use of modern learning.
3. Unemployment is a very hot issue

particularly in our communities, people in our society are facing serious hunger as a result of lack of employment because they dependent vastly in farming for survival which is not forth coming.

4. Cultism is one of the most pressing problem in the community. As we have today, the menace and agressiveness of cult members and cult related violence clashes and activities has caused sudden death of some youth in some of our communities. Youth engaged in Cultism and other illegal activities due to lack of vocational training
5. Robbery and Corruption the activities of Robbery and Corruption is at alarming rate in our communities where even youth of less that 20 years of age involved in this menace. Crime rate has increased in the community over the years, cases of armed robbery' occurance, kidnapping have increased due to increased level of poverty among our people.

Recommended solutions:

Our commitment to skill acquisition is premised on the fact that it remains the most viable and sustainable solution to combating unemployment, crime and poverty. No reasonable analysis will divorce unemployment from needless violence that has claimed thousands of lives. It will equally be difficult to separate rising crime and social vices from unemployment and the attendant poverty.

1. Establishment of vocational training centres can lead to significant reduction of crime

among young and adult who participated in skills acquired or learned.

2. Provision of free Entrepreneurial class for the youth and adult: Entrepreneurship is seen as the engine of innovation and job creation. It's the mechanism for Wealth and weel-being in the society. Entrepreneurship will help make young and old to be self-reliant and boost thier economics status. Entrepreneurship has been identify globally and nationally as a tool for generating a sustainable economy growth and Community development.

CONCLUSION

The world is embracing a knowledge-based economy. We need to acquire education but complementarily, acquire vocational and entrepreneurial skills for community development. The primary purpose of any form of vocational training is to prepare individuals those in the age group of 15-25 years, for the world of work, and make them employable for a broad group of occupation and rural development and also to keep themselves abreast to the economic expenditures of their daily livelihood. Afo men and women are therefore encouraged with high demand to learn, unlearn and relearn skills because it is so safe to say that skills is very important in the life of every human being.

- **ABDULRAHMAN OWUNA HUSSAINI**



HAZARD OF SKIN BLEACHING ON THE AFO YOUTH

The tropics and savannah are warm and averaging 25 to 28°C. This is because the tropics gets more exposure to the sun. Part of the adaptive strategy that evolve in African people is dark skin, a mechanism of natural selection against the burning heat of the sun. Thus, Nigeria, the host country of Afo people is one among the 54 countries of the tropical region. The Afo community is also one where the weather is relatively mostly warm. By all odds, the people of the Afo community are mostly dark in complexion.

The darkness of the skin is due to the existence of melanin, which is a substance in the skin that cause dark coloration. Melanin is a pigment that prepares the skin to be strong enough for tropical climates. It protects from DNA damage and absorbs the right amount of Ultraviolet (UV) radiation needed by the body.

Alarmingly, there is now preference or disfavour for dark skin. Skin tone is now branded as fashionable, beauty, grace and high social status specifically among African youth and this perception encourages youth, especially ladies indulging in skin lightening (skin bleaching). In Afo community's cosmetic map, skin whitening products have occupied a large percentage and it has become a new lifestyle addiction for a good percentage youth. These alarming rates in skin bleaching across the Afo communities begs for an urgent redress.

Skin bleaching is a cosmetic practice that aims at lighten the skin. It is the changing of the skin colour from dark to fair with the use of toxic chemical, herbs, soaps, fade creams, professional treatments such as chemical peels and laser therapy or any other substance that is strong enough to cause a quick change of the skin colour. Common topical

bleaching creams and lotions have historically contained hydroquinone, corticosteroids, and mercury compounds. These chemicals have serious side effects, both on the skin area they are applied to and throughout the body.

Within the Afo people, this practise is commonplace at all ages; both among men and women. However, observation indicate a much higher prevalence in young, unmarried and uneducated women and that only little has been done to check its continuous spread into the strata of our society. Almost everywhere in Afo community, one is confronted with a horribly bleached face, piteous hands or appalling foot.

There are several factors contributing to and perpetuating this behaviour. Attractiveness to some Afo youth is not fully achieved if the skin still remains dark. For the Afo communities, ignorance of the implications of skin bleaching and lack of confidence is a helping hand in the issue of skin bleaching.

Ignorance in the sense that, the youth have literally no idea on which cream to use or what chemicals the cream contains, when to use and how to use. This makes skin whitening sometimes taking them unaware or unconsciously. Lack of confidence plays a major role in skin bleaching. Some youth forget that everyone is created in his/her own unique beautiful way. The reason for this observation is partly because this group of young adults are more susceptible to Western concepts of beauty. These two major reasons are at the forefront, propelling skin bleaching among the Afo youth.

Unfortunately, the skins of bleaching victims become multi-coloured: red facial skin, yellow arms, black back, knees, fingers and toes. It is a shame that such misconceptions and self-identity issues persist within our community of 'Afo Queens' such that instead of beauty, they get a bucket full of shame, damaged self-esteem and social rejection. The cosmetic industry use quite a number of

toxic chemicals some of which are banned in some countries in bleaching creams. They include:

1. The most popular chemical in bleaching creams or agents is hydroquinone used by clients to lighten their skin. Large quantities of such substances can endanger the skin by destroying melanosomes (intracellular organelles that are generated by pigment cells in the skin and eye) in the skin completely resulting in patchy depigmentation and Exogenous Ochronosis (EO), a skin disorder that causes visible blue-black pigmented blood vessels in the skin.
2. Another widely used chemicals are steroids (corticosteroids), when used over large areas for long periods, they can have side effects such as acne, infection, inflammation, osteoporosis, a condition called Cushing's syndrome, and more.
3. Mercury compounds, another extensively used chemical in skin whitening cream can cause mercury poisoning and damage the nervous system. Side effects include headache, hearing loss, disordered thoughts, kidney damage, and even death.

To avoid unconscious indulgence into skin bleaching, in choosing creams for the skin, one must make it a habit to read the label which tells the whole story of the cream. By reading the label one can be knowledgeable about the content so that the wrong cream will not be used to bleach or destroy the skin. Other effects of skin whitening include: thinning of the skin, thereby making the organ prone to injuries, abnormalities in a newborn (if used during pregnancy), using of such hard chemicals by a pregnant woman results to deformity in the new born.

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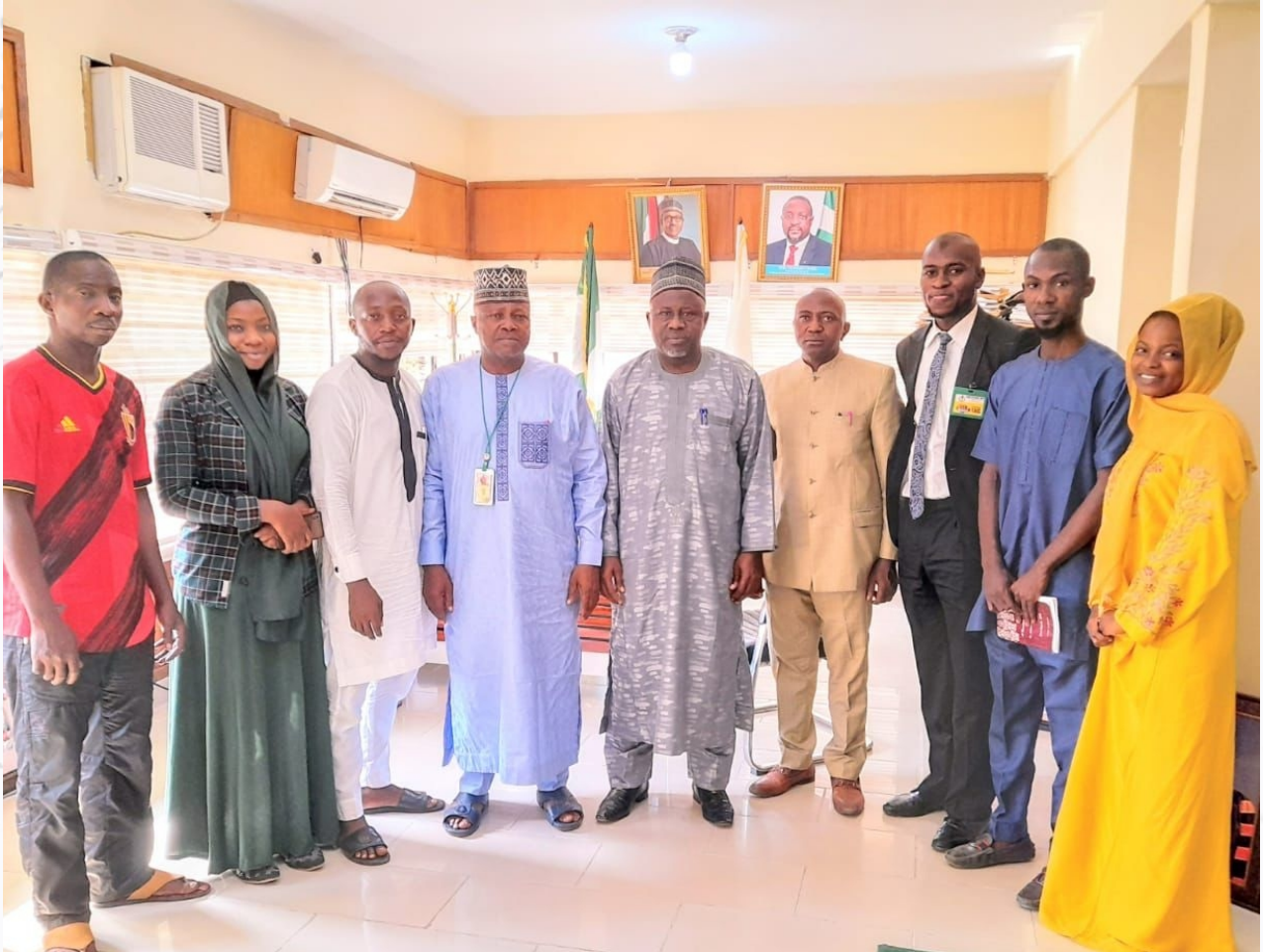












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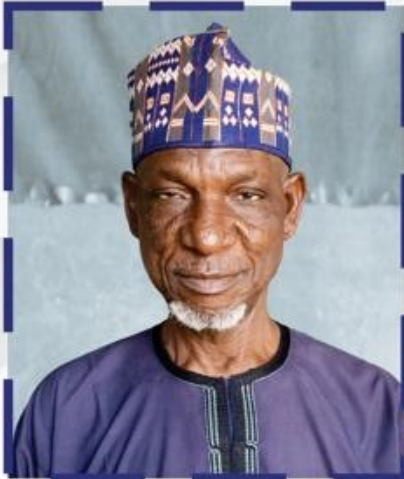


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