

**BEYOND THE RHETORIC: PROMOTING ETHNIC, SOCIAL DIVERSITY AND
INCLUSIVENESS IN THE WORKPLACE FOR A PEACEFUL NATIONAL
COHESION, A CRITICAL REVIEW OF NIGERIA'S FEDERAL CHARACTER
COMMISSION (FCC)**

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Abstract

In an ever-changing demographics in the workplace, workforce diversity and its benefits has become a topical issue. There is an underlying linkage and interconnection among geographically, socially and economically diverse groups in Nigeria. Whenever this diversity is not understood properly or is misinterpreted, there arises tensions, disputes or situations of conflict. This paper aims to explicitly explore the role of Nigeria's Federal Character Commission (FCC) in achieving real workforce diversity including ethnic and social representation.

Keywords: Diversity, Workplace Inclusiveness, Federal Character, National Cohesion.

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1. Introduction

The decision of the colonial masters to merge dissimilar but distinct groups and cultures into one political entity called Nigeria added to the problem of nation-building for post-independent administrations. They amalgamated a geographically and ethnically diverse people for economic and administrative but failed to explore their diversity (Onah and Ayogu, 2018). It is an obvious fact that inter-cultural, inter-ethnic, inter-religious and/or political conflicts are usually more common, more intense, more violent, and more vicious in a society where national cohesion is fragile. (Ugoh and Ukpere, 2012; UNDP, 2016).

Nigeria is a country of great socio-cultural diversity and disparity that has, in modern decades, gone through considerable political, economic and social developments. It is the most populous country in the entire African continent, with an estimated 202 million peoples with well over 250 ethno-linguistic groups, some of which are bigger than many independent states of contemporary Africa. (Aluko, 2007, Ojo 2009 ;World Bank Report 2020). A major source of identity amongst Nigeria has always been in the areas of religion, ethnicity, geopolitical region, state of origin and if you are from the North or the south.

Unfair representation in government has led to a feeling of discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, race or religion which in turn provoked tensions and conflicts resulting in the collapse of the first republic in 1966 and the civil war (1967-1970) (Mustapha, 1986;Demarest, Langer and Ukiwo, 2020). To address the created by these unfair representation, several constitutional amendments took place as a way to promote national unity and engender political stability. A key one is the inclusion of the requirement for a president to secure at least a quarter of the votes in 2/3rd of the states in Nigeria, in addition to securing the majority votes, to be declared the winner. Political parties were to have national spread and the introduction of federal character principle which demands that all ethnic and regional groups should be represented in the composition of all tiers of government. These constitutional changes and rules were maintained in subsequent Republics and military regimes.

With the aforementioned, Nigeria's diversity should have been harnessed towards national cohesion. The best possible way to begin to address threats to effective management of diversity for national cohesion is to recognize that unity does not mean uniformity, and that understanding, respecting and tolerating differences occasioned by socio-cultural diversity, is by far better than strenuously striving to wish them away. Edewor et al, (2014)

Consequently, acceptance of diversity and the peaceful interaction between inter-ethnic, inter-cultural and inter-religious groups within the society promote harmonious relations among various people, enrich their lives and provide them with creativity to respond to new challenges (Niessen, 2000). This implies that cohesion and commitment to participate in the life of the society are enhanced when differences are identified and valued. In other words, cohesion can be enhanced when diversity is valued and promoted.

National cohesion is a mechanism which specifies the processes of enhancing national peace and development in conflict-affected and post-conflict countries (UNDP, 2016). Government, through its various agencies and institutions can significantly contribute to societal settings that support and appreciate diversity and thereby promotes cohesion. Although, attainment of national cohesion, which is an ongoing process, is majorly the task-focus of the central government, through its various mechanisms and agencies such as FCC, however, subordinate governments, civil society, media and the people of Nigeria all have vital roles to play in modifying cultural norms and creating a national consciousness that is acquainted with the many commonalities shared among various diverse groups.

Nigeria as a state is facing a dynamic societal paradigm. As a country undergoing rapid and significant social, cultural, political and economic changes, while still tackling several socio-ethnic-religious crisis and hostilities, there is a pressing need to create and sustain a cohesive society that will address the challenges ahead. National cohesion therefore becomes a *sin-qua-non* if we are to manage conflict, develop the country in an equitable and inclusive manner, build peace and democratic governance.

Diversity is not a contradiction, but the recognition of differences that keeps a society together (Niessen, 2000). Workforce diversity is critical for the drive towards national cohesion because without a respect for differences existing within an organization, people who are the most significant elements in the society may turn in on themselves, ultimately leading to their disintegration, decline or disappearance (Niessen, 2000).

The 2014 National Conference of the people of Nigeria consequently argued that the Federal Character Commission should be changed to an “Equal Opportunities Commission” because the constitution and operations of the present Federal Character Commission were lopsided and strongly in favor of the major ethnic groups in the country. (Onah and Ayogu, 2018).

When President Obasanjo constituted his cabinet during his second term in office, he appointed 42 ministers, comprising 16 Moslems (38.1%) and 26 Christians (61.9%). In the whole of Kwara, Kogi, South-west, South-East and South-South, there was not a single moslem minister (Jokolo, 2005). The simple arithmetic quota is therefore deficient in not taking into consideration, important variables like ethnicity, religion and relative merit. President Yar'Adua in 2007 also faced similar accusations of favoring Hausa-Fulani appointees from the far north (Afenifere, 2009). President Buhari is presently being criticized for favoring the northern geo-political zones in the appointments he has made so far. It is gradually becoming a cyclical issue with every government being accused of favoring people from its geo-political zone, tribe and religion and this total negates the principle of character as enshrined in the constitution. At this point one wonders if the FCC has lived up to the promise of fighting discrimination and promoting fairness and diversity.

2. Conceptualization of Workforce Diversity and National Cohesion

Workforce Diversity

This paper perceives diversity from both primary (age, gender, ethnicity, physical abilities and capabilities, race and sexual orientation) and secondary (educational background, geographic location, income, marital status, cultural values, religious beliefs and work experience) dimensions. This denotes that the concept of 'diversity' refers to the presence of different people, with different cultures, ideas, interests, and practices residing in a definite geographical space at a particular time and in a particular society in which they live (Akinnusi, et al., 2017; Loden & Rosener, 1991; Muhammad, 2014; Akinnusi, et al., 2017).

More recently, the term diversity has been used to address variety of values, lifestyles, cultures, religions and languages that characterizes societies (Niessen, 2000). It connotes the ease of associating with people of various background and ideologies without stereotyping but hoping to learn from their wealth of experience. Diversity is a process of understanding, accepting, valuing celebrating and acknowledging similarities and differences amongst people with respect to class, sexually orientation, race, age, spiritual practice and public assistance status, ethnicity, gender, physical and mental ability. (Muhammad, 2014).

Workforce diversity is seen by Kreitner and Kinichi (2007) as the large number of individual differences and similarities that exist among the people working in an organization. This implies that workforce diversity relates to the host of the individual differences and similarities that make all the workers in an organization unique and distinct from one another. Some of these similarities and differences are in their gender, disability, social status, languages, culture, sexual orientation, ethnicity, personality, marital status and religion. Other spheres include lifestyle, tenure, position in the organization, functional specialty or geographical location (Wambui, et al., 2013; Akinnusi, et al., 2017).

A diverse workforce, according to Wambui, et al., (2013), is a response to a changing society. Its effective management will help create and maintain a positive work environment where the differences and similarities of individuals are valued. This is to ensure that all workers reach their individual potential and are able to maximize their contributions to the organization's strategic vision, goals and objectives.

A work environment of diversity and inclusion provides a viable platform for employees to subsequently interact with one another across demographic lines. This is because no single demographic group is valued more than another, leaving no group marginalized, employees are more freely able to engage and challenge each other yet be supportive at the same time (Muhammad, 2014). Although workforce diversity presents bundle of opportunities that can enhance organizational performance, it also presents some challenges to management. On this note, Barlow, Bergen and Foster (2002) pointed out that if diversity is not properly coordinated; it can easily turn into a losing situation for all involved, leading to demoralization.

Bamgbade, Jimoh and Kuroshi (2014) opined that effective management of workforce diversity provide viable platform for developing and sustaining new innovations, knowledge sharing, knowledge enhancement, team coherence, while improper coordination of workforce diversity creates problems of discrimination, conflicts, prejudice, bias, and negative effects on individuals, groups, organizations and society at large.

Management of workforce diversity in an institution will involve the process of identifying, defining, and harmonizing the obvious differences that subsist among the people of an organization/community for creating and sustaining better value (Wambui, et al., 2013).

The glean from all the definitions is that diversity at the workplace has to do with working together in harmonious manner and tolerance of the different and unique set of people within

an organization, using unique inputs for the attainment of the organization's goals and promotion of personal benefits in a positive way (Wambui, et al., 2013; Obita, et al., 2019).

Concept of National Cohesion

National cohesion has become a major post-independence project, which was perceived to be necessary and critical to national progress and development. (Edewor, et al., 2014). It describes a state of affairs in which people of society increasingly see themselves as one people, bound by shared historical experiences and common values, and imbued by the spirit of patriotism and unity, which transcends traditional, primordial diverse tendencies (Jega, 2002).

Edewor, et al., (2014) opines that while government and national leaders advocated and showed commitments to national integration, they simultaneously pursued ethno-religious, regional and other discordant agendas, thumping primitive sentiments and generating conflicts, which further separate rather than integrate the people. On this note, they further made three significant assertions about Nigeria, which need to be address immediately. Firstly, there is significant inequality within states/regions as well as at national level. Secondly, state policies are likely to be highly regressive, with an astonishing share of state expenditures going to service national and regional elites. Thirdly, ordinary as well as elite Nigerians tend to view their society in ethnic or religious terms.

This paper looks at national cohesion from the perspective of social cohesion. Social cohesion as described by the World Bank is that glue that holds society together, creates a sense of community, promotes harmony and a commitment to promote the common good. Apart from the linkages between ethnic and religious groups, the relationship between market institutions, communities and people can further bind the cohesiveness of a society if they are transparent, accountable and inclusive (Colletta, et al, 2001). It implies a set of accepted norms and rules around inclusion and equity, social and national membership and access to basic services and livelihood. (Norton & de Haan, 2013).

In the review of the definitions of national cohesion within the Nigerian context, certain important commonalities emerge. Firstly, national cohesion requires well-built social relations, a feeling of connectedness, direction towards the common good (Cohesion Radar, 2012) and equality (UNDP, 2016). Secondly, it equally possesses economic, social, political and cultural dimensions (Cohesion Radar, 2012). Thirdly, the cohesion broadens horizontally within and

across groups, as well as vertically, from people to their leaders, either at local, state and national level (UNDP, 2016).

It is very clear that national cohesion plays an important role in democratization, development and conflict management in Nigeria. Social cohesion does not involve the homogenization of country, it recognizes that ethnic, social and religious diversity contributes to the development of a confident and democratic society. National cohesion endangers a more consensus-orientated and/or inclusive governance. It helps individuals or a particular interest to have empathy and understanding for others.

Consequently, national cohesion and inclusivity in economic, social and civil political participation reduce the risk of anti-social behavior and individual alienation that can lead to violent extremism (UNDP, 2020).

The Vice President, Prof Yemi Osibajo, while delivering a lecture at 70th Anniversary Lagos Country Club stated that effective management of diversity will promote National unity and cohesion. According to him, history and contemporary reports all over the world shows that social diversity can trigger conflict or forge progress and prosperity for national cohesion. The challenges of insecurity in Nigeria occasioned by hate speech and promotion of divisiveness can be addressed through diversity management for national cohesion which will help drive economic growth

3. Conceptual Analytical Review of the Formation, Structure, Functions, and Powers of Federal Character Commission

The Federal Character Commission (FCC) was established by decree 34 of 1996, primarily to drive the implementation of the Federal Character Principle (FCP). (Gberevbie & Ibietan, 2013; Okpala, G., Williams, U., & Emeka, E.F., (2019), et.al., 2019; Mustapha, 2007).

Establishment of the FCC was a direct approach to redress horizontal inequalities between different groups in society (Demarest, Langer & Ukiwo, 2020). The essence of the principle is to ensure that appointment into the civil service and public office reflects the country's diversity (Nwogwugwu & Sosanya, 2015; Gberevbie & Ibietan, 2013; Ugoh & Ukpere, 2012). This is based on the fact that national institutions and affairs should reflect, in conduct and composition, of the diversity of the country. This should create a sense of belonging amongst citizens. (Akinnusi, et al., 2017; Nwogwugwu & Sosanya, 2015).

The president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria appoints members of the Commission, subject to the ratification of the Senate. Thus, the Chairman, commissioners and secretary are appointed by the President upon nomination by their state governments and ratification by the National Assembly. The legislature has oversight functions with regard to the FCC, with both the Senate and the House of Representatives having committees on Federal Character (Mustapha, 2007).

The commission is composed of a chairman, 37 commissioners representing the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), and the Secretary of the Commission. The law setting up the FCC is silent on the functions of the commissioners, who are further sub-divided into functional committees monitoring different parts of the federal bureaucracy (Mustapha, 2007). Each state has an official state coordinator, who monitors officers and statisticians working for the commission. The commission established 24 committees for monitoring recruitments into about 600 ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) of the Federal Government (Demarest, L., Langer, A., & Ukiwo, U et al., 2020). Funding the operations of the commission has been a major issue especially as it has to do with their investigating activities outside of Abuja. All calls to reform the commission has not generated the needed attention. Recommendation has been to have one commissioner for each of the geo-political zones and one for the federal capital. This will reduce the number of commissioners from 37 to 7. It will drastically help to reduce expenditure.

The mandate of the federal Character Commission is to (a) equitably share job positions amongst all states /geopolitical zones in the country (b) ensure there is compliance by all MDAs (c) put in place a mechanism to ensure compliance and litigation through the courts, if need be (d) demand and receive staff positions and their data from all MDAs and (e) Carry out investigations in response to any petition or complains by the populace. Recently the commission has been demanding for substantial powers in order to rescind any faulty recruitment exercise and order a fresh one.

The capacity of the commission to address a situation where the president is perceived to violate the federal character principle is debated as the Commission absolutely depends on the president which appoints its members and approves its rules and budgets. This implies that, rhetorically, the commission has legal capacity and far-ranging powers and can take chief executives to court for prosecution, but in reality, it appears to have limited real powers to

enforce compliance with federal character. This is one of the reasons why many MDAs are not always cooperative (Demarest, L., Langer, A., & Ukiwo, U., et al., 2020; Mustapha, 2007)

As noted above, the FCC is also responsible for monitoring the distribution of political appointments. Statistics on these appointments has been published regularly by the FCC but recent debate and controversy on President Buhari's political appointments and perceived preference for the North (e.g.; Baiyewu, 2018; Ibeh, 2015; Ojeme, 2018) has generated several calls by the National Assembly and several Civil Society Organizations (CSO) to call on the FCC to clarify the matter (Federal Character, 2018).

It is noteworthy to observe that the FCC Act (1996) further empowers the commission to legally pursue a second mandate, which focuses on the distribution of socio-economic benefits. This second mandate has not been included in the constitution but the contents revealed that it could further strengthens the role of the commission and its impact on the country (Demarest, L., Langer, A., & Ukiwo, U., (2020), et al., 2020).

4. Appraisal of the Mandate and Activities of the Federal Character Commission in the Effort to Ensure National Unity in the Workforce

Establishment of the Federal Character Commission (FCC), was aimed at fostering unity, peace, equal ability, as well as equal access to state resources and to promote the integration of disadvantaged states for better improvement of the living conditions of people living across the country (Ugoh & Ukpere, 2012).

The commission has helped the country to avoid the dominance of government institutions by a single group and has been commended as one of the "effective nation-building strategies invented for managing the combustive diversity in Nigeria." It has been able to successfully work out a modality that ensure equitable and fair representation of Nigeria's diverse groupings in public service, monitor public service recruitment exercises, and prosecute violations of the federal character principle (Demarest, L., Langer, A., & Ukiwo, U., (2020), et.al., 2020)

Even with the above-mentioned achievements, many observers, concerned institutions, scholars and practitioners have however criticized the FCC for not internally respecting the federal character principle. It is observed that all past chairmen have originated from the North which has led to MDAs and other stakeholders to question FCC's integrity (Bello, 2018; Demarest, L., Langer, A., & Ukiwo, U., 2020). The FCC is being termed 'elitist and class

biased', which leads to a blurring of the boundary between the pursuits of meritocracy and ethnic balancing, thereby creating inadvertently a multiple system of citizenship in the polity (Gberevbie & Ibietan, 2013).

According to Olaopa (2012), the FCC in striving to ensure equality for the unequal has become discriminatory. Interpreting federal character purely on the basis of state and ethnicity is considered faulty by many scholars. It should be noted that social classification in Nigeria includes religion, class and ideological divisions.

The principle fails to see the citizen as an individual in his/her own rights but focuses attention on him/her as a member of an ethno-linguistic group within the Nigerian state. This error helps to reinforce the integrity of those sub-structures rather than the general structure (nation), and make them attractive to the individual. (Gberevbie & Ibietan, 2013).

Moreover, the FCC annual reports shows that a lot of MDAs are in breach of the demand for equitable representation in employment. The commission has not been able to adequately address these concerns due to poor funding, weak political will and the delays /corruption within the legal system (Okpala, G., Williams, U., & Emeka, E.F., (2019), et al., 2019). It is quite saddening that despite the few successes recorded by the FCC in pursuing national unity, several allegations of tribalism and nepotism still persists (Akinnusi, et al., 2017). As observed by Mustapha (2005), regional and ethno-linguistic identities still remain very strong in Nigeria. This can be seen in the private sector (media, bank, the formal sector and the civil society), and continues to manifest considerable religious and ethnic bias with minimal efforts geared towards correcting the imbalances.

This paper posits that the operation of FCC suffers from a major contradiction, because it brings about division amongst Nigerians rather than fostering unity as was originally speculated in its mandates of managing the challenges associated with equal representation of people from different ethnic and social background, so as to foster national unity and social cohesion. This supports the view of Onyeoziri (2002) who equally observed that "the implementation of the federal character principle has caused a lot of tension among the different federating units in the country."

A critical issue for consideration as regards FCC's operation concerns the indigene-settler dichotomy, which distinguishes between natives of a particular locality and migrants. Indigenes are entitled to certain entitlements such as scholarships and public service jobs

which are not available to migrants. The rationale behind this is that they can receive such benefits in their locality of origin, regardless of how long they and their predecessors have resided in the area. This is totally against the principle of diversity and inclusion which does not discriminate. A case in hand is the issue around indigene / settlers classification in Jos (plateau state capital). This has led to incessant inter-group violence (Fourchard, 2015; Mustapha, Higazi, Lar, & Chromy, 2018; Ostien, 2009)

A former President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo reiterated that the essence of the federal character is to "avoid the concentration in a few ethnic hands or geographical places," but what we currently have in the leadership of our country security apparatus is alarming and disturbing to the pursuit of national cohesion. The submission of Ogunniran (2018) summed up the current state of affairs in the country in respect to federal appointment and portfolios. The author posits that "the list is an affront on the sensibility of Nigerians as most of the key positions have been given to Northern Muslims (Chief of Army Staff, National Security Adviser, Chief of Air Staff, Chief of Defense Intelligence, DG SSS, Inspector General of Police, Accountant General of the Federation, Group Managing Director, Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, Comptroller Generals of Customs and Immigration, MD Nigerian Ports Authority, Chairman of Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Inspector General of Police, Attorney General of the Federation, Chief Justice of the Federation, Executive Chairman NCC amongst Others). Summarily, there has never been such brazen abuse of the principle as witnessed in this current administration.

Another case at hand is the recent appointment of 38 commissioners for the Federal Character Commission (FCC), Only 4 of them are women with the other 34 as males. Even when each state had a representative, 21 of them are Muslims while the balance of 17 are Christians. It is very instructive to note that even the Chairperson and the Secretary are from the Northern part of the country. It is very clear that FCC does not even represent the spirit of federal character. According to the new chairman, Dr Muheeba Dankaka (Eagle Online, 8th July, 2020), FCC laid down procedures and operations standard have been compromised but the new executive had resolved to change the narrative – a confirmation that the FCC as its currently structured cannot bring about the desired social and ethnic cohesion needed by the country

A former Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria and immediate past Emir of Kano, Dr Lamido Sanusi, evaluated FCC's performance from another angle and concluded that it had fueled incompetence in the Civil service and should be discarded forthwith. In his words, it

fuels nepotism and corruption which works against the principle of national development. The Federal Character Principle does not focus on competence, performance and merit. As long as we do not focus on getting the best in this country to do the job and hold them to account, we will not make the desired progress.

It is therefore obvious from the foregoing submissions, that federal character represents only an ambiguous and deceitful recipe for national cohesion and unity in a federal society like Nigeria (Gberevbie & Ibieta, 2013). Twenty-four years on, the commission has not been able to totally fulfill its mandate, particularly towards fostering and sustaining national cohesion.

5. Effects of comprehensive Implementation of Workforce Diversity on Ethnic and Social cohesion towards National Unity

The impact of workforce diversity management on organization or national unity has been studied by many scholars across regions with an overarching submission that it has a positive effect on cohesion and attainment of organizational goals. Elron, Shamir and Ben-Ari (1999) in their study of diversity and operational unity in multinational forces submitted that cultural diversity management has a positive effect on their success once the overall goal of the mission is communicated and understood by all troops irrespective of their national affiliation, the common goal must remain in focus.

While the National government is making spirited efforts to foster unity in diversity in the society, managers of organizations must develop strategies to boost their corporate performance in the face of the prevailing circumstances. Managing a united diverse workforce may be easier to achieve if certain stereotypic barriers are broken down by corporate cultures evolved to sufficiently transform the individuals to recognize and appreciate the worth and uniqueness of others and the design and implementation of organizations structures and processes with a social conscience which will allow for equity, fairness and justice in the distribution of organizations favors and punishments as well as in the balancing of the psychological contract.

Section 42 of the 1999 Constitution as amended (antidiscrimination clause) emphasizes that no citizen of a particular ethnic group, place of origin, community, political opinion, religion or sex should be subject to restrictions, privileges or advantages or disabilities that other citizens are not subjected to.

Most democratic countries of the world consistently deal with the issue of managing diversity, affirmative action, equal employment opportunity and multiculturalism. Within that context, organizations have been playing a game of numbers which has helped to under-estimate the extent to which effective affirmative action demands fundamental changes to organizational culture and how people are managed. Still others, confuse concepts such as affirmative action and managing diversity to appear that the latter can be undertaken to the exclusion of the former. (Human, 1996).

Managing diversity is necessary for effective organization performance in the 21st century. Any manager who discriminates against a section of the workforce will not be able to maximize the potentials of the workforce. It will be difficult to effectively manage their strengths and talents. Diversity management therefore concerns the effective engagement of difference & similarities in race, gender, religion, disability/ability, ethnic background and their sexual orientation.

The FCC appears to help to solve one problem – that of a heavily lop-sided bureaucracy -, but then creates another – interethnic discord and acrimony -, particularly within the bureaucracy itself and this problem will persist until a way is found to practice federal character while simultaneously protecting technocratic principles of merit and due process, and giving due respect to the rights of all workers (Jaja and Ugwuzor, 2014)

As have been established above, FCC to this end has focused on representation based on geopolitical zones which does not fully represent the concept of diversity. Even when it created a balance between northern and southern workers, they do not give consideration for age, gender and religious representation which is why you can have majority of the security chiefs in Nigeria from the North and are all Muslims. Where is the place for a Christian, where is the place for a woman? Why is there no gender balancing? This obviously is not in consonance with the concept of diversity and its management.

The recent outburst by Alhaji Mamman Daura as captured in Thisday's Publication (16th July, 2020) further buttresses the point that appointment into political office should be by competence and not on a "Turn – by – Turn" basis. He opined that the concept of rotational presidency should be discarded for competence irrespective of the tribe, ethnicity and region of the country. His position was further supported by Mr. Simon Kolawole (Thisday of 2nd August) who advocated for what he called Merit-based federal character as a solution to the failure of the current operational modality of the FCC. The concept of diversity does not erode

competence, it only helps to strengthen it. It introduces the diverse skills and competence of different employees for the benefit of the organization. It allows for cross fertilization of ideas, leads to higher innovation, increases productivity and creativity, reduces employee turnover, help with better decision making, faster problem solving and reduces employee turnover.

In a multi-racial, multi-ethnic society such as Nigeria, peaceful co-existence of citizens irrespective of tribes, political affiliations, ethnic groups and religion is a necessity if National cohesion and unity is to be achieved. Considering lots of agitations posing threats to the nation's oneness, it now leaves much to desire more so in the face of progress and national goal attainment. The practice of federal character principle does not promote national unity amongst government workers but rather a mere 'social interaction (quasi unity). This was based on the common understanding that realization of unity remains fictional. Our focus on ethnic affiliations, divergent interests, poor understanding / weak nationhood spirit, tribal divisions, unenforced national unity policy and imbalanced educational development remain factors threatening national unity. Managing diversity entails a lot of effort in ensuring that there is no conflict or clash of interest in policies and practices of the firm. It is also ensures that there is none amongst individual workers.

It has been noticed that Nigerian workers tend to relate more readily around the cultural solidarities of kin at the workplace than the class solidarities of the workplace (Lewis and Bratton ,2000).

People of different cultural backgrounds, age and gender may provide diverse perspectives, valuable ideas, problem-solving abilities, and in this way facilitate the achievement of optimal creative solutions and therefore stimulate innovations (Hong and Page, 2004). Growing diverse cultural backgrounds, demographic, and knowledge bases of the workforces can help organization manage their customers better which will ultimately affect their bottom line in profitability (Berliant and Fujita,2008; Jaja and Ugwuzor, 2014)

Diversity based on competence will surely help for national cohesion. No other program helps to drive this home better than the NYSC – a program that ensures graduates of higher institutions gets to serve the country in any part of the country for 12 months. This has led to an appreciation of the diversity of the country, encouraged Nigerians to work in any part of the country, facilitated inter-ethnic marriages and encouraged many Nigerians to settle in a different region different from where they are from. It is therefore not surprising to see an Edo

man settles in Kano and a Fulani man married and working in Calabar. The scheme is aimed at assisting future policy maker of the country to adapt to the diversities of culture in the nation and it has helped to appreciate our collective difference for national cohesion.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

FCC, as is currently constituted, has not been able to fully foster National unity as desired but has rather focused attention on representation which in itself does not totally consider the ethnic, cultural and gender diversities amongst Nigerian workers or political office holders. This concept of representation in itself has further divided the Nigerian state. It has projected the major ethnic groups but silent on sex, age, religion and most importantly the minority groups in the Nigerian state.

While it is ok to see that 6 positions in a government parastatals has been shared equally between the North and South, it is very possible to see that the 3 from the north are Males, Fulani, and Muslims to the end that one begins to wonder if the north is only made up of Muslims and Fulani's. Where are the Christians, are there no women that are not Fulani's from the North?

Several scholars had evaluated the performance of FCC in terms of its ability to deliver on its mandate and have concluded that it is has failed to guarantee equity representation of human and developmental projects across the country. Several reasons were attributed to this with recommendations on the way forward. This paper however opines that the FCC, as is currently constituted, cannot drive diversity management for national unity. At best it can only ensure that the North and South have equal representation in the Civil and Public Service. It was also not set up to look into the issues of representation and diversity management in the private sector. In addition to this, FCC does not truly consider merit in its enforcement of equitable representation in public sector employment. Nepotism, political profiteering and ethnicity has negatively affected the way citizens are absorbed into the public service. This in itself does not also foster national unity

Having concluded that the FCC still has a long way to go it fulfilling its mandate, it is also very clear that it needs to focus on the private sector that accounts for over 80% of workers in the country and on diversity management.

With the foregoing, the paper recommends the following way of repositioning FCC to first deliver on its mandate and expand its scope to refocus its attention on national unity (considering the current spate of insecurity in the country) through diversity management

A change of name of the Federal Character Commission (FCC) to Diversity Management Commission (DMC) which should oversee diversity management in both the public and private sector. A new Diversity Management ACT should be promulgated by the National Assembly to guide the operations of the DMC, this can start with the modification of the existing federal character principle ACT of 1994. In doing this, consideration should be given to the underlisted

- a. Positioning of diversity within the organization context (Public & Private)
- b. Management Structure for Diversity Management within organizations (Human Resources Depts./Units)
- c. Implementation Top-Down and Bottom-Up Approach
- d. Measurement and Monitoring of Implementation
- e. Integration of Diversity in National Orientation for Development & Economic Growth
- f. Enforcement and Punitive Measures as deterrent

The Diversity Management Commission (DMC) should focus mainly on diversity management rather than just focusing on representation of the various geo-political zones as it is currently constituted under the FCC. This will ensure that they are not only interested that the North and South are ably represented but the concept of representation will now consider the components of diversity : age, religion, gender, ethnicity, physical abilities and capabilities, marital status, race and sexual orientation

To address the challenges of insufficient manpower and funds to support operations, there should be a Diversity Management Fund provided directly by the Central Bank of Nigeria to fund the Commission's operations at the Federal Capital and all 36 states of the federation. The Federal and State Ministry of Justices should provide litigation support for the DMC and help expedite conviction to ensure that both private and the public sector adhere to the guidelines of the commission. While the Federal Government cannot determine who is employed at the

private sector, it can issue a guideline for employment that ensure adherence to the principle of diversity

To strengthen a country's federating units of various ethnic groups, one needs to encourage the management of its diverse manpower both in the public and private sectors. Several scholars have advocated for education as a strategy for improving ethnic and racial relationships. This involves creating opportunities for interactions amongst people of different backgrounds, religion, sexual orientation, academic qualification, physical ability, socio-economic status and geographical locations. An educational institution creates an environment that provides tremendous experiences for students from various ethnic groups to interact (Mooney et al,(2005; Johnson et al, 2005). The system encourages them to destroy prejudices learnt from home which has been the major cause of disunity amongst people. This they are able to do as they interact and learn more from their fellow students. Its aim is to specifically inculcate national consciousness, patriotism and the right type of attitudes to forge national Integration and cohesion in the students

Creating a sense of belonging at the national level remains important to personal and societal health and well-being. Historically, societal cohesion comes from common backgrounds, beliefs and traditions but today it is gradually opening to management of diverse ethnicities, beliefs, traditions, sexual orientations, abilities, etc. This requires attention to address any structure or operations that further divides the country along ethnic or religious lines.

National integration and its benefits can be achieved by respecting, tolerating and understanding differences occasioned by socio-cultural diversity and its management. The FCC can only achieved this when it is modified by structure and policy to manage workforce diversity management in both the public and private sector, it is only through this that we can truly achieve national cohesion and unity.

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