

Communication, History and National Integration: Reflecting on some Aspects of Africa's Lost Family Values and their Implications

Emmanuel O. Akubor & Yashim V. Hannatu

Abstract

Generally, scholars have argued that both History and Communication (human interaction) are two important tools in Human society necessary for national integration. This is seen in the light of the fact that for man to be able to survive in any society, there must be some form of communication. It is in line with this that it is argued that 'No man is an island, entirely of himself'. Data obtained from primary and secondary sources were deployed to carry out this study with analytical and narrative historical methods used. Findings indicate that although communication is considered as an essential ingredient for building the society starting with the family, the breakdown of communication is largely responsible for the chaotic situation found in the family system (in many families) in most parts of the world with specific reference to Nigeria.

1. Introduction

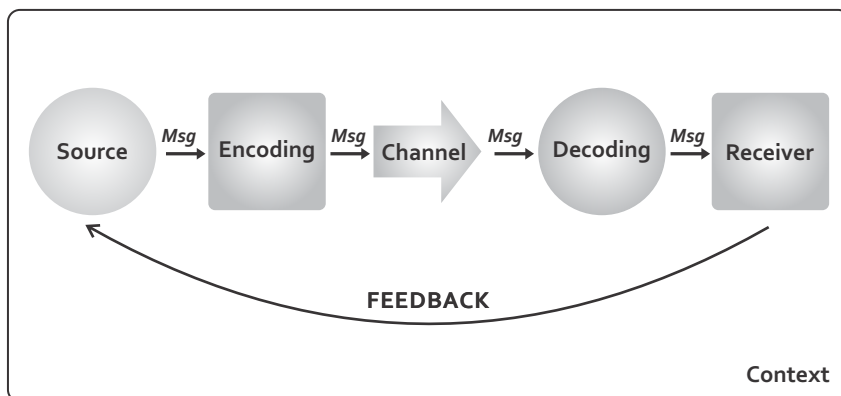
Communication which has been simplified to mean 'meaningful interaction' is a basic ingredient for the development of the human society. A break down in the channel of communication could lead to violent conflict situations. It is in the light of this that Lundberg and Wilson (1939) and Kolb (1949) (cited in Otite and Albert, 2004) argue that conflict may not be regarded only in a negative light of dysfunctional or disjunctive process, but a process which occurs (most often) as a result of a breakdown of communication. The argument in this case is that once people are able to maintain communication, there is the tendency of preventing (if not eliminating) conflict.

History is as old as human society; this is appreciated even more when seen in the light of the fact that all human beings are products of History. It is in

line with this that it has been described as both the human past as well as the sum total of human experience (Carr, 1961, Usman, 1977, Mangvwat, 1990, 1992). The importance of history in any society is reflected in the fact that, every society no matter how primitive has a special place for it. It is therefore not surprising that History is recognized all over the world as a source of enlightenment and development. As a collective memory of a people, history attempts to bring to the fore the salient and significant parts of events that occurred in the past, which could be utilized in building their prosperous future (this is because it is not static).

On the other hand, Communication has been acknowledged as the live-wire of every society, traditional or modern. Every society has ways and means through which its members communicate with one another. Communication is so central to the existence and survival of the society. Therefore, a society without communication is unthinkable. Communication is a process whereby a message is passed / received from one person to another. It could be by verbal or non-verbal means. Communication involves conveying messages in a manner in which it is clearly understood by people. Communication is considered effective when the message put across to the other person is unambiguous and without distortion and successful when both the sender and the receiver understand the same information as a result of the communication (Kasper, 2010 cited in Yashim, 2013, p. 5).

Table I: Communication Process



Source: Yashim, V. H (2012), "Effectiveness of Communication Skills on Couples Communication Adjustment in Kaduna Metropolis: Implication for Marriage Counselling Practice in Kaduna state. M.A Thesis, Department of Education Guidance and Counselling Section Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

According to the source of the diagram above, the idea is referred to as the communication process; which entails that there should be no distinction or misinformation in the process of transmission. This is because being able to communicate effectively is an essential ingredient for a successful family and society at large. To do this, one must understand what the message is, the channel, the audience and how the message is perceived. From the illustration, the source as the engine room of the message must have a clear idea about what is being communicated and how useful and accurate the message is. The message is the information that is being communicated. Encoding is the process of transferring the information one wants to communicate into a form that can be sent and correctly decoded at the other end. The channel is used to describe the passage and means of communication which could be face to face, verbal or non-verbal, through telephones or written. Decoding refers to successful interpretation of the message as it is, while receiver is the receptor of the message. A feedback which is the response to the message is expected.

The relevance of the above is that in the precolonial African society, communicating the values of the people was a very vital part of the system. This was done using various means to communicate the history and core values of the society. In this way, various items served very significant purposes in achieving this. Adegbola (2009) captures it thus;

In the medieval period ... communication was characterized by the codification of symbols through the process of socialization, dramatization, religious myth, hymns and architecture. The oral tradition and memorization played a significant role at this time and the medium of language had great influence too. With the invention of printing the oral tradition gradually faded out. The transition of culture into the electronic media moves from the culture of text to the second orality of film, television, and computer. In fact technology is reshaping everything again (p. 51).

1. History and Communication in the Traditional African Society

Traditional communities in Africa, and elsewhere in the world, have their indigenous communication modes and systems. These are age-old communication systems that are intrinsic parts of the culture of the traditional communities. Akinbile (2008, p. 88) writes that “indigenous communication involves local communication methods that are unique to a given culture or society. It involves the sum of experience and knowledge

for communication in decision making in the face of familiar and unfamiliar problems and challenges.”

Traditional communication is, in fact, the product of the interplay between a traditional community's customs and conflicts, harmony and strife, cultural convergences and divergences, culture-specific tangibles and intangibles, interpersonal relations, symbols and codes and moral traditions which include mythology, oral literature (poetry, story-telling, proverbs), masquerades, witchcraft, rites, rituals, music, dance, drama, costumes and similar abstractions and artefacts which encompass a people's factual, symbolic and cosmological existence from birth to death and even beyond death (Ugboaja, 1985, cited in Nwosu, 1990, p. 27).

Indigenous communication is the expression of the culture – norms, values and ethos- of the traditional communities. This explains why Wilson (1987) sees traditional system of communication as “a continuous process of information dissemination, entertainment and education used in societies which have not been seriously dislocated by western culture or any other external influence as is the case in many parts of the world” (p. 89). The identities, peculiarities and similarities among communities are expressed in their traditional modes of communication. Experts have been able to divide communication in the society into two viz, Verbal and Non Verbal. Non-verbal communication systems refer to the forms of traditional communication that do not involve the verbalization of the communicated message. The non-verbal modes of communication adopt objects, signs and symbols.

In a more specific term, Wilson (1987, p. 91) divides non-verbal systems of traditional communication into eleven classes. These are: idiophones, membranophones, aerophones, symbology, signals, signs, objectifics, colour schemes, music, extra-mundane communication and symbolic displays.

- **Idiophones:** These are self-sounding instruments that produce sounds when they are shaken, scratched, pressed, struck or pricked. They may not require the application of an intermediary device to produce sounds. Examples are metal gongs, wooden gongs, wooden drums, bells and rattles.
- **Membranophones** are instruments that produce sounds as a result of

the vibration of the membrane. They include leather and skin drums.

- **Aerophones** are instruments that produce sounds from the vibration of columns of air blown into them. Examples are flutes, trumpets, whistles, horns, and pipes.
- **Symbolography** are symbolic writings and representations that are used to pass information. Symbolic representations are culture-specific. They, therefore, differ from one culture to another.
- **Signals** include fire, canons and gunshots that are used to communicate information non-verbally to the audience.
- **Signs** are marks, objects and symbols that are used to represent some things. Tribal marks are good examples.
- **Objectifics** are objects that are used in various contexts to signify different things or convey some meanings. They include kolanut, flower, flag, white pigeon and charcoal.
- **Colour** schemes are colours or a combination of colours that are used to convey information in the traditional settings. For instance, red colour stands for danger.
- **Music** and songs are applied to convey messages of praise, admiration or satire in the traditional communities.
- **Extra-mundane communication:** This form refers to the communication between the living and the dead. It is usually done through libations, divinations and enchantments.
- **Symbolic displays:** These are some expressions that convey messages. They include scratching of the palm, smiling, winking, sighing, hissing, leering and shrugging.

In recent times, globalization and the attendant paradigms shift in communication apparatus and methods have resulted in near total neglect of the traditional communication systems. This is to the detriment of the society, as the rich cultural values and moral standards that the indigenous communication systems convey and sustain are fast being relegated to the background.

Thus, a critical analysis of the above shows clearly that there exist some relationship between history and communication. This is seen in the light of the fact that when the history of a people is well communicated, it gives

room for the building of a viable society. In this way, in the pre-colonial African society, the traditional system of education and its mode of transmission (which starts from the family) acts as the major link. In line with this, Rodney (1976) sees the precolonial educational system thus:

Indeed, the most crucial aspect of pre-colonial African education was its relevance to Africans, in sharp contrast with what was later introduced. The following features of indigenous African education can be considered outstanding: its close links with social life, both in a material and spiritual sense; its collective nature; its many-sidedness; and its progressive development in conformity with the successive stages of physical, emotional and mental development of the child. There was no separation of education and productive activity or any division between manual and intellectual education. Altogether, through mainly informal means, pre-colonial African education matched the realities of pre-colonial African society and produced well-rounded personalities to fit into that society (p. 377).

On the role of the society as agent of communication (starting from the immediate family), Rodney (1976, p. 58) continues thus:

In all African societies during the early epoch, the individual at every stage of life had a series of duties and obligations to others in the society as well as a set of rights: namely, things that he or she could expect or demand from other individuals. Age was a most important factor determining the extent of rights and obligations. The oldest members of the society were highly respected and usually in authority; and the idea of seniority through age was reflected in the presence of age-grades and age-sets in a great many African societies; ... Formal education in pre-colonial Africa was also directly connected with the purposes of the society, just like informal education. The programmes of teaching were restricted to certain periods in the life of every individual, notably the period of initiation or 'coming of age'

In what could be described as a more graphic account of this relationship as represented with story (for history) and drum (for communication), Achebe (1987 cited in Faniran, 2008, p 1), writing on history and communication as integral part of the society and national integration opines thus:

The sounding of the battle drum is important, the fierce waging of the war itself is important and the telling of the story afterwards - each is

important in its own way. I tell you there is not one of them we can do without. But if you ask me, which one of them takes the eagle-feather, i will say boldly, the story ... it is the story not the others that saves our progeny from blundering like blind beggars into the spikes of cactus fence. The story is our escort, without it we are blind.

Explaining the relationship between Communication, History and the society, Orewere (1991, pp. 58-59) writes:

The relationship between the communicator and the audience is personal. There are internal allocations of authority and in each situation, a structure which ensures continuity and cooperation. There is a regular, reliable and steady speed of diffusion of information. The response, or the feedback, is calculated and relevant, a product of discussed, debated and digested reasoning, especially at meetings, conferences, sessions and small groups or family unit discussion levels. This implies that the selection and interpretation of messages by the community for programmes of development is done to suit the local situation and not in a vacuum or aimless mass mobilization.

This credibility arising from the cordial and personal relationship – mutual trust- between the communicator and the target audience enhances the effectiveness of the message. The immediate feedback that is received also helps in accessing the success or otherwise of the communication process. This, of course, makes the traditional communication systems very effective for information delivery.

There are unwritten conventions, rules and laws that guide the behaviour and activities of the people. These are guarded by the leaders to ensure strict compliance by the people. Egbefo and Aghalino (2012, p. 59), using the Esan society in Nigeria, explain:

These conventions which were backed by taboo which must be observed, regulated activities such as cohabitation, relationship between husband and wife, father and children, inheritance, adoption, justice, land tenure and the like. As head of the family, a husband (odafen) was expected to be at peace with himself. He was expected to have some peculiar behaviour worth emulating. Thus in real sense, a peacekeeper, maker and builder. He was also held responsible for keeping the peace in his household and ensuring that its members relate well with others in the compounds and wards in their village or

town. The compound heads, onijjogbe, king, onogie, and village heads, odionwele had similar responsibilities in their respective domains.

Egbefo and Aghalino (2012, p. 59) conclude thus:

A breach of convention was regarded as “a crime against the ancestral spirits and disturbance of individual or communal equilibrium.” Imposition of sanctions on individuals or a group of deviants was a justifiable means of restoring the pre-existing balance in the society and traditional device for crime prevention or deterrence of deviant behaviour.

The foregoing clearly shows that through effective system of communication, the history and traditions of the people were effectively handed down from generation to generation even though these were not committed to writing. These measures have helped to maintain law and order in various societies in Africa. They have, by extension, facilitated effective indigenous communication through rewarding interpersonal relations and peaceful co-existence among the people. In this way, the family in all these societies were well protected.

2. History, Communication and the Family in modern society: The Nigerian Experience

In the pre-colonial Nigeria system, the family life was regarded as sacred and as such communication was greatly encouraged among members. Every available means was used to make sure orderliness was maintained among members of the family. Biliyock (2002, p. 117), writes:

The family is a community ... in the early stages, children are completely dependent on their parents-especially their mother, who breast feeds and sees to all other essential needs. As they grow, they realise their total dependence, but sooner they find they are all alone. At this stage, the parents with the assistance of the extended family, should be on the alert. The responsibilities of the parents do not stop at just bringing the children into the world and feeding them. They have to direct their lives till they are mature enough to stand by themselves - psychologically, physically and spiritually.

It was also regarded as a taboo for communication links to be severed without any cogent reason. In line with the traditional setting, Atado (1988)

rejects completely, the relegation of core family values (such as teaching the children respect for elders, sanctity of the family, communal nurturing of the children etc) and the infiltration of western values into the traditional system which in his view led this generation to wage a war on social norms and made it a norm and taboo free generation thereby lacking guidance in areas of love, marriage and family. The result has been a rapidly increasing violence, immorality, divorce rate and confusion about the values of marriage and family life. This is against the traditional setting in which through communication the laws of the land was relayed to the people without writing them down and were obeyed. Emphasizing this as well as the possible consequence on erring members of the society as corrective measures. Egbefo and Aghalino (2012) state that:

A breach of convention was regarded as “a crime against the ancestral spirits and disturbance of individual or communal equilibrium.” Imposition of sanctions on individuals or a group of deviants was a justifiable means of restoring the pre-existing balance in the society and traditional device for crime prevention or deterrence of deviant behaviour (p. 59).

In line with the above, Alfa (as cited in Oliagba, 2006, p.56), opines thus;

Traditionally, the sanctity of the family and the desire for continuity is seen in the fact that less privilege members of the family (orphans, the sick, and the aged) are cared for through the extended family circle (a situation which to the background). observed that the extended family moderates the effects of divorce on children, but noted that the system is gradually fading, due to neglect of the core family values and communication problem which cut across many family circle. This exposes the children to emotional breakdown, child trafficking, academic problem and sexual abuse. The springing up of old people's homes and motherless baby's homes' all over the country is a clear indication of the disintegration of the extended family system.

However, with the coming of colonialism and capitalism, the family life has suffered severe strain. This is because it cuts off certain vital aspects that the traditional African system impacts on members of the society. The channels of communicating history and traditions of the people to the younger generations have been left unattended. This is as a result of the fact that apart from the parents who are so much engaged in too many activities that

does not give them time for the family, the younger generations have been left to the mercy of western media of communication which most often encourage violence and hatred. In this way, the traditional non-verbal aspect of the African system of Idiophones, Membranophones, Aerophones, Symbolography, Signals, Signs, Objectifics, Colour, Music and songs as well as Extra-mundane communication have continued to suffer. This has been specifically pointed out by Azikiwe (1961, p. 27-29) who argues that:

Unlike the system before now, it did not grow out of the traditional environment nor was it designed to promote the most rational use of material and social resources. It was not tailored to give young Nigerians and others who came under its tutelage confidence and pride as members of the societies, but one which sought to instill a sense of deference towards all that was European and capitalist.

In relation to the position above and in a more emphatic manner, Osoba and Fajana (1980, p. 571) write: "In this way, the new system completely watered down the original idea, as there was no question of really introducing to the 'benighted savages' the mysteries of the white man's scientific and literary knowledge of establishing institutions geared towards meeting the social and material needs of Nigerians."

Thus, the neglect of the system and the whole hearted acceptance of the new system by the younger generations have thrown the entire society into confusion especially as it relates the family life, respect for individuals and elders, dedication to duty and selfless service to the community. Babawale (2007, p. 16) noted thus:

Colonialism ensured that Nigerians lost the sense of pride and confidence in their own culture. Consequently, "the technical inferiority of the traditional culture vis-a-vis the technical superiority of the Europeans" largely accounts for why Nigerians strive to copy anything and everything European, from religious practices, styles and tastes to education and assumption of European identities. Consequently, there has been a tremendous neglect of, and destructive prejudice against everything traditional.

3. Concrete Cases of a Decaying Society and how it affects the Family in Nigeria

From research so far carried out, it is clear that the world today is facing

serious problems as a result of the falling level of History and Communication among families in the society. This is clearer when seen in the light of the problems that have evaded our world. However, it will be superfluous for us to be making a general reference to the entire world, when the situation in Nigeria is enough evidence to deal with. This is understood when seen in the light of John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 43, thus:

The relationships between the members of the family community are inspired and guided by the law of "free giving." By respecting and fostering personal dignity in each and every one as the only basis for value, this free giving takes the form of heartfelt acceptance, encounter and dialogue, disinterested availability, generous service and deep solidarity.

Emphasizing the above, Pope Francis (contained in a radio message of the Holy Father on the theme '2015 World Communications Day 2014') continues thus;

Today, how can we tell people who are perhaps wounded and disillusioned that love between a man and a woman is a good thing? How can we help children know that they are a most precious gift? How can we warm the hearts of people, especially those who are wounded and disappointed, and help them rediscover the beauty of love? How can we show that the family is the privileged place where we experience the beauty of life, the joy and the gift of love, the consolation of forgiveness offered and received, and the encounter with the other?

The above passages (with particular reference to the latter), give a more critical and graphic picture of the family system in the world today. In the case of our beloved continent Africa and country Nigeria, many families have failed to be the Privileged Place of Encounter with the Gift of Love. Although, Nigeria has no accurate records of the number of broken homes and divorce cases often caused by ineffective communication among couples, members of families, neighbors among others. A visit to the customary courts and social welfare agencies around the country have shown an even increasing high rate in divorce cases, resulting in broken homes, abandoned children, unwanted pregnancies and other cases of immorality.

The situation pointed out above seems more abstract to some of us, but when confronted with available statistics, it is indeed alarming. For example, report of the International Labour Organization (ILO), 2004, (citing World Development Indicators 2004) estimated that 24.6% of children between the ages of 10 and 14 in Nigerian are homeless as a result of broken homes (largely due to the problem of ineffective communication) and they are involved in menial labour for survival. This claim is corroborated by UNICEF / National Bureau of Statistics which reported that an approximated 24% (33.6 million) of all Nigerian children under the age of 16 are working instead of been found in the class room, (Akubor as cited in Anagbogu 2010, p.17). It is in line with this that there is an urgent need to address the situation.

It is no longer news that the extended family system is gradually becoming weakened. Family/ Marital life is under siege and marital bond is loosening. The evidence of deteriorating family/marriage is seen in the number of street children, school drop outs and increased vices among youths. This is graphically illustrated by Akubor (as cited in Anagbogu, 2010, p.19) when he posited that in 1996, the Child Welfare League reported that in Lagos alone there were 100, 000 boys and girls of school age (mostly from broken homes) roaming, living and working on the streets. Solana (as cited in Adeyemi, 1990, p.21) reports the case of kids (ages 12 to 16years) who were of broken homes and become nuisance at Lagos City halls during parties as they parade and fan invitees in bids to earn a living. In the northern part of the country there are similar situations. It is thus the evidence of deteriorating African family values, as seen in these alarming statistics of street children, increased vices in youths as well as its attendant effect on the society in general.

4. Impact on the Family and Human Society

As earlier pointed out, the African traditional educational system imbibes in every member of the society the sanctity of the family, life and community. In most of these societies, the idea of avoiding the shedding of blood is encouraged among members through stories and other means communicated directly or indirectly to them. However, as it is today, it is clear that, that aspect has been relegated to the background. This is seen in the fact that it is fast becoming a norm to waste life without regrets. This becomes even more glaring when seen in the light of the fact that economic activities have taken over the closeness that existed in the society, while the family falls apart. Yashim (2013) puts this thus;

World over, it is fast becoming the order of the day for parents to separate (marriages collapsing) without the parties involved showing any sign of regrets or attempt to reconcile their difference or even thinking of the future of the children. According to experts in the field and based on day to day experiences in and around our societies and neighborhood, the rate at which parents separate is alarming, thus exposing the children to the dangers of life. Closely related to this is that these children without proper upbringing constitutes security threat to the nation. They become ready hands for greedy politicians and other agents of destruction. The thinking therefore, is that if no urgent step is taken to correct these anomalies, the country is doomed as the present security challenges as currently posed by militants and fundamentalists, will be a child play in the future. This is already the case in most developed world and even our country as seen in the existence of different groups challenging the corporate existence of the nation and bent on destroying her foundation (p.1).

Secondly, the idea of the extended family tie is gradually fading away. The idea of the communal life in which the care and correction of the child is the responsibility of the community is gone. The consequence is that habits which should have been condemned outside by neighbours are left unchallenged. In this way, children grow up with such negative habits and consequently imbibe criminally-oriented behaviours which will eventually lead them to joining cult groups and others. The table below gives a clear consequence of this in the society.

Table II: Activities of some negatively Influenced Groups in the society (Akubor, 2012)

No	Date	Activities	Place
1	1985	a non cult student incurred the wrath of another student, who was a cult leader for snatching the latter's girlfriend.	University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
2	1991	a student of University of Port Harcourt was beheaded during a feud between cult members; the activities of secret cult groups resulted in the death of a Principal Assistant Registrar and his wife.	Delta State University, Abraka,
3	2002	a 300 level economics student was shot dead and slaughtered at the Dallimore area	Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State.

No	Date	Activities	Place
4	2006,	some cult members invaded University of Ado-Ekiti at 12 noon where they burnt the cadet's office, killed three students and wounded many students and staff of the university	University of Ado-Ekiti
5	2006	Seun Oyedola, a lecturer was abducted and killed during a clash between cult groups	Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ogun
6	1999	five students were killed. They were: George Yemi Iwilade, the then Secretary General, OAU Students Union, Tunde Oke, a member of Democratic Socialist Movement, Efe Ekedede, Eviano Ekelemu and Yemi Ajiteru .	Obafemi Awolowo University
7	2003,	Three students—Kehinde Dosumu, Omotayo Suraju and Olalekan Ajao were killed.	Kwara State Polytechnic
8	2008	Tony Ileogbuna, was murdered (acting Head of Geology department)	Enugu State University of Science and Technology
9		Yomi Edeki was killed	University of Benin
10	2004	Vincent Uloho was murdered in cold blood.	University of Benin
11	July 2004,	WaleAdeyori and Banji of were killed	Federal Polytechnic Ilaro
12	March 2005;	Ashifat Olatunji Saheed, a student was slaughtered	Polytechnic Ibadan
13	June 2005.	Gbenga Joseph, a policeman attached to anti-cult squad of Kwara State police command was killed by suspected cultist	Kwara State
14	Sept 2005.	Cultists slaughtered Bolaji Toniwa, a student	Lagos State University
15	2012	Three men suspected to be cultists shot dead an unidentified man	Artisan Market in Enugu
16	2012	Cult clash leading to the death of student and closure of school.	Igbinedion University, Okada
17	2012	Cultists killed a final year student	University of Benin

Activities as listed in the above table are fast becoming the norm in many schools, because they happen quite often in such schools. This has made many communities hostile to hosting tertiary institutions in their communities. The fact is that when this is taking place, the entire community is often engulfed in the crises leading to the loss of lives and properties and in some cases closure of the markets in the area amongst others. Commenting on this trend, Pemedede O and Viavonu B (2010) write thus:

The activities of Secret Cult has taken a horrifying and worrisome dimension which many criminal activities including murder, arson, armed robbery and rape are frequently linked to their members, and lack of discipline. To that extent therefore, many of the purported Cultists are actually Gangsters or members of crime syndicates hiding under the umbrella of certain Secret Cults or societies. Holloway (1989) examined the proposition that human aggression can only be explained in terms of the capacity of human species to develop complex social communities on the basis of abstract idea. According to such view, he explained that violence springs from logic of the human condition. It represents typical and pathological response to frustration which are nevertheless endemic in human society and human mind. Conflict begets frustration and in certain circumstances frustration begets violence. As a result of this, the study on Cultism and Gangsterism as the causes of current eruption, aggressive behaviours and violence in Nigerian tertiary institutions as they affect the learners' moral development is worth pursuing. It is therefore hoped that the result of this study will provide solution if not total as to the activities of the cultists and gangsters on campus. And in a short while sensitize the public and Nigerian schools to the evil of secret cult activities while the public would see the need to eradicate them within its rank and file in and outside Nigerian school system (p. 15).

Closely related to the above is the rising waves of crime especially among the youths, who are supposed to be in schools or who should have been comfortably employed in their various localities. The unavailability of a system which should have implanted in them the dangers of involving in this and the need to live a meaningful life is largely responsible for this. Thus, there is the surge to migrate to the cities. The result is rampant crimes. In the two-and-half decades that followed the civil war of 1967-70, concern about public safety has become an overriding concern among Nigerians, perpetuated by those who should have moved the nation forward. Osaghae

et al (1994) maintain that from 1980 this took a frightening dimension. For example, the total crimes reported to the police in 1980 was 245,972; the figure rose to 325,073 in 1983 (table 1). It then stabilized, falling to 297,060 in 1986; 279,058 in 1987; and 325,061 in 1989. The available figure for the first half of 1990 was 85,602. These figures reflect only those crimes that have been reported to the police. Public concern is derived from the knowledge that approximately 50 percent of the offences go unreported. Since 1999, the dimension changed as these youths (gangs), comprised primarily of unemployed young men are mobilized to attack political rivals, intimidate members of the public, rig elections and protect their patrons from similar attacks. Some of these often end up forming criminal gangs, violent campus-based “cults” and serve as agents of political violence. Those recruited are paid, often very little, and sometimes armed for the sole purpose of carrying out violent abuses on behalf of their political sponsors (Olasupo, 2003, pp. 1ff., Badmus, 2006). In the northern part of the country, especially the North-East, the activities of a new set of gangsters masquerading as Islamic Reformers, has led to a situation in which families have been sent on exile, while their means of livelihood destroyed. In the light of this article, amongst others, this is also as a result of the neglect of communication and history as it relates to our situation. As at 2014, some 492,000 children in the northern part of the country were severely malnourished, while about 19,000 farming families abandoned their farms (JDPC, 2014). Of recent, over 1000 people from several displaced families were rescued from the den of this group Boko haram. This situation is such that families now live in camps as Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's) even in their country. This shows the level of decline in the true African communication system which often emphasizes good neighbourliness. In what seems to be a reaction to the above, Babawale (2007, pp. 16-17) writes:

The situation is such that we have had to contend with a dying sense of communal life, a chaotic socio-political order, institutional fragility, systematic decay, economic disequilibrium, violence and perennial political instability. We have an anaemic rural sector and an increasingly chaotic urban life ..., from this scenario it is clear that prebendal politics and the existence of an irrelevant state threaten our traditional way of life, our value system and above all, our collective cultural heritage. Yet we need to know that there is no record yet in history of a real nation born out of a cultural womb alien to it.

1. Conclusion

This article maintains that the major problem facing the world today is the systematic destruction of the ideal communication system both in the family, community and the society at large. This is a major factor as regards the problems facing the society today. The history, traditions, actions and reactions of the people have been replaced with the western way of communication which does not represent the ideals of the African society. Any effort targeted at the communities may not be successful if it ignores the communication resources, especially as it reflects the people's way of life. No doubt, the means and resources of communication can be harnessed for the good of the family and for community mobilization and development while paying attention to the way of life of the people.

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