



## The Value of Human Life in the Nigerian State

SYLVESTER IDEMUDIA ODIA, VALENTINE ADETAYO INAGBOR  
University of Benin, Nigeria

**Abstract.** This paper sets out to exam the ontological meaning of life based on the relationship that exists among the Nigerian citizens, government and its law enforcement agents. Down through the ages the scenario created by the Nigerian government and its law enforcement agencies in the careless mishandling of the citizens they swore to protect with their positions is becoming a terrific and an imaginable phenomenon. The insensitive mishandling of the citizens as low breed animals has forced people to ask whether life in Nigeria is a right or a privilege. The government and its law enforcement agencies in Nigeria are now playing God and assuming the position of God when dealing with the citizens. In Nigeria, fundamental human rights exist in shadows and utopic impressions of false hope. The absolute disregard for the fundamental human rights and the rule of law in Nigeria have led to man's in-humanity to man in the country, insecurity, corruption, outright injustice, and mass exodus of the citizens to foreign lands where life is more secured. Using the historical and phenomenological methodologies, this paper examines the precarious nature of human life in the Nigerian State with historical facts, references and without bias, and further made some recommendations on how to navigate out of this uncivilized and barbaric system we presently find ourselves in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Keywords:** Life, Right, Bad leadership, Corruption, Nigerian State, Law Enforcement Agencies.

### 1. Introduction

The meaning of life and human existence is one of the perennial problems of philosophy. Existentialists, liberal democratic theorists, essentialists, etc. have all given their opinion on the meaning of life. There is also "the socio-cultural and communal dimensions of the human person which the African takes into consideration in searching for the meaning of life" (Odia, 2018: 70). From the religious perspective, it is

a general belief round the world especially among the theists that life is a direct gift from God and therefore sacred. This concept has naturally made it clear that no one has the right to tamper or snatch or sniff off another man's life. Such an act in African traditional society is abominable and therefore attracts a severe punishment from the community where the crime is committed. The sacredness of life is held sway with high esteem in most parts of the world because no man can give it. Therefore, it cannot be taken by anyone. In Nigeria today, the sacredness of life or human dignity is theoretical, cosmetic and mere mask because there is little or no regard for life. For ages, the Nigerian government and its law enforcement agencies have dehumanized majority of the citizens, frustrated them beyond recognition, killed/murdered them without conscience, jailed them without a cause, and wiped them out of existence for asking for their legitimate rights. Nigerians now live in their father's land with fear like the ancient Israelites in Babylon during their captivity. Nigeria is a country that claims to practice democracy but afraid of the basic tenets, rudiments and ingredients of democracy, especially the supremacy of the rule of law. It is a situation where the government acts unconstitutionally and punishes the few courageous people who challenge the unconstitutionality of the government.

This work will focus on the Nigerian State, law enforcement agencies and the citizens. It will mostly dwell on how the citizens are treated, and the reactions of the citizens towards the government. It will not fail to address too how people emerge as leaders and occupy the high and sensitive positions in Nigeria as an acclaimed democratic nation. Are the leaders truly the people's choices, or self-imposed or manipulated (hence they are insensitive to the people's plights)? It is saddened that in this 21<sup>st</sup> century a country like Nigeria that is 62 years old as an independent nation is still graciously and proudly wallowing at the periphery of democracy, and yet

parades itself around as the giant of Africa. This is the problem this work sets out to tackle.

## 2. The Ontological Concept of Life

There are many accounts of the origin of life. We have the stories of the origin of the universe from different cultures of the world. We also have the origin of the world or the self from the Upanishads, the origin and fate of the universe by Stephen Hawking, the origin of species by Charles Darwin, and the creation and the fall from the Bible (Hallman, 2003: iv). However, ontologically, life is conceived as a priceless gift from the creator (God) to man. It cannot be given by any other being within or outside the universe except God. It is for this singular reason that life is considered as the most sacred thing bequeathed to all living beings especially rational persons. According to Ejim (2006: 46-47) each individual's life is a gift from God to the community and to the family. That is why when a child is born, there is celebration in the family and in the community. The most important thing that makes humans equal is 'life', because no life of a human person is superior to the other as far as all persons are created of the image and likeness of God. Life is therefore an unquantifiable thing given to humans by the creator (God) in a very special way and manner. The human person is the only being molded from the earth with God's own hand and has the breath of life from God that makes him or her active and alive as a being that can think, react, interact, love, appreciate and that moves towards an omega point as his or her final destiny.

Human beings are conscious of themselves because of their unique relationship with God. As an image of God, the human being is a special being that distinguishes himself or herself from other creatures. For this singular reason, Ejim (2006: 38-39) points out that all that exists in this world: man, animals, and other objects, simply share their existence from the reality of the Supreme Being. However, the degree at which human beings as thinking beings share in the reality of the Supreme Being differ from the degree at which other things share in the same reality. The breath (life) of God in human beings is eternal. Thus, death is not an end but a transformation or a sojourn to an eternal life because the human soul as the breath of God is immortal just as God is immortal. It is through death that the human being achieves immortality and reconnects to God. In the odyssey of life, the human being constantly reflects on what becomes of him or her after his or her earthly existence. This singular fact makes the human being to occasionally examine and reexamines himself or

herself in order to reform and refine himself or herself when the need arises as a result of his or her shortcomings since he or she has some imperfection.

With advancement in science and technology thus far, no scientist has created a human being from dust. Attempts may have been made through biotechnology and other means, but the fact remains that our understanding of the functioning of the human anatomy and physiological make up are not enough to create from the dust a human being or other living things. We should bear in mind at this point that cloning is different from creating a human being or other living things from the dust. For now, the secret of creating life or giving life to human beings or other living things remains with God alone as the very author of life.

In African indigenous society, life does not belong to an individual alone. This echoes the saying of Aristotle that the human being is a social being. Humans cannot exist without sociability both at conception and beyond. For the African indigenous society therefore, the deliberate taking away of another man's life is not only an abominable act, but a grievous offense against mother earth, the deities, ancestors, the entire community where the crime is committed and especially the Supreme Being the giver of life. The sacredness and the inestimable value of life in African indigenous society have made it an abomination to terminate the life of an unborn child, maltreat a pregnant woman/nursing mother, commit suicide, euthanasia, and the killing of the weak in the society. Those who are culprits of such abominable acts that terminate other people's life are not spared or allowed to live with other members of the community. The least punishment that could be given to such culprits is banishment, and that is when it is discovered that the offense was committed in error. While those who deliberately committed such act (murder) at the time of peace (not in a war situation) are condemned to death by the community, because the entire morality of the people is anchored on the value of the human life and justice.

In most parts of the world, what makes the society to be considered great is the ability to protect life and property of its citizens. A society is considered to be barbaric, timid, uncivilized and crude when the hope of living a free and secured life is thrown to the dogs. An organized society must therefore show concern for all the inhabitants and their welfare irrespective of the tribes that form the society. Nations have gone into wars because of the protection and welfare of their citizens, because they felt it was their duty to do so. The acclaimed incessant wars in Sub-Sahara

Africa even before the arrival of the white man in Africa were basically fought for the interest of the people; they were fought either for territorial boundaries, or liberation and protection of the people from the domination and oppression of other tribes, or for injustice done to them by another tribe that was not well addressed.

A society therefore is only qualified to answer the name ‘society’, ‘nation’, ‘State’, ‘community’, and ‘country’, when it has what it takes to protect the lives and properties of those who live and dwell within the specify territory not minding the tribes that constitute it. So, tribalism which is the “discrimination against a citizen because of his place of birth” (Achebe, 1983: 7) has the capacity to prevent a society, nation, state, community and a country from function as such. A country (in a true sense of the word) is always on a look out for external aggressors who may attack its territories either for the purpose of game or otherwise. It is an aberration when a certified society turned against itself by destroying what makes it bear the name “society”.

### **3. The Nigeria State: Its Security Apparatus and the Citizens**

Most Nigerian citizens are fully aware that their physical earthly survival is in the hands of God and not that of the government with its law enforcement agencies. The citizens are also much aware that the security agents are paid to protect the rich, the politicians, the technocrats, and those occupying high positions in the society. The ordinary man and woman on the street have come to believe that he or she can only survive through ‘worshiping’ those that are at the hem of affairs in the society. The poor can be slaughtered by the security agents to please the few selected opportunists and their cronies without protest. Protest in Nigeria is a crime and best put as treasonable felony. Asking for your right is considered as an attempt to unseat the government of the day. Ehusani (1995: 99) asserts that Nigerians have no freedom, even to complain about their condition, as their best Newspapers have been proscribed for venturing to write the truth, labour unions have lost their autonomy to the extent that oppressive government now dictates what happens in many unions thus making them unable to adequately negotiate better conditions of service for the distressed workers. He states further that when workers attempt to stage peaceful demonstration against their oppressors, they are confronted with deadly harassment by a brutal police force.

The Nigerian citizens were better off during the colonial era when it comes to respect for the fundamental human rights of the citizen. The British were able to manage the colony of Nigeria and respect the fundamental rights of Nigerians because the administrators of Nigeria were experts. As observed by Achebe (2012: 43)

The British governed their colony of Nigeria with considerable care. There was a very high level of knowledge of how to run a country. This was not something that the British achieved only in Nigeria; they were able to manage this on a bigger scale in India and Australia. The British had the experience of governing and doing it competently. I am not justifying colonialism. But it is important to face the fact that British colonies, more or less, were expertly run.

Nigeria gained its independent from the British in a platter of gold without going to war, but there were several protests especially in the southern part of the country demanding for freedom for self-governance without been slaughtered, murdered, or killed by the colonial masters. The citizens were allowed to air their views on issues that directly affected them to guide the colonialists to develop a more cordial relationship with the natives. The Nigerian politicians carved out a special society for themselves after drinking from political elixir to create a lacuna between themselves and the commoners who collectively elected them (directly or indirectly) to occupy the positions that turned them into superhuman beings.

The seemingly frustrated and agonizing relationship between the ruling class and the citizens has made the citizens foreigners in their own fathers’ land. The citizens cannot seek for justice or demand for their rights from the ruling class. According to Ehusani (1995: 99), today thousands of people who are mere suspects languish in jail under sub-human conditions, some for upward of five to ten years. Many of them have never been formally charged to court for any offense. A number of these detainees die in prison due to abuse and neglect, and hardly any account is taken of them. The extent of police brutality and extra-judicial killings in our land is alarming. The ruling class has gradually turned the Nigeria State into a totalitarian State where despotic rulers act without regard for the constitution of the country. They indiscriminately increase their salaries and allowances whenever they deem it fit while the public servants and civil servants are paid peanut that is not enough to send their children to good schools. The religious bodies are not excluded, because the

missionary schools, which used to be the school for all and sundry, are currently out of the reach of the poor. Only few religious leaders have openly criticized the government on the pulpits and at the public fora for gross inefficiency. Some of the religious leaders have romances with most of the politicians up to the extent of even knighting or 'turbaning' them in their Churches and Mosques just for material gains. Close to 90% of the politicians in Nigeria are either Christians or Muslims who worship in the same Churches and Mosques with other fellow Nigerians. If our religious leaders are like the biblical Amos (a social critic) they would have used the pulpits like Archbishop Oscar Romero of El-Salvador in Latin America to correct the ills and challenged the criminally corrupted politicians in their Churches and Mosques. Everyone claims that Nigeria is a religious nation; the question now is, of what benefit is religion to the Nigerian populace since some of our religious leaders collaborate with the politicians to perpetuate evils in the land?

The law enforcement agents have their own share of making life unbearable and, to a large extent, meaningless in the Nigerian State. They occasionally unleashed terror on the people even though they are also suffering from the consequences of the negative and bad actions of political leaders. Most of them that have retired barely get their retirement benefits or live a standard life that befits those who made great sacrifices for their country. Most public and civil servants that have retired in this country are treated like ex-convicts freed from the maximum Kirikiri prison after serving their jail terms. Some of them who retired with terminal ailment or injuries from their duty post while in service are left alone to cater for themselves with the meager monthly allowances that is not even forthcoming as at when due. Some of them dropped dead during pensioners' occasional verification exercise, because of poverty. It is this terrific and horrific situation of the Nigerian masses that prompted Ehusani (1995: 98) to comment that, the mass of Nigerians have been stripped naked by a corrupt and callous elite. The mass of Nigerians have suffered in the hands of a succession of despotic, decadent, vision-less, and reckless leaders. They have been humiliated, pauperized and reduced to a state of destitution by combined forces of military dictatorship, political subterfuge and economic profligacy. Most Nigerians have lost their individual and collective pride to the excesses of autonomous conquerors who recognize no order except that established by mammon. Every day, thousands of our country men and women are dying of starvation and otherwise curable diseases. Gaiya (1992: 2) asserts that on several occasions, government has set up

administrative judicial and special military tribunals to victimize and witch-hunt selected persons instead of finding lasting solutions.

The social media that ought to be one of the medium for the citizens to express their feelings and opinions about the nefarious activities of the political class in relation to looting of public funds, borrowing from foreign nations, unexecuted paid projects, incompetence of the government, police and army brutality, poor standard of living, insecurity, raping, kidnapping and banditry in Nigeria, has been made redundant by the government who considers any written or spoken statement against the government as hate speech or treason; therefore a bill has to be raised by the National House of Assembly for the censorship of people's posts on social media that are anti-government. The dictatorial nature of a supposedly democratic system in the Nigerian State is a paradox in the oasis of mental abstraction that is not comprehensible to human understanding, and therefore remains an enigma to the international world where true democracy is practiced. Duniya (1995: 37) points out that from the colonial days to the present, the army or the traditional rulers have always ruled the masses of this nation with an iron hand, arresting and sentencing thousands of suspects on political charges. Although there were countless human rights abuses during the military regime in Nigeria, but people were allowed to protest against bad governance without loss of lives and brutalization of citizens during protests, people could sleep with their eyes closed, and the security of their lives and properties were guaranteed compared to what we have now.

#### **4. Criminal Seeds Watered by Hopelessness**

In every human being, there are both good and evil tendencies due to virtues or vices acquired over time in the family, school, society, religion and other social institutions. No one is born perfect and act perfectly all the time. The environment an individual grows up contributes to shaping and modeling his/her life style and his/her relationship with other humans. Even in the Bible, Jesus says a good tree cannot produce bad fruits and a bad tree cannot produce good fruits; that would be an aberration. Philosophically speaking, ideas govern the world to the extent that the prevailing ideology (good or bad) influences persons to act the way they do. Thus, the kind of persons in government and the kind of ideologies they promote and sustain go a long way in making the citizenry politically active or docile. Nigerians as persons created by God are good persons who are hospitable, unassuming, calm,

peace-loving, sociable, entertaining, industrious, self-contented, and anti-racists. However, the kind of leaders they have had over the years and the ideologies these leaders propagated have formed or nurtured Nigerians into what they have currently become.

The world all over is aware that Nigeria is a land flowing with milk and honey like the biblical land of Canaan in the Ancient Near East. Nigeria is blessed with both human and material resources, and it's among the few countries in the world with such abundant opportunities. Otuibe (2003: 67) argued that God has endowed Nigeria with enormous potentials and opportunities that could make this nation really great and offer every Nigerian a comfortable living. Like the biblical description of the land of Israel, Nigeria could equally be said to be a land that flows with 'milk and honey.' According to Pope John Paul II (1998):

God in fact has blessed this land with human and natural wealth, and it is everyone's duty to ensure that these resources are used for the good of the whole people. All Nigerians must work to rid society of everything that offends the dignity of the human person or violates human rights. This means reconciling differences, overcoming ethnic rivalries, and injecting honesty, efficiency and competence into the art of governing.

Nigeria is an envy of many nations of the world due to its natural resources and with one of the best climatic conditions throughout the year. There are no much natural disasters in Nigeria as experiences in other part of the world like some countries in Asia, Europe and America. The question is, is Nigeria with its natural resources better than those countries that are less endowed?

There are complains within and outside Nigeria today about the chaos, poverty, insecurity, human rituals, cymal crimes, unemployment, gangsterism, religious charlatan, ostentatious style of life among the political class, short life span because of poor health system, increasing rate of illiteracy, school drop outs, robbery, kidnapping, banditry, raping, and cultism in Nigeria presently. Is there hope for the Nigeria nation and the people? Hope can be found in a system of education that produces adequate knowledge for Nigerian graduates "based on a philosophy of education that involves the active participation (consisting of talents, gifts and potentials) of those being educated with an approach open to pluralism" (Odia, 2016: 150). Such a philosophy of education can produce citizens that can

challenge the existing corrupt political structure in Nigeria. However, the current negligence of the educational sector by successive government in Nigeria has made adequate knowledge elusive. There are secessionist movements all over Nigeria clamouring for separation to give room for fast development. Nevertheless, some unbiased and non-tribal-ethnic political agnostics opined that separation is not the answer to the economic, social and political quagmire we are presently navigating in, because the visionless, insensitive and corrupt politicians are evenly distributed in the six (6) geopolitical zones. Therefore, secession will not change and heal the mental state of hysteria of the Herodias political elites who are deeply immersed in corrupt practices, because of their kleptomaniac nature. Stopping a Nigeria politician from stealing from the public treasury is like preventing a village goat from eating yam, which we know is an unthinkable impossibility. According to Okonjo-Iweala (2012: 81) Nigeria had become virtually synonymous with the word "corruption." The corrupt practices are exacerbated by both the Military Generals and politicians (retired and still in service) who had thrown their conscience to the street dogs.

The Nigerian political elites have failed to provide an enabling environment for the citizens to excel in their various fields of endeavors. Eboh (2016: 109) points out that rare Nigerians leave the shore of Nigeria to seek refuge in countries willing to recognize what they are. As a result of the distance between the leaders and the people the leaders do not understand the plights of the people, and they do not know how to address the problems of the common man/woman on the street. The leaders are only concerned about the progress of their families and at times their village supporters. It is a verifiable fact that most of our people who summoned up courage with all the odds in the Nigerian society to go to school/tertiary institutions aimed at getting white collar jobs. After graduation, when the white-collar jobs are not available, they redirect their knowledge and skills acquired from the courses they studied to crimes of various degrees out of frustration. The Nigerian government is not innovative enough to create jobs for its vibrant youths who because of their youthful exuberance are prone to all kinds of crimes. Nevertheless, the same government is good in fixing the privilege ones (their children, brothers, sisters, and ethnic men/women) in juicy positions, while the children of the commoners who struggled to graduate from tertiary institutions are left on the street to seek for teaching jobs from private schools where they are poorly paid just to survive. Some of the poor ones who graduated from tertiary institutions turned to

pastoral ministries by gathering other poor people like themselves seeking for miracle to start fellowships and later graduate to big ministries or Churches.

The Nigerian youths who are always ready to work as a means of survival are not given the opportunity by the government to showcase their talents. It is possible that, if there are basic amenities in Nigeria like other developed or developing nations of the world, the Nigerian youths would have been spending their time on self-development or growing businesses. The government had spent billions of naira on electricity, but very little to show for it. There is no stable electricity and water supply to carry out small scale businesses in the country. Those planning to open small scale businesses have to make provision for power supply because of the epileptic nature of our electricity. The government feels unconcern for the welfare of its citizens. In the process of struggling to survive some of the youths result to cymbal crimes, prostitution, rituals, robbery, and gangsterism. The Nigerian State helps in bringing out the evil tendencies in its citizens through its anti-people's policies. For instance, civil servants, public servants, military and paramilitary who play pivotal roles for the corporate existence of the Nigerian State are poorly remunerated. They spend good 35 years serving their nation, yet at retirement they live in penury and hardly able to care for themselves without depending on their children and relatives. The poor salaries during their service years are not enough for their families up keep, it is therefore practically impossible for them to save for the rainy days (retirement). Some of them rely on loan for the training of children, building of houses and buying cars just to meet up in the society. The Nigerian State has created a miserable situation for them and therefore pushed them to some corrupt practices. For them to survive, they engage on unholy activities such as collecting bribes from their fellow citizens who need their services, working in other places during office hours to get double salaries to increase their incomes, and what have you. The few committed ones remain perpetually poor and become laughing stocks in the society, because there is nothing to show for the 35 years of service to the nation. Some of them die miserably during yearly screening exercise before they get their monthly poor remunerations to keep them alive.

The government emphasizes on fighting corruption, but provide avenue for corrupt practices. The youths are unemployed, those employed are not better off because of poor remuneration, and the pensioners are looking like frustrated strayed ghosts seeking for

places to inhabit. The parents spend virtually everything they have in training their children and, at the end of their training, they are left unemployed with no conducive atmosphere or environment to practice their trade. Since they could not continue to depend on their old parents, they device a means to survive and to assist their parents or younger ones. Some of them taken into robbery, cymbal crimes, human rituals, cultism and other similar crimes. The government of the day seems not to bother about the poor leadership style, while the political class is made up of the egocentric individuals who manipulate the majority to achieve their goals. The rest population is made to live like slaves whose masters are only concerned about the services they render and not their welfare.

### **5. Leaders Wondering in a Desert Of An Endless Odyssey**

It is becoming clearer by the day that the majority of the crops of leaders found in Nigeria can be described as leaders who are wondering in the desert of an endless odyssey. The suffering Nigerians are experiencing today are as a result of leadership malnourishment because leaders in government have remained unfocused, visionless, timid, lacking in administrative acumen, voracious, callous, insensitive to the people's plight, consumed by a selfish political ideology, bereaved of leadership qualities and a bunch of looters. It is also obvious that these same corrupt leaders have inoculated the public and upcoming politicians with corruption virus because of their leadership styles. Their incompetency has thrown the entire nation into a reckless journey with unavoidable jeopardy, and Nigerians are ashamed to be counted among the civilized nations of the world, hence there is a constant mass exodus of young people to neighbouring and far distance countries to find succor and means of surviving. The leaders' thirst for materialism has turned almost all of them to brood of vampires who have little or no human feelings towards the ordinary citizens. Eboh (2016: 123) described 53 years of post-independent Nigeria as a cyclic movement in a mighty ocean without navigational system, no orientation, and no defined destination.

The major reason why Nigeria is underdeveloped today is traceable to the leaders who found themselves in the position of power without knowing what to do positively with the power at their disposal. The reason why politicians fight for positions in Nigeria is simply to amass wealth to oppress the poor and the down trodden individuals. Almost all of them lack developmental principles and completely

knowledge of how to formulate policies that will bring about growth and development in the country. Although, they are good tax collectors like Zacchaeus (before his encounter with Jesus), the people they are leading (followers) are more knowledgeable than them in terms of leadership skills and what it takes to be a good leader. Unfortunately, the followers have allowed themselves to be marginalized and made poor by the ruling class to the extent that they can be bought by peanuts. In the civilized world, people are referred to as elder- statesmen because after retirement from politics or executive positions, the country can still tap from their wealth of experiences and they also give good counsel to those who took over from them. Most of the so-called elder-statesmen in Nigeria that had occupied high positions are self-centered and are still seeking for avenues to milk the country dry. Some even seek for ministerial positions for their children so that they can remain relevant in the corridor of power. Most ministers in Nigeria are children or relatives of retired and dead politicians and heads of state who feel the Federal Government is their family inheritance. Most retired Generals and their children rotate the seat of power like African traditional rulers in total neglect of the fact that the Nigerian State is a democratic State that should pursue the values of democracy. Nigeria is tied down with old bloods that have expired in the political theatre even before they were elected into offices, while the new bloods are disallowed to infuse contemporary political ideologies into the system and style of governance. It therefore looks moronic that a country that is blessed with enough human resources and parades itself as the giant of Africa has the worst system of leadership in the world, and shamefully deceive the world that it practices democracy with leaders who are tyrannical despotic demagogues who loot the nation's treasury without conscience, and jail, incarcerate, murder, banish, cage, threaten, kidnap, and frustrate political opponents who go against their Machiavellian philosophy of leadership that 'the end justifies the means'. Electioneering campaign period that ought to be a period when the various candidates representing different political parties are expected to convince the electorates why they are qualified for the positions they are vying for, has become a period for thuggery, arson, civil unrest, killings of opponents, blackmailing, cheap lies peddling against opponents, and the distribution of government stolen money meant for developmental projects. The general populace has developed a strong belief that their votes do not count because of the open rigging with destructive weapons to scare off the electorates. Some registered voters out of fear of untimely death at the pooling boots where votes are cast stay at home with their voters' cards on

Election Day to avoid molestation from the law enforcement agents and political thugs. Even during ordinary primaries within the parties to select their representative for the main election are occasions where most party leaders fraudulently impose the candidates of their choices on party members through rigging. They still use thugs against themselves to elect party representatives. Therefore, most of the leaders are not the people's choice, but the choice of selfish party leaders. Also, it should be noted that most of these leaders that are rigged into offices by party leaders are character wise not qualified to occupy any public office in a civilized society because of their criminal records and notoriety. In this type of scenario, what are your expectations from such crops of leaders, if not looting to satisfy the demands of those who imposed them on the citizenry, lies and deceit to remain in office, the lack of any genuine developmental philosophy and the greed for materialism?

## 6. Conclusion

From the foregoing discussion it is pictorially clear that the Nigerian citizens are grooving and glooming in a deep sea of an endless misery, hopelessness, melancholic depression, a bottomless Erebus of political subjugation, a pitiable condition and begging to live and survive in their fathers' land, because of the criminalities of most politicians and law enforcement agencies in the contemporary Nigerian society. Life has lost its sacredness and awe. Most political leaders have a very strong belief that they have the right to take away the life of a citizen who poses as a problem to them at any time; hence, whenever there is a protest against bad governance the politicians and the law enforcement agencies use the slogan 'shoot at sight,' meaning kill any protester that is seen on the street. Nobody questions the government on some of the protesters who were victims of army or police straight bullets, because these law enforcement agencies are carrying out their legitimate duty and government orders. Human life in Nigeria could be equated with the life of lower animals without fear of contradiction. For instance, in Nigeria the herdsmen would murder hundreds of farmers because their cattle were prevented from destroying farmers' crops and the Federal Government would apologize to the herdsmen and even pay them compensation, while the deceased are blamed for interrupting the movement of the cattle. It is also in Nigeria that terrorists are captured, rehabilitated, trained and given amnesty, while protesters without arms are jailed or even killed.

## 7. Recommendations

The following are recommended to improve leadership quality in Nigeria, and to build a healthy relationship between the leaders and the citizens:

- Leadership philosophy as a course should be introduced in our school curriculum from primary to tertiary institutions to groom our future leaders.
- Rights of citizens should be taught in schools from primary to the tertiary levels.
- The Nigerian judiciary should be truly autonomous as the third arm of government to help foster the supremacy of law.
- Every government should be a single term of five (5) years and no more.
- All laws granting pension or allowances to all past political office holders should be repelled. The salaries and allowances of political leaders are already over-bloated.

## References

- Achebe C. (1983), *The Trouble with Nigeria*, Nigeria: Fourth Dimension Co. Ltd.
- Achebe C. (2012), *There was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra*, London: Allen Lane.
- Duniya, F. (1995), *The Zangon Kataf Crisis in Respect of Minority Culture in Northern Nigeria*, in *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology* Vol. 7:1-2, *Violence and State Security*, Uzukwu, E. E. ed., Enugu: SNAAP Press Ltd.
- Eboh, S. O. (2016), *Biafra: God's Judgment on Nigeria - Reflection on the Theology of History*, Owerri: Gabtony Prints Ltd.
- Ehusani, G. (1995), *Theology at the Service of the People*, in *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology* Vol.7:1-2, *Violence and State Security* (Edited) by Uzukwu, E. E. ed., Enugu: SNAAP Press Ltd.
- Ejim, J. O. (2006), *Traditional Religion in Africa*, in *Readings in Religion and Philosophy*, Oyelade, E. O. Ed., Benin City, Nigeria: Teredia Press.
- Gaiya P. (1992), *The Zangon Kataf Crisis in Perspective*. No Publishers.
- Hallman, Max O. (2003), *Traversing Philosophical Boundaries*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Odia, S. I. (2016), "The Knowledge Question and the Problem of Uneducated Graduates in Nigeria", in *Philosophy and Praxis: Journal of the Nigerian Philosophical Association*, Vol. 7, pp. 58 – 72.
- Odia, S. I. (2018), "African Personal Names and Quest for the Meaning of human Existence: A socio-epistemological Perspective", in *Philosophy and Praxis: Journal of the Nigerian Philosophical Association*, Vol. 8, pp. 145 – 163.
- Okonjo-Iweala, N. (2012), *Reforming the Unreformable: Lessons From Nigeria*, London: MIT Press.
- Otuibe, C.A. (2003), *Amos: A Challenge to Nigerian Church and Society*, Ibadan: Okley Printers (Nig.) Ltd.
- Pope John Paul II, (1998), *Homily at the Beatification of Blessed Cyprian Iwene Tansi at Oba, Onitsha*.