

THE CALL FOR INDIGENOUS PROVERBS AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR PROMOTION OF NATIONAL UNITY

BY

A. A.GANIYU, G. E.ODETOMI and E. O. MOFOLUWAWO

www.guildaa.org

THE CALL FOR INDIGENOUS PROVERBS AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR PROMOTION OF NATIONAL UNITY

BY

Akeem Alatise, GANIYU
Department of General Studies
Federal School of Surveying, Oyo

Gbemisoeye Ezekiel, ODETOMI
Department of General Studies
Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora
and

Esther Omoniyi, MOFOLUWAWO
Department of Social Studies
Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo
Corresponding Email: Akeemalatise2013@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Every human society is endowed with a divine cultural heritage that determines how its inhabitants behave and relate with one another. This in turn promotes harmonious living culminating in societal unity. Societal norms, ethics and values embedded in culture are promoted by language particularly, indigenous languages. It is believed that the inculcation of cultural norms, ethics and values into individual through indigenous language right from the family level, community, tribes to national levels plays significant roles in the promotion of national unity. However, the indigenous languages that are supposed to promote cultural values and heritage towards achieving national unity are not given adequate attention as it is done to foreign language that is totally alien to Nigerian culture. This paper, therefore, calls for the use of indigenous proverbs as instrument of cultural heritage germane to the promotion of national unity. Qualitative design was employed for the study, three research questions were raised. A mini study was conducted among 6 lecturers each from the school of languages of the two Colleges of Education that exist in Oyo. (twelve lecturers), another six community elders, two each from Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba communities were purposively selected, while, two palace Chiefs were also considered from Alaafin of Oyo's palace. The 20 respondents were also interviewed on the role of indigenous proverbs in promoting cultural heritage for national unity. It was unanimously agreed that if proverbs such as those given to illustrate unity are given priority in every household, they will promote positive attitudinal changes that will enhance people's attitude towards unity at homes, villages, communities, states and the entire nations irrespective of our differences. It was recommended among others that government, stakeholders on

THE CALL FOR INDIGENOUS PROVERBS AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR PROMOTION OF NATIONAL UNITY

BY

A. A.GANIYU, G. E.ODETOMI and E. O. MOFOLUWAWO

www.guildaa.org

education, parents, and guardians are to embrace a policy that will enhance the use indigenous languages both at home and the general public such that the beautiful values in cultures will be exposed to individual in order to promote and actualize unity in Nigeria.

Key Words: Cultural Heritage, Indigenous, Proverbs, National Unity, attitudinal changes.

INTRODUCTION

Every human society is faced with one challenge or the other. There is no gainsaying that one of the greatest challenges facing Nigeria as a country is the threat to her national unity. This challenge is born out of the single fact that Nigeria is a multi-ethnic country with diverse cultures and traditions. Nigeria at 55th year anniversary could not boast of absolute peace and unity. Cases such as the Boko Haram insurgences are serious threat to national cohesion and unity, and at the same time promote shedding of human blood. The recent threat by Movement and Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and sister groups in the South/ South and South/ East are all examples of the traces of disunity. Negligence on the part of Nigerians to make use of values in their culture contribute to poor attitudinal display and intolerance which in most cases serve as factors that make unity a mirage among Nigerians. Nevertheless, heritage in different cultures across the country is good enough to develop and promote in individual, the spirit of oneness and unity. It is a known fact that, culture is a phenomenon that shapes peoples' attitudes and disposition to issues. Societies exist and advance on the platform of their cultural heritage. Either tangible or intangible, cultural heritage serve as a pointer to how people relates and react in their private and public life.

Intangible cultural heritage is the focus of this study, and it deals with cultural norms, values, ethics, belief system, tradition, language and especially proverbs.

As beautiful as the elements of intangible cultural heritage are, Nigerians do not give adequate attention to the medium through which they could be employed in our daily life. The medium is no other one than indigenous language. Nigerians attempt to identify with the spirit of globalization has eroded most of our cultural heritage in favour of the western life style. Parents and adults do not develop interest in communicating with their children in indigenous language, and this prevents youths in employing the message of unity that most indigenous languages and proverbs teaches. Civilization is one of the elements of globalization that is combating cultural heritage of the people of Nigeria (Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba). One other powerful instrument that globalization employs to spread its powerful influence after Information Communication Technology is English language which Nigeria adopted as her lingual franca in order to promote national unity. The adoption of English as a medium of communication has posed a big challenges to Nigerian indigenous languages, many of which currently are facing extinction.

THE CALL FOR INDIGENOUS PROVERBS AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR PROMOTION OF NATIONAL UNITY

BY

A. A.GANIYU, G. E.ODETOMI and E. O. MOFOLUWAWO

www.guldaa.org

The near extinction of many minor languages and the reduction in the level of usage of the major languages are another factor that prevent youth in Nigeria to recognize and utilize elements of intangible cultural heritage across the nation. Cultural prowess and heritage in Nigeria are good instruments that could promote unity but little or no attention is given to them. Most youth and adult do not understand proverbs let alone appreciating their power in promoting unity within our nation-state. This development perhaps informs the decision of the National Institution for Cultural Orientation (NICO) to be saddled with the responsibility of establishing a programme that will re-orientate Nigerians towards a cultural-related life style, to piloting and energizing the learning of indigenous language (Okafor,2014).

However, Nigeria is supposed to learn from developing countries of the world that had attained a greater height through the adoption of their indigenous languages. For instance, Mazrui (2002) contended that “no country has ascended a firsthand technology and economic power by excessive dependence on foreign language, Japan rose to dazzling industrial height by making Japanese language her medium of communication” (Olaoye,2003). It is unfortunate that at 55 years of independence Nigeria could not effectively harness her three major languages when according to Obong (2005) in an online *Nairaland* discussion concerning Yoruba version of the Google Search Engine, with a theme “*Should we Promote Nigerian Languages More*”. “The powerful countries in the world have all

tried in the area of language annexation, South Africa has up to (9) nine languages and China supports all the 55 languages in its country. They even pay to have newspapers translated into these languages. India does the something and even awards yearly prizes to writers in local Indian languages. It is needless to say that these countries have a deep identity, making them more patriotic with information easily accessible to the masses, even old and poor.

Thus attempt is made in this work to examine indigenous language vis a vis proverbs that emphasize and promote togetherness and unity. Moreso, indigenous proverbs in Nigeria have been discovered to possess socializing and enduring values for peaceful co-existence (Fasiku, 2006, Adeboye 2010, Owomoyela 2012, Adeyemi 2012 & Salawudeen 2012). Since language is the vehicle of culture, attempt is being made here to highlight some indigenous proverbs and their impact on national unity.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Nothing is pleasant like living in a conducive atmosphere, where growth and development are the order of the day. Nigeria at 55th year anniversary could not boast of absolute peace and unity. Different instances such as the Boko Haram insurgences that are blowing the trumpet of discord, and shedding human blood. The recent threat by Movement and Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and sister groups in the South/ South and South/ East are all examples of the traces of disunity. Negligence on the part of Nigerians to make use

THE CALL FOR INDIGENOUS PROVERBS AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR PROMOTION OF NATIONAL UNITY

BY

A. A.GANIYU, G. E.ODETOMI and E. O. MOFOLUWAWO

www.guldaa.org

of values in their culture contribute to poor attitudinal display and intolerance which in most cases serve as factors that make unity a mirage among Nigerians. Failure to preserve our culture is attempt at killing our cultural heritage and create disorderliness in the society. This perhaps informed the submission of Azebry in Okeke (2014) that “most of our cultural heritage are lost and people don’t want to go back to it again, instead, they are copying foreign culture and is slowing down our own culture...” (p27) This view may be the reason why most of our indigenous languages are into extinction.

The purpose of this study is to direct the attention of parents, guardians, social studies educators, linguist and government to the benefit that can be derived in promoting indigenous language and proverbs in other to open the mind of youth to appreciate the spirit of unity.

METHOD

The study employed qualitative research design, three research questions were raised and interview conducted on 20 selected respondents, through purposive sampling technique. The twenty respondents were selected thus; six (6) lecturers each from the school of languages of both Emmanuel Alayande College of Education and Federal College of Education (Special) all in Oyo township. Also two elders from each of the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba communities within Oyo town while another two (2) palace chiefs from the Alaafin of Oyo palace were selected making eight (8) elders and 12 lecturers. The information

gathered were categorically transcribed in percentages.

Understanding Cultural Heritage, Indigenous Language and Proverbs

Cultural heritage is an expression of the way of living developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation, including customs, practices, objects, artistic expressions and values. It is an indicators of the ways of living that a community, develop, which are inherited from previous generations. It includes art work, buildings, books, objects, songs, folklore, and history. Cultural heritage provides both tangible and intangible representation of the values, beliefs, traditions and life styles of prior generation. Accepting culture as a total way of life, Modus (2015) posits that cultural heritage is a collective endowment of human existence or unique activities over a span of time and within a cultural area which bears exceptional testimony to the cultures, traditions, religions and belief of the people. Such properties form the basis of people’s living and existence which are transferred from generation to generation.

Cultural heritage could be built heritage which includes buildings, townscapes, archeological remains and historic areas while it could also be natural heritage which includes component of our surroundings which have not been created by man and which are of cultural, spiritual, biotic or ecological value and which could also be of direct usable resource value. Examples of this in the Nigerian context are

THE CALL FOR INDIGENOUS PROVERBS AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR PROMOTION OF NATIONAL UNITY

BY

A. A.GANIYU, G. E.ODETOMI and E. O. MOFOLUWAWO

www.guildaa.org

rugged landscape, waterfalls, and land falls, Wikki warm spring in Bauchi, to mention few. Cultural heritage comprises sources and evidence of human history regardless of origin, development and level of preservation (tangible and intangible) and the cultural assets associated with it.

Tangible cultural heritage refers to things that we can store or physically touch. It refers to those significant places that advocate the country's history and culture. For instance, museum shrines, *Oluminu* waterfall, *Ishesa* waterfall, *Ikogosi* warm spring in Ondo.

Intangible cultural heritage refers to those aspects of a country that cannot be touched or seen, for instance, traditional music, values, superstition, myths, folklore, language, oral history, songs adage, proverbs, idioms, rituals and social practices.

Indigenous Language

Language in the word of Olaoye (2013) is a distinctively human system of communication based on oral and written symbols. It is the vehicle that serves as a repository of a people's culture, industry and exploits. Language again as a component of culture is a means of communication. It is a central factor of culture in any community and a reflection of the thought, feelings and values, belief and the experiences of community. Indigenous language in the word of Spolsky (2002) refers to the language speaking by people who share common historical origin and culture.

Solanke (2006) also contends that indigenous language is an indispensable control legacy with which all forms of human interactions are carried out. Nwadika (2004) was of the view that indigenous language is the key to the heart of the people, which if lost, we lose the people. If we treasure the key and keep it safe, it will unlock the door to wealth or affluence. In the place of culture, indigenous language is an indispensable cultural legacy without which all forms of human interactions cannot be carried out. It is the most effective engine of a people's culture; it treasures human culture and self-identity. Finally, Olaoye (2013) submits that indigenous language is the indicator of history and self-identification. In the context of this paper, indigenous language is defined as a local and original language which an individual is exposed to in the locality for the purpose of communication. It is the primary language, first of which individual naturally acquires for community interaction.

National Unity

Because of the fact that unity is the corner stone of this study, it is imperative to explicate what it depicts. Unity in the context of this study is one strong cohesion that exists among group of people who submit their individual wish and interest for the sake of living together as one single element for the benefit of all. It could also mean a scenario where the joy of one is the joy of all and vice versa. (Muhammed, 1999)

National unity according to Malaysia Department of National Unity (2001) is a

THE CALL FOR INDIGENOUS PROVERBS AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR PROMOTION OF NATIONAL UNITY

BY

A. A.GANIYU, G. E.ODETOMI and E. O. MOFOLUWAWO

www.guildaa.org

situation in which all citizens from various states live in peace as one united nationality giving full commitment to federal constitution.

PROVERBS

Proverb is an element of intangible cultural heritage and popular wisdom bound in many African languages to accentuate and highlight discursion in a given context. These expressions are not considered rich and intelligible except when they are duly laced with proverbs (Usman, Mustafa and Margaret, 2013). Mbiti (1995) in Babatunde and Mujidat (2014) described proverbs as symbols of connectedness packed into short sentences or even anecdotes and stories sometimes carved on wood, stone, or other materials or even sung or danced. While lending his voice into what proverb is all about, Fasiku (2006) in Babatunde and Mujidat, (2014) contended that indigenous proverbs in Nigeria have been discovered to possess socializing and enduring values for peaceful co-existence.

Proverbs are intellectual work of arts that attempt to explicate major issues in every language. Proverb according to Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary (1972), in Usman et al (2013), is a short saying in common use expression, a well-known truth or common fact ascertained by experience". Proverbs are drawn from and referred to all activities of society, natural objectives and phenomenon. Most African proverbs acts as a catalyst of knowledge, wisdom, philosophy, others and morals which provoke further reflection and call for a deeper thinking and consideration of issues.

Usman et al (2013) further defines proverb as a short pithy saying in frequent and widespread use that expresses a basic truth or practical precept.

From the above definitions, one can conclude that proverbs are sayings or expression of wisdom through which reflective thinking gives deep meaning or explanation to issues that are vital and useful for human life. Also, proverbs give beauty to language of any tribes. Little wonder, why Chinua Achebe in Usman (2013) extols the aspects of Nigerian proverbs in a remark that, among the Igbo, proverbs are the "palm oil with which words are eaten". This was further explicated by Usman et al (2013) that Achebe imagines a situation where words are put in the mouth like pieces of yams and chewed, after dipping the yam (word) in palm oil. Finally, proverbs can be described as elements of intangible cultural heritage that teaches and guide individual on why certain decision and action should be taken and why others should be jettisoned in order to meet up with one's socio-cultural value and norms.

Highlights of Proverbs that Emphasize Unity in the three Major Nigerian Languages

The use of proverbs is common among Nigerian writers. Thus, in projecting the Nigerianness of their themes and cultural backgrounds, the Nigerian writers articulate the rich cultural ethos of proverbs in their creative works. Here are some of the proverbs that are carefully selected with regards to their use for national unity in Nigeria;

THE CALL FOR INDIGENOUS PROVERBS AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR PROMOTION OF NATIONAL UNITY

BY

A. A.GANIYU, G. E.ODETOMI and E. O. MOFOLUWAWO

www.guildaa.org

Some Hausa proverbs which emphasize on unity.

“Yawa shi kan sa zare yaua duchi”

Meaning: *Quantity makes the cotton to become a stone of unity and strength.*

The proverb is relevant to the course of unity in Nigeria. It emphasises that if people come together to unite, they become powerful and move mountain. This is because unity makes a group to be strong, their strength assist them to achieve a lot, in terms of growth, development, progress which could have been difficult to achieve if they go separately. If this is applied by individual in Nigeria, irrespective of our differences, the diversity will turn to blessing and promote national cohesion, development and unity of purpose.

“Sai bango yatsage kadangare kan samu wajen fakewa” Meaning: *The wall has a crack before it makes room for the lizard.*

This proverb is similar to a Yoruba proverb that says, “*Bi ogiri oba lanu Alangba olewobe*” i.e. it became difficult for intruder, or enemy to create confusion or hullabaloo in a community where there is cohesion, and unity. People with strong element of unity do not allow an outsider to divide them. In the case of Nigeria, if we do not go on the line of religion, language and ethnic differences, no one either from within the country or outside can create disunity among us. The case of *Boko Haram* and previous religious crises that had ensued in Nigeria in most cases were been sponsored by outsiders (Non-Nigerians).

“Albassa ba ta balli nrua” Meaning: *The nature of onion and water are difficult but one grows by the help of the other.*

This proverb emphasizes the symbiotic relationship between onion and water. One grows, by the help of the other. This should be one good value that tribes and ethnics in Nigeria should emulate. They should believe that they are not Island, no one is indispensable, we have a lot to benefit from one another. Hence, Yoruba should not restrict itself to the west while the Hausa should see beyond their region in terms of solid relationship with other ethnic groups and tribes. The Igbo should work in harmony with other tribes in Nigeria. Doing this will assist us to come to a round table to offer one another beautiful ideas and advise through which our nation become a single powerful country that solve her national problem from within.

“Hanna dayawa maganin kazamar” Meaning: *In cooperation and unity lies success.*

This proverb emphasizes the beauty of cooperation and unity as instrument of national growth and development. Nigerians can make Nigeria to be a great country that will succeed economically, politically and religiously. These three elements or concepts easily make a country to be successful. With the nature of endowment and resources we have, if all the tribes in Nigeria could exhibit the spirit of cooperation and unity at various levels and in various governmental institutions it will be easy for Nigeria to record huge success. The use of this proverb is,

THE CALL FOR INDIGENOUS PROVERBS AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR PROMOTION OF NATIONAL UNITY

BY

A. A.GANIYU, G. E.ODETOMI and E. O. MOFOLUWAWO

www.guldaa.org

therefore, necessary and important to be frequently used among every Nigerians.

“Sarkin yawa yafi sarkin karfi”

Meaning: *Those who are many in a group are more powerful and cannot be compared to a single person that can easily be defeated.*

The proverb is projecting the idea of togetherness and the strength in unity. In this turbulent period of insecurity in the North eastern Nigeria, the message of the proverb is pointing to the fact that, the case of *Boko Haram* should not be seen as a problem of the North or federal government alone but state and local governments across the country should come together to resolve the crises. An example of this in the recent time reflected in the bold step taken by the Governor of Lagos State Mr. Ambode Akinwumi who gave a donation of cash worth millions to the victims of the insurgency in the North East Nigeria.

Some Igbo Proverbs that Emphasize Unity

“Gidigidi ibugwueze” Meaning: *Unity is strength*

The proverb strongly believes in the strength that lies in unity. If youths and adults are in the direction of the proverb, it will encourage the spirit of unity and will promote success in all standards. The unity that exist between the northern part of Nigeria and the southwest in the days of civil war (1967-70) contributed to the triumph of the federal government in making Nigeria a single whole and indivisible powerful country in Africa. This proverb is good for unity

because a drop of water is not too strong enough to wash anything away, while an elephant cannot break a number of thread that are woven into a thick rope.

“Egbe bere ka ugo bere, nke siri, ibeya ebela ka nku kwaaya” Meaning: *May the kite perch and may the eagle perch whichever, does not want his neighbor to perch, may its wing broken.*

According to Onwuechekwa (2013) the principle that underlines this proverb is the principle of collective peace and unity of a people. The proverb forbids anyone from doing injury or injustice of any kind to one’s neighbour irrespective of the institution. It also teaches one to be law abiding, non-violent and respectful to both friends and foes. It helps to scare away the sense of insecurity in people, knowing fully well that insecurity is one of the factors that threaten the unity of Nigeria, particularly when one refers to the insurgent of *Boko Haram* in the Northern part of Nigeria.

“Aka gbangba otigbo ijiji” Meaning: *When hands join together, it easily kills flies*

This is another proverb that preaches togetherness as a value that is to be cherished among men in the society, it emphasizes the facts that what is difficult to achieve by a person or few people can be achieved easily and effectively by a group. Nigerians should cultivate the spirit off togetherness, cooperation and oneness to assist the nation achieve her major goals and objectives. Also putting our various resources together will promote growth.

THE CALL FOR INDIGENOUS PROVERBS AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR PROMOTION OF NATIONAL UNITY

BY

A. A.GANIYU, G. E.ODETOMI and E. O. MOFOLUWAWO

www.guildaa.org

“Anyuko Mamiri Onu Ogbo ufufu” Meaning: *If we all urinate on one spot it generates foam.*

This proverb also emphasises oneness, togetherness and sense of belonging as bedrock for growth and development, the pulling together of our various cultural and natural resources to help Nigeria to move forward. If all tribes could identify with one another they will move a mountain. This idea if inculcated into individual at the early stage of life, will promote the sense of collectivism, and sense of belonging.

“Otu aka adighi eke ngwugwu” Meaning: *One hand cannot effectively tie rope round a wrap.*

The proverb like other also emphasises, the principle of collectivism, cooperation, team spirit and togetherness as instrument of growth and development. The proverb can be used to orientate youth and adult in Nigeria not to only rely on members of their tribe to accomplish a goal rather, they should see people from other tribes as those they can work with, to achieve their desire or a goal toward personal or national development. Igbo people should use this and other proverb here to train their youth to achieve national unity.

Some Yoruba Proverbs that emphasize Unity

“Ajeeji owo kan kogbe eru dori, nitori agbajowo lafin soya.” Meaning: *One hand cannot be used to carry load except by collectivism or aid from the other hand.*

This proverb is similar to that of Igbo which also emphasizes collectivism, team spirit, sense of belonging, cooperation and togetherness

Yorubas also should impart the spirit and values which the proverbs emphasize into their youths and adult, in order to achieve unity right from the home, community, state and federal level of our body politics This will go a long way in achieving national unity in Nigeria.

“Ajoje kodun beni kan oni” Meaning: *Eating alone is not sweet when others do not have*

The proverb emphasizes sense of belonging, and cooperation. Human beings relate well with one another when they all contribute and achieve success together. Every tribe should champion national goal, they should be loyal and patriotic to the nation as a whole and not to their tribes, ethnic or region. A development in a region should also manifest and spread to another. This should mean that every Nigerian should cherish the idea that what is good for the gander is as well good for the goose by trading this part; Nigeria will achieve national unity that will promote healthy living.

“Aikowo rin ejo nise iku pawon ni ikookan” Meaning: *Failure of snakes to walk together as a group make them to fall into the trap of death.*

This proverb is similar to the saying that united we stand divided we fall. The proverb focuses on the strength that comes as a result of unity, Nigeria is a country blessed with several resources in terms of both human and materials, if the human resources can come together to contribute their wealth of experience, they will

THE CALL FOR INDIGENOUS PROVERBS AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR PROMOTION OF NATIONAL UNITY

BY

A. A.GANIYU, G. E.ODETOMI and E. O. MOFOLUWAWO

www.guildaa.org

easily proffer solution to most problem that confront the nation. This spirit will need to be inculcated in youths and adults and they should be charged to internalize the value and make use of it in their day to day life weather with neighbours or members of the same community, hence the proverb is good for promoting national unity.

“Agidi malaja awo Ile-Ife, awo ni gbe awoni igbowo, ti awo koba gbe awo nigbowo, awo ate awo aya” Meaning: ***The mysticism of unity is based on communalism.***

The proverb is one of the rich proverbs in Yoruba language and cultural heritage used to drum support, or canvass for cooperation and strong unity. The proverb is of the view that failure by an individual or a group to support each other/one another may likely lead to disintegration and disunity. It serves as a warning considering the negative effect of lack of cooperation among men in the society. This proverb therefore needs to be used in our day to day affairs to build cooperation and to shun individualism in order to achieve national unity.

“Kaarin kaapo, yiye ni yeni” Meaning:

There is dignity in walking together

The proverb emphasizes the beauty and dignity in collectivism, unionism, and cooperation. It emphasize that the dignity and honour that people experience when they speak with one voice earn them more success and achievement. If tribes and ethnics groups in Nigeria can work together and do things in common in terms of politics, religion, economic and other socio-cultural affairs, the nation will achieve a lot and enjoin undiluted unity which is the bedrock of every success.

Going through the proverbs one after the other, one will be convinced that they all possess elements of love, cooperation, sense of belonging and unity. As beautiful as the proverbs are, most Nigerians, youths and adults from each tribes do not have good knowledge of the proverb let alone the message they pass. This is due to the fact that the languages that are supposed to promote especially our intangible cultural heritage, are not been taken serious by Nigerians.

Having a critical look at the proverbs one can conclude that there should be a reexamination of the pedagogical values of proverbs in not only

THE CALL FOR INDIGENOUS PROVERBS AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR PROMOTION OF NATIONAL UNITY

BY

A. A.GANIYU, G. E.ODETOMI and E. O. MOFOLUWAWO

www.guildaa.org

social studies but in other relevant social science disciplines in order to train the mind and socialize Nigerian youth towards a better understanding of the norms and values of Nigerian society and reposition them for the challenges of the global world, more so a tree that has no root will soon bow to the wind.

Report of the Mini Study conducted in Support of the Role of Indigenous Proverbs and Language to promote Unity.

Research Question One: To what extent will the understanding of one's indigenous language promote the understanding of one's culture?

Findings: Sixteen respondents (80%) were of the opinion that no culture can survive without language of the people that observed such culture and that no one can have a better understanding of his or her culture (material or non-material) without a good knowledge of indigenous language, while 4 respondents (20%) disagreed with the idea. This findings is in tandem with the view of Solanke (2006) and Olaoye (2013) that, indigenous language is an indispensable control legacy with which all forms of human interactions are carried out and that, it is the vehicle that serves as a repository of people's

culture and industry. However, 20% of the respondents had a divergent view that language do not necessarily kill a culture, and that if elders in the community engages in practical use of material and non-material culture, nothing will affect the promotion of such culture.

One can also conclude that, the moment an indigenous language that own the culture fade away, the culture also gradually die off. But improvements in the use of language immensely promote and preserved the culture. Also, both language and culture are two side of a coin, they go simultaneously, and culture is best understood with the aid of indigenous language. One of the important mediums through which generations passes their cultural heritage to another generation is indigenous language. Indigenous language is, therefore, the blood through which culture survive in any human society.

Research Question Two: Of what influence is proverbs as intangible cultural heritage bring about attitudinal change of the speaker of an indigenous language.

Findings: fourteen respondents (70%) admitted the fact that, proverbs when used to explicate issues, gives insight into complicated issues

THE CALL FOR INDIGENOUS PROVERBS AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR PROMOTION OF NATIONAL UNITY

BY

A. A.GANIYU, G. E.ODETOMI and E. O. MOFOLUWAWO

www.guildaa.org

among men. They argued further that, proverb influences the way people perceive and react to issues which bring about changes in their responses and attitude. Proverbs was also said to bring clarity and promote better understanding among people which in turn promote cooperation in social relations. This result is in line with the submission of Fasiku (2006) in Babatunde and Mujidat, (2014) who contended that indigenous proverbs in Nigeria have been discovered to possess socializing and enduring values for peaceful co-existence. While six respondents (30%) argues that societal influence, at times serve as a barrier to the expected role of proverbs in promoting positive attitudinal change.

One can conclude that, no matter how influential a proverb is in changing people's attitude if indigenous language that expresses it is not employ, proverbs itself will not be feasible let alone bringing changes in peoples thinking and behaviour. hence, proverbs gives meaning to issues that are not clear, it changes people's perspective and thought which eventually influences individual to live up to expectation.

Research Question Three: To what extent do proverbs emphasize promotion of unity among its user?

While responding to the above questions, thirteen respondents (65%) assisted in quoting proverbs, in their respective indigenous languages, that emphasize unity. The respondents further argued that, if those proverbs in indigenous language were critically examined, and frequently used in day to day activities by both young and adult at home, community and the larger society, it will promote attitudinal changes that will enhances understanding, cooperation and unity. The fifteen proverbs highlighted in this study were said to be good enough to promote unity if all household engaged them in training the mind of their youths and adults. Nevertheless, seventeen respondents (35%) argued that, men are rigid and do not easily succumb to ideal ideas, they gave the instances of the messages from both Bible and Quran that preach positive values and good behaviours their to man, but instead of those values to bring pure sanity; the society is still full of social menace of different kinds.

CONCLUSION

THE CALL FOR INDIGENOUS PROVERBS AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR PROMOTION OF NATIONAL UNITY

BY

A. A.GANIYU, G. E.ODETOMI and E. O. MOFOLUWAWO

www.guildaa.org

It is obvious that language is the vehicle of culture. It is also obvious that indigenous languages are being largely affected by globalization with their branches such as civilization, westernization, and modernization. It was observed that only indigenous language of a child can better expose him or her to those elements of culture that promote national unity, and that to appreciate the values such as cooperation, tolerance, discipline, patriotism, honesty, respect for elders and constituted authorities, all of which are embedded in culture. This study also aligns with the submission of Olatuja (,n.d) which says:

“that the Nigerian indigenous language have the right to live because, in their own right, they are the containers of the cultural heritage, traditional values, and communal wisdom of their native speakers. They also remain the best and only languages that can fully appreciate and accurately express such cultural essence and traditional values. Every language is both an embodiment and an epitome of the characteristic behavior, attitude, and thinking of its speakers; therefore, no Nigerian indigenous language deserves to die” (P.45)

However, unity as an important instrument of human survival on earth can be achieved through the employment of the positive cultural values and norms, with heritage such as idioms, adage and proverbs, if well used to effect positive attitudinal changes in the Nigerian society. Indeed Nigerian society is blessed with both tangible and intangible cultural heritage that could be utilized to promote national unity and progress among all tribes.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

- Stakeholders in education, Social Studies experts, authors and teachers/lecturers in languages units of schools and higher institutions should adapt indigenous proverbs that emphasis unity across the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria into their teaching for the actualization of national unity.
- Government through its National Broadcasting Commission should as a matter of urgency, take bold steps to compel various media houses in Nigeria to broadcast, display and transmit those cultural values and heritages that emphasize unity in indigenous languages

THE CALL FOR INDIGENOUS PROVERBS AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR PROMOTION OF NATIONAL UNITY

BY

A. A.GANIYU, G. E.ODETOMI and E. O. MOFOLUWAWO

www.guldaa.org

rather than transmitting them mostly in English language. This is to avoid extermination of culture.

norms that will enhance responsible citizenry and high level of patriotism.

- Parents and families should endeavour to communicate with their children and other members in their different homes in indigenous languages in order to assist in the promotion of culture, its heritage and to enhance children's ability to critically think in line with the norms and values of the society to promote unity.
- Indigenous proverbs, adage and idioms should be frequently used in our day to day activities in order to make individual engage in philosophical thinking in proffering solutions to societal problems and promote good interpersonal relationship within people in their immediate tribes and across ethnic groups.
- Governments should also encourage the using of indigenous language in various States House of Assembly to discuss the business of law making and other issues. This will go a long way to promote indigenous language proverbs which will also promote cultural heritage, values,

THE CALL FOR INDIGENOUS PROVERBS AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR PROMOTION OF NATIONAL UNITY

BY

A. A.GANIYU, G. E.ODETOMI and E. O. MOFOLUWAWO

www.guildaa.org

REFERENCES

- Achebe, C. (1958). *Things Fall Apart*, London: Heinemann.
- Adeniyi & Racheal B. (n.d). *Nigeria Media, Indigenous Language and Sustainable Development*.
- Anthony A. O. (2013). *The Role of Indigenous Languages in National Development: A Case Study of Nigerian Linguistic Situation*. International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature.
- Chinwe, Okafor (2014). Culture: A Medium of Social Cohesion and Integration on Real News Magazine an Online Publication on Google Website.
- Mbiti, J.S. (1995). Children Confer Glory at Home Introduction to the African Proverbs Series in M.I. Mokitimi, Proverbs of the Basotho. Ibadan: Daystar.
- Modus, A.U. (2015). Cultural Heritage. The Nigeria Observer <http://www.nigerianobservernews.accessed>.
- Malasia Department of National Unity. (2001) www.google.com).
- Muhammad, M.N, (1999). Ethnicity and National Integration in Nigeria. An international journal of African studies, Vol.3, No.1, pp.88-90.
- Nwadike, E. (2004). The Role of Igbo in Enhancing National Unity. In Oyewole (ed) Nigerian Languages for National Development and Unity. Ibadan: Longman Communication.
- Obong (2005) Should we Promote Nigeria Languages more. Naira land Publication on Online www.google.com.
- Okeke, (2014). Why Nigeria Must Preserves its Heritage Resources. Leadership. April 18.
- Okorie Onwuchekwa (2013). Philosophy in Indigenous Igbo Proverb: Cross Cultural Media for Education in the Era of Globalization in Open Journal of Philosophy. Vol. 3, No.1A pp. 218-221.
- Olaoye, A.A. (2009). Language and the Rebinding Project in Nigeria. A Leadpaper Presented at the National Conference of the School of Languages. FCE Obudu, Cross Rivers State.
- Olaoye, A.A. (2013). Sociolinguistics of Communication Skills. In Linguistics and Literature for Language Arts. Kano: Rainbow Royale Publishers.
- Onyeagba Joseph Chinonye (nd) Igbo Proverbs Idioms and Parable.
- Owomoyela, A. (2012). Yoruba Proverb Trasury <http://yorubaum.edu/yoruba>. Paul French, Truner and Co. Ltd.
- Salawudeen, M.O. (2012). Role of Yoruba Proverbs in Socialization of the Youth. Implications for Social Studies Curriculum. Paper Presented at the 3rd National Conference of School of Languages, Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo between 5th – 9th March.

THE CALL FOR INDIGENOUS PROVERBS AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR PROMOTION OF NATIONAL UNITY

BY

A. A.GANIYU, G. E.ODETOMI and E. O. MOFOLUWAWO

www.guildaa.org

Solanke, J. (2006). What has Folklore get to do with it? Endangered Languages and the Electronic Age. In proceedings of the National Workshop on Best Practices to Safeguard Nigerian Languages. Abuja. UNESCO Publication.

Usman, Joshua, Mustafa, Lynda Jumah & Agu, Margaret Honyerem (2013). Proverbs as a Determinant of Cultural Identity: The Imperative of the Three Regional Languages in Nigeria.