

## A DISCUSSION OF THE CHALLENGES CONFRONTING ARCHAEOLOGY AND ITS PRACTICE IN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*There is no gain saying that archaeology and archaeological practice in Nigeria is yet to achieve the desired results, particularly as it is yet to fully meet the needs of the society, and largely contribute to problem solving in contemporary terms. This is seemingly not unconnected to the fact that the practice of archaeology in the country is faced with a lot of challenges, especially in the recent times. Thus, the aim of this research is to discuss the nature of some of these challenges and make some suggestions that can largely improve archaeological practice in the country. The research draws from past/recent concerns that have negatively impacted archaeology and its practice in the country. Much of the data for this research has been elicited from primary and secondary sources. The paper notes that the benefits of archaeology and its practice to Nigeria and her citizens are enormous and therefore, adequate to give all cultural heritage (CH) stakeholders a strong motivation towards repositioning the discipline. Doing this appropriately implies that, Nigeria has begun the journey towards benefiting from the numerous opportunities presented by the discipline for sustainable development.*

**Keywords:** Archaeology, Archaeological practice, Challenges, Public education, Cultural heritage, Sustainable development.

## **Introduction**

There is no gain saying that archaeology and archaeological practice in Nigeria is yet to achieve the desired results. This is because archaeological efforts in the country are yet to fully meet the needs of the society, and largely contribute to problem solving in contemporary terms. Looking at how long archaeology has been part of national building in Nigeria, it is supposed to at least be one of the most important options to explore in attempt to proffering solution to problems in the nation. It should be one of the most important options amongst efforts being made to end the menace of lack of patriotism, growing disunity and social instability/insecurity presently confronting the nation. Regrettably, the discipline has remained “young” despite its decades of existence in the country. This is not independent of serious and notable problems holding the discipline from striving to achieve more successes in recent time.

A myriad of obstacles has been affecting its ability to operate successfully compared to other disciplines in the social science and humanities. This can be attributed to many reasons; one of which is the poor attitude of the government and some Nigerians towards the discipline. Presently, only five universities in Nigeria (University of Ibadan, University of Nigeria Nsukka, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, University of Jos, and recently, Federal University Lokoja) offer Archaeology as a discipline of study. The government and her institutions perceive archaeology as a discipline that pull much funds for its establishment, unlike other humanities and social science disciplines like history, languages, philosophy, sociology, psychology, economics and political science amongst others.

Other universities in the country only offer archaeology as a course that is offered by students of history departments. Some state universities have made attempts to establish archaeology departments but could not succeed. For instance, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University Lapai in Niger State and Taraba state University Jalingo tried to establish archaeology departments, but these efforts could not yield positive results because of reasons like paucity of funds and lack of adequate academic staff, amongst others.

Further, the fact that some communities perceive archaeology as an anti-cultural-pursuit discipline is another problem. This is particularly notable in the northern part of Nigeria where most people (especially Islamic faithful) perceive archaeology as a discipline that teaches anti Islam and also train people to go against Islamic ideologies. Why this understanding is totally wrong and unfortunate, it strongly contributed to the collapse of the archaeology department in IBB University Lapai. This is also affecting a unit of heritage studies in department of religion, history and heritage studies, Kwara State University Malete.

Despite been amongst the focal areas of concern by the pioneer government of Nigeria (Ogundiran, 2002), and also continuing to record some notable successes, especially in the formation of identities for the various nationalities in the country, archaeology is yet to receive the attention it deserves. For clarity, a concise articulation of the achievements recorded by the Nigerian archaeology through scientific investigations has been given by Gubam and Nomishan (2021), and need not to be repeated here.

Although archaeology is often cited at public fora, its relevance along with that of its experts is often ignored and usually not exploited for the benefit of the country. Therefore, these challenges and obstacles that have hindered massive success in the practice of archaeology in the country to pave the way for sustainable development are discussed in the following section.

### **Challenges of Archaeology/Archaeological Practice in Nigeria**

In this research, a number of problems attributed to the challenges affecting archaeology and archaeological practice in Nigeria are outlined and discussed as follows;

- i. **Public Ignorance:** Some Nigerian communities have the perception that archaeology's primary concerns are against principles guiding their religion or culture and tradition. As a result, such societies are willing to do anything humanly possible to frustrate the archaeologists and teams of archaeology departments in Nigerian universities carrying out research in such communities. In some cases, they perceive the discipline as fetish because of archaeologist's primary objects of studies (past material culture). This is usually as a result of ignorance, illiteracy and the inability of archaeologists to properly educate and integrate the local people into

their research (Uguanyi, 2018). This have over the years made the public to regard the protection of their CH as less important and therefore, completely neglecting it or even contributing in the destruction of their heritage.

More so, the wrong impressions given to the people about their culture by the colonial masters and the unprecedented brain-washing that make even the so-called educated in African societies to despise their culture is another factor that keeps promoting public ignorance. This is in addition to the inability of archaeologists to create awareness or enlightenment to the public regarding the need for them to understand the importance of their CH and contribute to its protection. As a result, most Nigerians don't see anything good about preserving these so-called "archaic, fetish and uncivilized objects" which they feel are against their new religious beliefs and level of civilization. In some places the people themselves were made to openly destroy those objects of cultural importance (Soyinka, 2006), as a sign of rejecting their old ways of life (culture). The attacks on traditional religious shrines started between 1888 and 1890 in the Niger Delta (Strother, 2010). Between 1915 and 1918, Prophet Garrick Sokari Braide, a Kalabari prophet instructed his followers and they destroyed tens of thousands of cultural and religious objects (Strother, 2010).

In 1930/31, another Christian leader Apostle Joseph Ayo Babalola instructed large numbers of his Yoruba followers to surrender mask, shrine figures, ceramic objects and wooden containers to be burned during mass revival gathering. In 1950, a spiritual West African movement instructed individuals accused of anti-social behaviour to surrender their ritual objects for destruction (Morton-Williams, 1956, cited from Strother, 2010). Another case in point is the destruction of over one hundred shrines in Mbaise community, Imo State by the United Congress of Mbaise Christians during a restoration Crusade in 2005. This was organized without any form of rescue operation by an archaeologist (Codewit News, 2010). During the early part of such operations particularly before independence, colonial masters and foreign traders utilized such opportunities to loot Nigeria's cultural objects which they afterwards took to Europe, America and Asia (Strother, 2010). Although Nigerian government at independence embarked on rescue missions in some places, her efforts were not good enough to salvage the situation. This is because, the destruction cum

looting of antiques were going on simultaneously in different parts of Southern Nigeria.

- ii. **Colonial Brain-washing:** The colonial orientation that was passed on to Nigerians about their CH or archaeological materials was highly problematic (Rodney, 1972). Till date, some Nigerians are dangerously brain-washed by foreign cultures. Their acceptance of foreign cultures over their own has made them to negatively perceive their archaeological heritage and/or CH as rubbish, fetish, ungodly and uncivilized, thereby making them to distance themselves from it and abandon its preservation (Eyo, 1994; Fasuyi, 1973, cited from Ugwuanyi, 2018). The colonial masters particularly the British did not really pay attention to the cultural relevance of our archaeological materials and their ability to assist in resolving societal challenges. Instead of paying attention to the significance of these CHs to their societies, the British colonialists were rather concerned about the aesthetic and artistic beauty of these materials. This is because most of the early colonial officers in charge of Nigerian museums were not trained archaeologists; they were either arts teachers or historians, amongst others. Even after independence, this orientation has continued to stay with some museum staff and non-professional treasure hunters, who don't care about the preservation of these cultural materials, but are only concern with the aesthetic and monetary value of these heritage materials.
- iii. **Neglect:** Archaeology is yet to receive the much needed attention from the appropriate authorities. Much of what becloud the thinking of most Nigerian leaders is what will benefit them in a short run. The future is therefore addressed only in terms of months or a year. More so, the actions of policy makers in the country mostly end on their lips. This inadequacy in the attention given to planning of serious matters like archaeological research is not only troublesome but also dangerous. This poor attitude of those in leadership positions towards CH has contributed to the poor and/or lack of adequate funding of archaeological researches in Nigeria. This can also be attributed to ignorance about the contribution of archaeological knowledge to contemporary problem solving. Nigerian leaders must begin to pay more attention to things that are long term needs of the people including archaeological research. Lack of adequate attention needed to support institutions such as the National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM), saddled with the responsibility of preserving, protecting, managing and promoting the CH of Nigerian

people is worrisome. This height of neglect on the part of the government has made it possible for archaeological and other heritage objects to suffer in the hands of subsistence diggers, illegal antique traders, looters and/or treasure hunters in the country and beyond.

- iv. **Lack of Adequate Funding:** Inadequate funding has made it difficult for CH institutions and experts to carry out their duties effectively. Many CH sites in the country are going through various degrees of destruction without any scientific intervention. Others found in cities and towns suffer destructions coming from development projects (Ogundele, 1995). Contractors carrying out construction works like roads, houses, bridges and the likes have become the major source of destruction to CH sites in the country. Inadequate funding of CH institutions and departments in Nigeria has also contributed to lack of dating facilities for archaeological materials. No country in West Africa today can boast of a functional or equipped dating laboratory which can help to process archaeological research samples. The only laboratory that used to be in Senegal is presently at a state of disarray. Therefore, samples collected from archaeological excavations in Nigeria must be sent to American, Asian or European laboratories to be processed.

Apart from delays caused by the process of accessing these laboratories, the rate at which results are processed is very expensive for an average researcher to afford without sponsorship. Thus, hindering most people from dating their samples. Inadequate funding of archaeological researches in Nigeria has greatly affected the efficiency of CH institutions, and prevented them from protecting CH materials against destruction and illegal exportation to foreign nations. More so, this challenge prevents archaeology departments in Nigerian universities from carry out rigorous scientific investigation in parts of the country. This is not healthy because field training is one of the basic requirements for the award of a degree (whether B.A. /B.Sc., M.A. /M.Sc. or Ph.D.) in archaeology anywhere in the world.

- v. **Lack of Adequate Archaeology Experts:** Being in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the number of active archaeology experts in Nigeria is extremely low as compare to other sister disciplines. Nigeria being a large country comprising of diverse ethnic groups with different cultures and traditions, is supposed to have produced more than 5,000 active archaeology experts. For instance, as at 2014 the UK had about 7,000 archaeologists. And even

with more than 11,000 active archaeologists in 2014, USA citizens were still worried as to how the number could greatly increase to cope with their research needs (Rocks-Macqueen, 2014). As a result of paucity of expert archaeologists in Nigeria, a lot of CH sites have remained unexplored.

Most of the students that pick up admission into Archaeology in Nigerian universities end up moving to other disciplines, and a lot of those who manage to complete their studies in archaeology turn to seek high degrees in other related disciplines thought to have better job opportunities. Hence, only few remain committed to pursuing archaeology at higher levels (Master degree or Ph.D.). Thus, leaving a handful of scholars in the discipline, who are highly insufficient to explore the great archaeological potentials in the country.

- vi. **Lack of Proper Cultural Heritage Management (CHM):** There is poor system of conserving, preserving, protecting and promoting the CH materials in this part of the world. "CHM approaches have changed" recently, "transformed from the conventional approach which gives more attention to the resource itself, to the human approach, which gives attention to the resource and the visitor. This is done in order to achieve the required balance regarding the quality of the visitor's experience" (Yilmaz & El-Gamil, 2018:71). The all-important phenomenon of CHM is a complex and highly dynamic one, and ought to be taken very serious by all the stakeholders (government, heritage agencies, experts, and the public). Countries that properly manage their CH resources "such as Israel, Malaysia, Singapore, UAE, China, USA, Britain, France, South Africa, Uganda, and Kenya," provide essential socio-economic opportunities to their citizens. This is seen in the ability of CH resources to attracts investments (internal and external), which in turn provide job opportunities through increased cultural tourism, better/improved infrastructure, and promotes patriotism amongst the citizens (Nomishan, et al., 2020:3). This is obviously not the case in Nigeria as CH resources in the country faces diverse natural and human-induced threats of destruction, enabled by existing weak laws/institutions, amongst others.
- vii. **Environmental Challenges:** The location of Nigeria in the tropics has placed the country at a disadvantaged position when it comes to the preservation of archaeological materials buried in the ground. Like other countries in the tropics, the climate is humid, the soil is usually acidic and erosion is also common. With these conditions the preservation of

archaeological materials like bones and objects made of wood becomes difficult. Nigerian archaeologists are therefore always left with the option of utilizing the few imperishable objects that usually appear in the archaeological context such as charcoal (in few instances), potsherds and stone tools to reach a logical conclusion. These materials can however provide useful clues about the ways of life of ancient populations if handled properly, without which they can also be misleading. This therefore provides room for speculation which is dangerous in historical reconstruction.

- viii. **Unethical Practices:** Another serious problem facing archaeological practice in Nigeria and elsewhere in the world is the unethical practices which are common amongst some members of the profession, museums staff, and the public *inter alia*. These fraudulent individuals; loot antiquities, steal museum objects, hunt for treasures, promote illegal antique market and engage in trafficking of CH resources (Onyima, 2016). Archaeological sites are always subjected to serious threats by the activities of this group of people who have no regard for archaeological ethics (Balestrieri, 2018). Annually, thousands of CH materials are illegally exported from Nigeria into foreign countries by artefacts looters and those who help in vandalizing the objects. The activities of this group of people have posed great threat to archaeological sites such as the Nok cultural landscape (Kachia, Kawu, Kubacha, Angwan Mailafiya, Kagorko and Suleja); Zaria Area (Madugu in Giwa LGA); Katsina Area (Sabuwa, Funtua, Faskari, Dandume and Kankara); Kano Area (Gwarzo); and Zamfara Area (Kwatarkwashi)" amongst others (Gundu, 2014, 2020). The beginning of this could be trace to the British punitive expedition of Benin kingdom in 1897 in which thousands of antiquities were looted away by the colonial forces. The colonial government brutally overthrew the monarchy and forcefully took over the control of Benin Kingdom (Gundu, 2020, Hicks, 2020). Consequently, about 4000 royal work of art in bronze, brass, ivory, bone and wood were looted during the punitive expedition of Benin (Layiwola, 2010 cited from Gundu, 2020). These objects later found their ways into "more than 150 known museums and galleries, plus perhaps half as many again unknown public and private collections globally - from the Met in New York to the British Museum, from Toronto to Glasgow, from Berlin to Moscow, Los Angeles, Abu Dhabi, Lagos, Adelaide, Bristol, and beyond" (Hicks, 2020, p.3).



Further, construction works for development projects in places with high concentration of cultural materials especially the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, which falls within the Nok culture area, became the major means by which CH materials were been destroyed. Till date, this location has its cultural materials massively destroyed in the course of construction of project works, looted, and smuggled in to Europe (Gundu, 2020). Even after independence sacred places in Nigeria like shrines were ransacked by the agents of such illicit traffickers in CH of Nigeria. This usually escapes public notice because; it is not done in large scale like the one done by British Marines and Soldiers in Benin kingdom. In doing this, the aesthetic and artistic attributes of these CH take pre-eminence above their historical and cultural values.

- ix. **Limited Community Inclusion:** The contribution of the public and/or host communities to archaeological research is yet to be given the desired attention in Nigeria. Nigerian archaeologists are yet to mainstream the local people into archaeological researches (Ugwanyi, 2018). It is however, unfortunate that the archaeological materials from where archaeologists get their information belong to one community or the other. Information about these materials can only be obtained from the public or local people within whose community the cultural materials are located. Sometimes these communities claim direct historical link to the cultural properties around them. In this case, information about such cultural materials is usually passed down to the people by their ancestors.

Therefore, without proper inclusion, they may decide to hoard some vital information about their heritage and history, restricting the researcher from reaching a coherent conclusion. In some societies in Nigeria, archaeologists have been resisted because of the attitude of the researchers towards local people. However, when involved and treated appropriately, they turn to release such vital information at will. These local people are also needed in the area of assisting in the protection of cultural materials in their communities. The role of the local people in the preservation and protection of CH resources becomes crucial – since they are vital stakeholders. Archaeologists therefore, owe it a duty to educate or carry out awareness campaign to enlighten members of host communities about the importance of archaeological materials in their vicinity. This will help to arouse a motivation to contribute towards the protection of their CH

materials against any danger (Zimmerman, 2006). The desire to protect archaeological materials or CH against destruction gave birth to a sub-field of archaeology known as Cultural Resource Management (CRM).

- x. **Corruption:** Corruption which is a common problem in Nigeria (Adagbabiri, 2018), is also found in the CH sector. Here, the first individuals to watch out for when corruption is mentioned are the political office holders appointed to oversee the affairs of CH institutions. These institutions are saddled with the responsibilities of collecting, conserving, preserving, protecting, managing and promoting CH resources in the country. They include the NCMM and her museums, Federal and States Ministries of Culture, and National and States Councils for Arts and Culture, amongst others. They are established especially to protect cultural sites and heritage materials from the activities of criminals, looters and illegal traffickers in antiques, amongst others.

However, following the high level of corruption in these institutions, CH resources in Nigeria are subjected to systematic looting, mismanagement and destruction (Adekola, 2015). For instance, there have been allegations against staff of the NCMM who are believe to be conniving with some expatriates and foreign professionals to carry out unethical archaeological practices in parts of the country under the guise of scientific research, done without the knowledge of relevant stakeholders (Gundu, 2012). In 2012, the Archaeological Association of Nigeria through its then President Dr. Zacharys Anger Gundu noted that, Professor Peter Breunig, the project director (Nok Cultural Landscape Archaeological Research) and his team exported several excavated materials including terracotta figurines to Germany without any form of inventory with the NCMM. This allegation was denied by Professor Breunig though without any evidence to prove his team's innocence.

More so, the weakness of the NCMM and the unsecured nature of her Museums have overtime aided theft activities, resulting into stealing of several essential cultural properties. These include masks, bronze sculptures, ivory pieces, ancestral drums, Esie soap-stones, Oron monoliths, Igbo Ukwu artefacts, and Benin bronze. Others include Nok terracotta figurines, Awka traditional door posts, Ife sculptures, and some antiquity collection from Jos Museum (Gundu, 2014, 2020). This few examples are selected out of many.

- xi. **Instability/Insecurity:** Another challenge that has posed a serious obstacle to the wellbeing of CH resources and archaeological research in Nigeria in recent times is instability and/or insecurity. This situation has become a common vice in all the locations of the country, leading to loss of lives and properties of different magnitudes. People are being killed even on transit, in their farms, homes, offices and schools. Kidnapping of people for ransom has increasingly become a profitable venture to a lot of people in the country. In some instances, even after collecting ransom on their victims (and raping women in addition), they go ahead to kill such victims. In recent times secondary school children (especially those in boarding schools) have become victims of abduction. This started with the abduction of students of Government Girls Secondary School Chibok (Borno state), then Government Technical School Dapchi (Yobe state), Government Secondary School Kankara (Katsina state), Greenfield University Kaduna and Joseph Sawuan Tarka University Makurdi (formerly Federal University of Agriculture Makurdi), amongst many others.
- The instability and insecurity in different parts of the country seem to be taking a different dimension on daily bases. The Boko Haram insurgency is dominant in the North-eastern region. According to the United Nations Refugee Agency, these insurgents have displaced about 2 million Nigerians in that region and killed over 30,000 people (Reuters, 2020). In the North-western region, banditry is the most common. This constitutes armed gangs that rob and kidnap for ransom. The bandits are very active particularly in states like Kaduna, Katsina and Zamfara. According to Amnesty International (2020), the groups killed more than 1,126 people in 2020. This made it difficult for people in the affected areas to go to farmlands, travel or even tap some rich mineral resources in their vicinity. The other dimension of insecurity in Nigeria is that of Herders attacks on local communities usually refer to by many as Farmer-Herder clashes. This is common in the Central part of Nigeria, or the Middle Belt Region. Areas in the Middle Belt Region affected by this ugly menace include Benue, Nassarawa, Plateau, Niger, Kwara, and Kogi states and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Including the minority groups that are found in Bauchi, Gombe, Southern Kaduna, Kebbi, Adamawa and Taraba states. Banditry and farmer-herder clashes are also common in the southern parts of Nigeria. While piracy, vandalism and theft are common in the Niger Delta region, killings amounting from the agitation by the Independent People

of Biafra (IPOB) in the South-eastern region and the recent surge in the killing of security operatives in the region represent a summary of the security situation in Nigeria.

The consequences amounting from this insecurity are felt even more by active archaeologists, who unlike experts in other disciplines cannot carry out scientific research without going to the field. Archaeology is realistic in nature and only becomes successful in investigation by acquiring primary data from the villages or heritage sites through deployment of scientific methods. These materials are further analyzed in the laboratory for the purpose of retrieving more information to assist in the historical reconstruction of such sites. Therefore, the present security situation in the country is largely slowing down archaeological research. This is because all the factions involved in the insecurity target human lives and will not spare even researchers in the bush such as archaeologists (Eyisi & Okonkwo, 2019).

Thus, if a research project is necessary to be conducted, the team therefore goes in accompany of some security personnel to secure them for the entire period of the research. This is also problematic in the sense that, engaging the services of security personnel (though important) poses a serious risk to members of the community within which the research is being conducted. This is because the bandits or insurgents are likely to view this as an indirect way employed by members of the community to fight them. Hence, such communities are exposed to the risk of being attacked by the bandits/insurgents. More so, archaeological formations and cultural materials have also been targeted for attack. For instance, the gallery of the National Council for Cultural Orientation in Jos was attacked and its artefacts gathered and burnt by hoodlums. The famous Ropp cultural site which has produced evidence of early human occupation of the area (PIDAN, 2010) also suffered from attack of this kind. Similar thing happened at Shonong, Rim and Wereng in Riyom Local Government Area of Plateau State. Also, the seat of authority of the Ancient Sukur Kingdom located in the Mandara Mountains, Adamawa State, and declared as a World Heritage Site by the UNESCO in 1995 was attacked by the Boko Haram in 2013, 2014 and 2017. During these attacks, some important features of the World Heritage Site including the Hidi's house were damaged (World Monuments Watch, 2018).

Further, forceful renaming of locations in attempt to twist history has also become a serious concern in recent times. People migrating from other places to settle in others try to change names of such places for fictitious reasons. Others do this for political reasons and willingness to dominate others, thereby, creating avenues for crises and instability. For example, recent attempts to change names of places/locations in the Southern Part of Taraba, hitherto given in Tiv language and dominated by the Tiv (in terms of population), saw a lot of opposition, leading to crises and instability in the State. This has also been happening to different places in the Northern part of Nigeria. Here, people (who are mostly Hausa/Fulani) and who migrate in recent times to locations on the Jos Plateau, imposed Hausa names on settlements, replacing hitherto names given in other native languages before their arrival. Places such as Barkin Ladi (was hitherto referred to as Gwol), Dogo Na Hauwa (Dyemburuk), Mangu Hausawa (Halle), Tudun wada (Jishe) and Sura (Panyam), all in Plateau state, have been affected by this ugly scenario. There are so many examples of this in other places especially in the Northern part of Nigeria.

### **Suggested Ideas for Sustainable Archaeological Practice in Nigeria**

The ability of archaeology and archaeologists to seek answers to fundamental issues that interest and/or concerns human life such as probing into the problems faced by ancient societies and how they were solved, so as to seek solutions for contemporary challenges (Sharer and Ashmore, 2003) is one most important aspect of the discipline that should be exploited for the benefit of Nigeria. This is because there is no phenomenon that is completely independent of history. Several aspects of contemporary human engagements have some connections to the past. For instance, the outbreak of Covid-19 and other recent pandemics in the world cannot be judged with the sole aim of finding lasting solutions without having a good knowledge of past incidences of related epidemics. Seeking to know how past people fought and subdued such epidemics will go a long way in revealing the appropriate dimension to go in tackling same or related kinds of contemporary outbreaks.

Therefore, there is the need to exploit the benefits that come with the practice of archaeology, for the wellbeing of the country. Thus, to reduce the challenges confronting archaeology and its research in Nigeria and pave the way for adequate

utilization of the benefits of archaeological practice in the country, the following suggestions would be useful;

- i. **Inclusive Archaeological Education:** Archaeology should be mainstreamed into the educational curriculum of the various levels of education in Nigeria. There have been several calls (Okpoko 1986; Ogundele 2005; Gundu 2008; Agbelusi, 2015; Owoseni, 2018) for the introduction of archaeology as a subject in the primary and secondary levels of education in Nigeria. According to Agbelusi (2015:3), “for educators and archaeologists to bridge the gap between cultural education in primary and secondary schools with archaeological education in the universities, there is an urgent need to bring archaeology into the other levels of education.”

Agbelusi (2015:5) added that “Nigeria, being a multilingual, multi-religious, and pluralistic society, is constantly faced with the danger of conflict amongst its different groups. To this end, archaeological education can largely be useful in an effort to create a sense of common identity, traditional and historical attachment. Through the teaching of the subject, ‘we can recognize what we hold in common and can begin to live in peace. We can all recognize our relationship with each other and to the past’ (Caspari, 2014).” What Nigerian citizens require at the moment is an educational system that should put more emphasis on self-discipline, promote value system and tolerance. Archaeology teaches African values, morals and norms, which help in modeling people’s way of life; including self-discipline, respect for elders and one another and the accommodation of fellow humans. The introduction of archaeology at various educational levels will help to nurture citizens with good behavioural traits beginning from childhood to adulthood. With this training, Nigerian citizens will begin to count Nigeria first before other things. It will also strengthen our unity in diversity and provide the country with the opportunity to gain sustainable progress.

- ii. **There should be Efforts to Reduce or Eliminate Ignorance about Archaeology and its Activities:** Many people in Nigeria are highly ignorant of what archaeology as a subject of study is, and so, doesn’t bother about what archaeology or its experts do in the country. However, this is not a healthy situation for the nation. If everything is to work positive in the nation, everybody must know who they really are and

- what identity they represent. Behave in accordance with the norms and values in their societies and acquire societal and cultural standards from their elders and seniors. Lack of adequate knowledge about archaeology and its activities simply means total lack of knowledge about one's culture, history, descendant, and heritage. The present lack of good behaviour amongst the youth of Nigeria can be traced to this issue. Therefore, the introduction of archaeology in the primary and secondary as well as the tertiary levels of education in the country should become the very priority of every stakeholder. Archaeologists on the other hand should intensify efforts at educating the Nigerian public about the importance of their culture, heritage and also contribute immensely towards the protection of their heritage and cultural values.
- iii. **Discouraged Neglect of Archaeology and Its Activities:** Neglect relating to issues regarding knowledge of archaeology and one's CH can occur intentionally or unintentionally. It is considered to be intentional, when CH stakeholders (such as the government) decide to overlook and/or down play the importance of archaeology and its research to the wellbeing of a nation, as it is seen today in Nigeria. It can also happen unintentional when certain stakeholders such as the local people or members of the host communities undermine their heritage and abandon its protection because of the fact that they are not able to understand its significance to their identity and general wellbeing. Whichever way this occurs; the result it produces in any society is not positive. Neglect brings about lack of CH research, its conservation, preservation, protection, promotion and proper management for sustainable development. This is regrettably the present situation in Nigeria.
- iv. **Discourage Illegal Trade in Antiquities:** Almost every nation of the world has certain regulations guiding operations relating to CH and antiquities. Nigeria is not left out of this development, as there are regulations to guide all activities relating to the nation's antiquities and heritages. In 1953, the Antiquities Ordinance No. 17 established the National Department of Antiquities in Nigeria. "The Ordinance also provided for the establishment of museums, archaeological excavations, protection of monuments and handling of antiques" in the country (Eze-Uzomaka, 2014:140).  
Another one was the promulgation of Decree 77 of 1979, which abolished Ordinance No. 17 and brought to existence the National

Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM). The Decree provided that only the Director General of the NCMM and any other person commission by the Director was made eligible to buy antiquities in Nigeria. The Decree also created an Executive Administrative Secretary responsible for Research in antiquities and training of professionals, and also, handling of same in areas of Natural History and Technology. However, even with the NCMM and other heritage agencies, illegal trade in heritage objects, such as terracotta figurines, bronzes, pottery objects, paintings, and statues amongst other artefacts, has remain one of the major problem confronting the wellbeing of archaeology and CH materials in Nigeria. This has resulted to loss of heritage materials in almost every part of the country. Archaeological sites are raided, temples are robbed and artefacts stolen and taken out of the country to feed the illegal trade in heritage objects (Gundu, 2014, 2020). This ugly situation that is causing wanton destruction of CH resources and also discouraging archaeological activities in Nigeria has to be arrested.

- v. **Discourage Theft and Looting Activities:** This point is closely related to iv above. Lack of proper attention from the government and relevant agencies avail fraudulent people the opportunity to carry out theft and looting activities on Nigeria's antiques. This has over time subjected CH materials in the country to systematic looting, illegal trade, trafficking, and destruction (Gundu, 2014, 2020; Adekola, 2015). Activities of artefact looters should be properly monitored by the government through the protection of museums, archaeological sites and other CH resources. Individuals caught vandalizing CH sites and exporting cultural artefacts should be given stiffer penalties, which will serve as deterrent to others. There is also the urgent need to review Decree 77 of 1979 that established the NCMM. This is because the provisions in the Decree no longer stand the taste of time. For example, the provision for punishment of offenders as stated therein is not with the required strength to protect Nigeria's heritage resources. And the Decree is a product of the military government of 1979 and considering Nigeria's economy and the nature of the citizenry, its review is long overdue. The period given for jail terms or amount to be paid as fine by offenders should be reviewed upwards. The activities of the staff of the NCMM should also be drawn out clearly and made to be monitored closely, so that any staff found wanting will



- receive severe punishment. And artefacts that have been sold out illegally will be repatriated back into Nigeria for posterity, since they represent the identity of the various nationalities in the country.
- vi. **Development Projects:** Following government negligence of archaeology and its research in Nigeria, development (construction) companies such as Julius Berger Nigeria Plc., Reynolds Construction Company, Costain West Africa, Setraco Nigeria Limited, Monier Construction Company, Brunelli Construction Company Nigeria Limited, and Dantata & Sawoe Construction Company Nigeria Limited, amongst others do not view protection of CH resources found around development sites as important aspect of the Nigerian society. These companies are supposed to have professional archaeologists as members of staff whose primary responsibility should be to rescue artefacts found around construction sites. This can also prompt such companies to establish museums that will house artefacts recovered by their staff. Thereby, creating more employment opportunities for the citizens amongst other benefits.
- vii. **Archaeology should be utilized for the Promotion of Social Stability in Nigeria:** Archaeology does not only provide a conscious conception about the past, it also reveals to the public information about the nature of human conditions and by implication social transformation (Shanks & Tilley, 1992). The Nigerian government must come to the realization that, the solution to most of the problems confronting the country at the moment, including those of social instability/insecurity requires adequate knowledge of the past. For example, the kind of training archaeology provides, have the ability to contribute in proffering solutions to the problems that are affecting Nigeria today. Archaeology teaches cultural values that are enshrine in daily human engagements which have the ability to produce citizens with good behaviour. This point perfectly present what is lacking in the contemporary Nigerian society. Therefore, repositioning archaeology and its practice in Nigeria can help citizens to rediscover their lost cultural values that are most needed to promote patriotism and unity in diversity so as to bring an end to the present chaos (insurgency, killings, kidnappings, militancy, banditry, stealing etc.) going on in the nation.
- viii. **Sufficient Funding of the CH Sector:** Government agencies such as the NCMM, the Federal and States Ministries of Culture and Tourism, and

the National and States Councils for Art and Culture, should be empowered by way of adequate funding. This will be done to enable them preserve, protect, promote and manage the CH of Nigerian people properly. Sufficient funding can also lead to sponsorship of more researches that will help to address contemporary situations amongst other benefits. More archaeological and ethnographic researches are necessary at this material time, if current national problems are to be properly solved.

### **Conclusion**

No doubt, archaeological presence is yet to achieve the desired results in Nigeria. Efforts being made by experts in the field must be able to contribute to problem solving in contemporary Nigerian. Just as much has been done in the area of exposing achievements of the early population that inhabited this geographical entity, urgent attention should be paid to solving current problems using interventions from archaeology.

Going forward, the government and her agencies saddled with the responsibility of researching, preserving, protecting, managing and promoting the archaeological and CH resources in the country has to work together with archaeology experts in eliminating the high level of public ignorance concerning CH. The Nigerian public has to know the meaning and significance of their CH resources and also contribute to the preservation and protection of these heritages.

Thus, whether the target is to eliminate ignorance, neglect, increase the training of professional archaeologists operating in the country, have a proper CHM program, strengthen ethical practices in the CH sector, increase community inclusion, eliminate corruption in the sector, or work toward using archaeology to achieve social stability/security, amongst other things; without adequate funding, none of these can be done perfectly. Therefore, the present researchers places a strong call on the government and other CH stakeholder to prioritize funding of CH agencies, institutions and department, to enable them work effectively and also support the smooth running of archaeological activities in the country for sustainable development.

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