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African Traditional Religion and National Development in Nigeria

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Abstract
There is a general misconception that religion and development do not mix, and a strong belief that religion has a negative effect on development. Against this background, this paper showed that African traditional religion can aid national development in Nigeria. This it does through its traditional ethical principles based on the communal concern for the well-being of all, principles founded not on the ethics of individualism, human autonomy and selfishness, but on a common unity-centered. These traditional ethical principles, sanctions and eschatological beliefs regulated the behaviour, conduct, and actions of individuals in African society. Ethical principles, sanctions and eschatological concepts were the factors that kept individuals and government in check. The paper also x-rayed how African traditional religion can play a vital role in the national development of contemporary Nigerian society through its ethical principles and practices. This argued that the moral salvation of Nigerians lie in their immediate and conscious return to traditional socio-religious values and morals system which is the foundation for genuine conscience and national development.
Keywords: African Traditional Religion; National development in Nigeria; Religious Ethics

INTRODUCTION

There is a general misconception that religion and development are strange bed fellows. There is also a strong belief that religion impacts negatively on development. However, this paper shows that religion and development can complement each other. That Nigeria's development had had the assistance of religion without which Nigeria would have had a slower rate of development. The idea here therefore is that African Traditional Religion (ATR) plays a vital role in the national development of Nigeria.

This work has urged the Nigerian government and its citizenries to return to their traditional socio-religious values and morals systems, which are a catalyst to fast-track a change in characters and attitudes thereby giving birth to the needed national development in Nigeria. Therefore we pitched our tent with African traditional religion with its ethical principles and practice, eschatological concept and traditional medicine as a viable option to bring meaningful development and social, economic, political and health sector reforms in Nigeria. The traditional ethical principles based on the communal concern for the well-being of all, principles founded not on the ethics of individualism and human autonomy and selfishness, but on a common unity-centered. It is this traditional ethical principles and sanctions that regulated the behaviour, conduct, and actions of individuals in society. These ethical principles and sanctions were the factors that kept individuals and government in check. African traditional ethics and sanctions, which is embodied in the worldview of the African, was the source of social order, peace, harmony, stability, and discipline in society before the coming of the Europeans. African belief in eschatology acts as a mechanism that has gone a long way in changing some aspects of people's life and behaviour even in our present day. Equally, African has come to believe that those who involve themselves in criminal and distasteful acts in this world would miss the bliss in the next life when they reincarnate. This will in turn translate into development and sector reforms in Nigeria.

2.   MEANING AND DEFINITION OF TERMS
2.1   AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION
"African Traditional Religion (ATR) is called 'African' due to certain reasons. First, it is called 'African' because it is indigenous, aboriginal, and foundational or handed down from generation to generation" (Adasu 150). Religion is a basic, maybe the most significant, influence in the life of most Africans. Religion enters into every aspect of the life of the Africans and it cannot be studied in isolation. Its study has to go hand-in-hand with the study of the people who put into practice the religion.

When we speak of African Traditional Religion, we mean the indigenous religious beliefs and practices of the Africans. It is the religion which resulted from the sustaining faith held by the forebears of the present Africans, and which is being practiced today in a variety of shades and intensities by a very great number of Africans, including individuals who claim to be Muslims or Christians (Awolalu 1).We can succinctly observe that ATR is embedded in the African world view as well as in the norms and values of the people. The concept African Traditional Religion is intensely typical in the African life, the world and the universe.

2.2   WHAT IS DEVELOPMENT?
Development, as opined by Iroegbe is "a progressive realization of the fullest possible and balanced flourishing

of human and natural resources. Human resources here do not mean the reduction of what is human to a mere resource, but means all the innate potentialities of the human person physical and spiritual, intellectual and moral, aesthetic and psychological, personal and social, etc" (148). He also adds that development "is balanced if it fulfils two conditions; (1) the flourishing of natural resources is aimed at the flourishing of human resources and not vice versa, (2) the development of human resources does not neglect or reject one or some of the aspects of the human person as listed above" (148). From the above assertion, we can deduct that the most important aspect of the development of any nation or country is indisputably the development of human personality. It is conversely, the moral development of the citizens that constitute the country. This means that the development of a country is first and foremost the development of human dimension, that is, the development of human persons. In other words, for a meaningful development to take place in Nigeria, both the human dimension and the infra-human dimension which include the natural resources, land, roads, machines, factories, refineries, and buildings must both be developed.

Hornby has also defined development as "the gradual growth of something so that it becomes more advanced" (400). In a similar sense, Obi in Ikegbu defined development as "a progressive change which produces a condition that is better than the existing one" (121). From the above assertions, the writer of this work therefore opines that every aspect of the human person or thing has to be touched for the development to be complete. This means that both the society and the persons that make up the society have to be comprehensively developed. The development of a country is nothing else other than the procedure of catering for the numerous needs of human's complex nature.

3. AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
3.1 VALUES AND MORALS AS A CONDITION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Values and morals are the aspects of African Traditional Religion which deal with the ideas that defend or sustain the life of the people in their relationship with one another and the world around them. Values and morals cover issues like justice, right and wrong, respect for people and prosperity, truth, love, good and evil, the keeping of promises and agreements, beauty, crime and punishment, praise and blame, etc.

These values and morals determine the political, economic and social behaviour of a people and stability and development of any nation of the world. It is in this light that Mbon writes that, the development or otherwise of a nation to a very great amount depends on the moral and intellectual development or otherwise of its people (101-109). Supporting this assertion, Anyanwu observes succinctly that, we are not quite aware that any society can afford to exist in the absence of morality, trust, justice, liberty, truth, goodness and faithfulness. Only religion provides these (11).

We can therefore deduct from above assertions as follows: that for any nation or society to experience justice, trust, love, peace and harmony, its citizens must be imbued with all the good life and qualities provided by religion (African Traditional Religion) through its moral education. Again, African Traditional Religion teaches its adherents to eschew evil, bribery, corruption, ethnicity, tribalism and nepotism. These teachings are bedrock for national development.

This is a humble call to Nigerian government and its citizens to return to their traditional socio-religions values and morals system which is a catalyst that will bring change in our characters and attitudes and thereby giving birth to the needed development in Nigeria. For there seems to be no other way through which Nigeria can come out of their present moral dilemma which enhances corruption, tribalism, nepotism, ethnicity, bribery and assassination. The moral salvation of Nigerians lies only in their immediate return to their traditional socio-religious values and morals system which is the foundation for genuine conscience and National development.

3.2 ETHICAL CODES AND SANCTIONS
Ethic is the branch of axiology which attempts to understand the nature of morality; to define that which is right from wrong. Ethics according to Velasquez et al refer to well founded principles of right and wrong that lay down what humans ought to do, usually in terms of right, obligations, benefits to society, fairness, or specific virtues. Ethics, for example, refers to those standards that compel the reasonable obligations to desist from rape, stealing, murder, assault, slander, and fraud. Ethical values also include those that enjoin virtues of honesty, compassion, and loyalty. And, ethical principles include standards relating to rights, such as the right to life, the right to freedom from injury, and the right to privacy (1).

In Africa, ethical principles and rules of conduct have been preserved over the ages in the various customs and traditions that give explanations of the reason, motivations, values and purpose of behaviour. They supply the moral rules and point out what the people must do to live ethically (Idowu 42). Lending credence to this, Ekeopara sees ethics as the study of the principles of conduct and moral judgments, mirror image on morality as well as a body or system of morals of a particular group (23). Ethical prescriptions in African Traditional Religion are seen as divine injunctions and penalties for contravening such injunctions, are regarded as coming from God. These prescriptions and disciplinary measures may be executed through the intermediaries

such as the king, divinities, ancestors and elders.

According to Olademo, certain principles were put in place in African communities to guide the concept and practice of Ethics. These include the principle of being your brother/sister's keeper (one for all and all for one), taboo, covenant relationship and the use of customary media system. The ethical behavior of one individual may put at risk the destiny of the whole community (26). It is observed here that a part could influence the whole either positively or negatively. This is why persons or individuals are warned to be extra careful in their conducts in interpersonal relationships among humans. Another guiding principle for ethics is taboos which stipulations deter certain acts or conducts in African communities. Repercussions for breaking taboos are sanctions and ostracizes, hence taboos serve as boundaries to ethical conducts.

Talking on the kind of ethics in operation in Nigerian society, Mbon submits when he decried the kind of ethics that "is based on values of money, personal comfort and affluence, greed, and avarice, is for all intents and purposes individualistic and is at variance with African traditional communalistic ethics. Such perfidious Individualism, paves the way to the selfish way of life" (106). It should be emphasized here that there is no nation in the globe that can honestly dream of development when only few of its privileged and well-placed citizens got to where they are by structural and organized embezzlement and stealing from the national coffers. It is in this light that Mbon writes;
"Unless Nigeria goes back to, and begins to put into practice, traditional ethical principles,   principles based on the communal concern for the well-being of all, and not only for the well-being of a privileged few; principles based on kinship or lineage relationships, and a "big brother" concept, within which configuration those who had more shared what they had with those who had less; principles founded not on the ethics of individualism and human autonomy and selfishness, but on a common unity-centered, theonomous, theocentric and ancestor-sanctioned set of ethical criteria" (106-107).

Writing on the important of sanction, Adegbola postulates that everywhere in Africa, morality is hinged on a lot of sanctions. But the most basic sanction is the fact that God's all-seeing eyes scan the total areas of human conduct and personal relationships (116).

The need to return to the traditional socio-religious ethics of our fore-fathers is no longer strange to many contemporary Nigerians. The provision of moral rules and ethical standard in African society reflects that character which is basic to the well-being of the community. Ethical codes and sanctions foster peace and unity in the community and a peaceful and harmonious atmosphere is the only panacea that will promote national development in Nigeria. Nigerian government should therefore consider introducing African Traditional ethical principles and practice and deterrent punitive measures used in pre-modern Nigerian societies into its legal systems and criminal codes such as ostracism, banishment in the evil forest and other forms of public punishment. This if followed, and then Nigeria as a nation can begin to say at least that it has taken a bold step in the direction of national development.

3.3   ESCHATOLOGY IN AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION
The African concepts of end times reflect in their understanding of human death and every rite attached to the time of death. Since Africans subscribe to the belief that human soul is immaterial and capable of surviving death, it follows that the end time for Africans cannot be conclusive. It is in this light that Onyenwuenyn supports the postulations of Iwe that the belief in immortality is the cornerstone of African religious thought, when he asserts that "when a person dies the traditional African does not only say that the soul of the dead has gone to the spirit world. It is not only the soul or part of man" (37), that has gone to the world of the spirit but the whole man though not in a visible forms (Okoro 73). In his own opinion, Ikenga Metuh submits that:

 Death is not the final end of the man in Igbo thought; all men go on to live in some form or, the other after death. Persons who lived a good quality life and died a good death…go to the land of the spirit (Alammuo) where they carry on a life similar to their earthly life and are allowed to reincarnate "into Uwa" while those lived bad lives and or died evil deaths…are banished to "*Ama nri mmuo na mmadu*" an intermediate state between the Spirit land and, the land of the living. This later place is the Igbo concept of hell. Its occupants are visualized as frustrated wandering and restless evil spirits (62).

The cycle of African belief in end time is based in the perception that the universe is endless. Hence African cosmology is therefore a cyclical one. It is this that gives birth to the notion that one's behaviour or moral disposition in this present life affects one's position in the world of the spirit when one finally dies. Therefore, one's acceptance or rejection in the cult of the ancestors in the life after death or banishment into the place of suffering in the life after death depends on one's moral disposition. According to Olademo, African belief in eschatology reflects a twofold submission, both of which are regarded as true. One is that, at end times, after the death of humans, the maker would require an account of everything done on earth by each individual. Two, that at death, people with good moral deeds would come back to earth form the abode of the ancestors, either as new born babies or as marked visitors on the occasion of ancestor festivals, for example, the Egungun among the Yoruba (48). Onunwa made the matter more explicit when he says, "…Reincarnation, the idea has a

long term personal and interpersonal dimensions and has affected the relation of one with another in the community…the concept has for long served as a means of social and moral check within the traditional society" (104).

It is also seen that the socio-ethical and moral implication of the belief system act as a catalyst that has gone a long way in changing some aspects of people's life and behaviour even in our present day. It is in this vein that Onunwa observed that the belief is the cornerstone sustaining the altruistic and patriotic disposition and honest services being rendered by various progressive youth to their communities. These youth having sustained the facts of the belief in reincarnation accept that when they die, they would reincarnate into a highly-place and privileged citizens of their communities for the reason of the good and honourable service they had done to their communities. Conversely, they have come to belief that those who involve themselves in criminal and sordid acts in this world would miss the bliss in the next life when they reincarnate (106-107).

The uppermost incentive for good moral conduct in African societies is tied to benefits accruable at the end of life. It is also noted that the idea of recompense at the end of life aid good behaviour in people. In the same vein, the expectations of reward, promotion and goodness after death deter individuals from being immoral. African's people avoid sanctions and strive to be good so that nothing obstructs their qualification for the abode of the ancestors after death. African eschatological concept thus plays an important role in sustaining the moral coherence of African societies. Moreover, as individuals strive to be morally upright, agents in control of moral codes in African societies also try to be upright because any laxity would result in sanctions. Therefore, the African concept of eschatology has acted as a form of checks and balances between members and leaders of the society. This work therefore urge the government through its agencies such as National Orientation Agency to inculcate the concept of African eschatology on the citizens including the executive arm of government, legislators, judiciary, and security agents through seminars, workshops and conferences. If this is done, it will acts as a form of checks and balances between members and leaders of our great nation, Nigeria, thereby removing all the road blocks to national development in Nigeria such as corruption, nepotism, tribalism, bribery, embezzlement, etc and finally it will aid good behaviour in people. It is only then, that Nigeria as a nation can begin to say at least that it has taken a step in the right direction to national development.

3.4   AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION AND NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIA

In time past, "local people have developed a variety of resource management practices that continue to exist in tropical Africa, Asia, South America and other parts of the world" as opined by Appiah-Opoku (93-99). Similarly, Shastri et al submits that Traditional African Societies also go after ethics so as to often help them regulate interactions with their natural environment (1080-1084). Traditional African Religion and cultural practices as done in the largest part of African communities are environmentally friendly and sustainable, thus contributing so a great deal to natural resources sustainability and protection (International Institute for Environment and Development, 3). In a research on traditional and indigenous methods of conserving biodiversity, Ntiamoa-Baidu identified three indigenous methods for conserving biodiversity in Ghana and other West African sub region, which Nigeria is inclusive. These methods include:

- "Religious traditions: temple in the forests, monastery forests, sanctified and deities' trees
- Traditional tribal traditions: sacred forests, sacred groves and sacred trees
- Royal traditions: royal hunting preserves, elephant forests, royal gardens", etc (Eneji et al 35)
- "The protection of any specific fauna or flora species making it a totem and taboo on such communities e.g; Umuaro in Nigeria, male deer or stag is a totem, while in Nnewi, the python is a totem. In Bekwarra, the road runner is also a totem.
- Control and regulating the exploitation of environmental/natural resources during different parts of the year e.g like some parts of Boki, during rainy season; some wood species cannot be cut down. Likewise some animal species cannot be harvested during the dry season for fear of extinction.
  - The protection of some particular ecological systems or biome or habitats in the name of sacred groves, evil forests, burial grounds, sacred rivers, and rocks" (Silori and Badola 272-279).
  These beliefs and strategies are passed to those who become initiated with adulthood in the community during the rites of initiation. Taboos and beliefs were given legal backing in the rules and institutions of the communities which make them strong enough in the past to make people obey the religious and cultural regulations.

Discussing on how African Traditional Religion do protect natural resources, Mkenda observes that in the contemporary African worldview, there exists a dichotomy among things that are supposed to be secular and those that are sacred. He comments that the way people view the universe has distorted. That science and western education has prejudiced man's sense of reasoning and judgment concerning the world which is no longer viewed in the religious sense but somewhat it is looked at as something to be completely exploited for the advantage of the human being. Africans in the modern time should borrow a leaf from traditional Africa. They

should use African cultural heritage in the conservation and rehabilitation of the environment that has been destroyed and degraded by selfish economic motives of few people (10). It is noted here that for the Africans there is no clear-cut separation between what is secular and what is sacred. This is because Africans view themselves as part of the environment. Therefore plants, animals, rock, water, and other non-living things are duely respected as part of nature as much as human beings who are also part of nature.

That Nigeria as a nation can only say to have taken a step in the direction of national development by borrowing a leaf from traditional Africa and begins to put into practice, traditional ethical principles on environmental conservation and protection. They should as a matter of urgency restart or restall African cultural heritage in the preservation and rehabilitation of the environment that has been destroyed and degraded by selfish economic motives of the few people. Traditional ethical principles on environmental conservation and protection discourage desertification occasioned by deforestation. This in turn will earn the Nigeria nation carbon credits which lead to national development and will make Nigeria climate-friendly.

3.5   AFRICAN TRADITIONAL MEDICINE AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In twentieth century, southern and eastern Africa, "traditional" medicine was the leading healing scheme and frequently sees as the more suitable form of therapy by specialists and recipients. That stretching from Ethiopia, Tanzania, South Africa, and Zambia to Cameroon, Nigeria, and Ghana indigenous African curative systems remained extremely utilized by large sections of the (rural) populations surveyed. These way of thinking on and use of indigenous medicine were shared by similar populations in geographically distinct places such as New Zealand, Hawaii, and the United States among persons of African ancestry (Konadu 1).

In recent years, the treatments and remedies used in traditional African medicine have received additional appreciation from researchers inside western science. Developing countries have begun to understand the high costs of, contemporary health care system and the technologies that are necessary thus, proving Africa's reliance to it (Conserve Africa 2). In view of this fact, interest has recently been expressed in integrating herbal medicine into modern medicine. It is in this light that Oosthuizen writes: The traditional healer/diviner has, still according to a lot of African professionals, greater success in the mitigation of psychological turbulence than Western-trained psychotherapists (46). He adds that "the traditional healer/diviner has wider function than just healing, but as well acts as consultant on family and other relationships, as priest, and as one captivating a great interest in ecological issues. In other words, he/she also has the daily needs of the people at heart (46). It is noted that a lot of the activities of the traditional healer are psychotherapeutic which are provided with affection, empathy and genuineness in order to restore confidence.

Traditional healers ought to be made conscious of situation which could be treated more successfully in hospitals, and the hospital be supposed to consult highly regarded traditional healers in therapy-resistant cases of culture bound syndromes in African patients. In this way an effectual traditional healer could turn out to be a primary health worker (Oosthuizen 47). If one takes a short look at Nigeria's healthcare sector, the contribution of natural-based products to conventional medicines cannot be overlooked. This is in view of the fact that African Traditional Medicine (ATM) has over time been the foundation of primary healthcare for majority of Nigerians living in rural areas. l-" product

However, even as some African countries have set in place mechanisms intended for registration of traditional medicines legislation, regulatory structure and institutional instruments for developing ATM and locally producing commercial quantities of Standardized African Traditional Medicines (ASTM) and then integrating traditional medicine (TM) into the public healthcare systems, experts think the integration of TM into Nigeria's healthcare sector will do a long way in the nation meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) target. In an interview with BusinessDay, Tamuno Okujagu, Director General, Nigerian Natural Medicine Development Agency (NNMDA) said that "the role of traditional medicine in healthcare delivery in the developing countries is known. He noted that in view of the vast healthcare delivery and economic potential of traditional medicine, countries like China, India, and Germany, who had developed their traditional health systems, had supported agencies and universities on researches into traditional medicine. African countries such as South Africa, Ghana, Egypt and Morocco had keyed into the initiatives and maintained specific institutional mandates to fast-track the co-ordination of research and development, promotion and documentation of traditional medicine. WHO acknowledges this growing need and potential of natural medicine and has continued to encourage and support its promotion, documentation, research and development through several initiatives. It is worthy to note that traditional medicine to state that global market for traditional therapies stands at US\$60 billion a year and is steadily growing even as China and India usually record between two to five billion dollars. In developed countries like France, it is believed that about 75 percent of pain clinics provide acupuncture; and in the United Kingdom, expenditure on complementary or alternative medicine stands at US\$2300 million per year" (Chiejina 1-2). Having recognized the huge potential of traditional medicine and its immense contribution to health and poverty alleviation, the great economic and health opportunity which traditional medicine offers, it is then, the position of this paper to employ the Nigerian government without any further delay to take a holistic

step to ensure that effective legislation, goals and strategies are put in place in order to incorporate or integrate traditional medicine into the mainstream of national healthcare system of Nigeria. Traditional medicine has all it takes to bring economic and health development in Nigeria which is the pathway to national development.

CULTURAL TOURISM AND AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION

African Traditional Religion is Traditional because it is a religion and culture that is based on the life of the Africans. African Traditional religion is part of African culture. One cannot separate oneself from traditional religion. "African Traditional Religion is so intertwined with African culture that among the Tiv, for example, neither the culture nor the social and political system of the people could be understood without reference to their religion. African culture and African Traditional Religion have been described as two sides of the same coin due to the close affinity of the two. African Traditional Religion is embedded in African culture and vice versa. This is explainable in the light of the pervasive influence of religion in the African worldview. Everything finds explanation and validation in religion in Africa. Culture is a main 'pull factor' which influences visitors' initial decision to travel to destinations in different parts of the world. Thus in most regions of the world, particularly in Europe and North America, cultural attractions have become important in the development of tourism. At the global level, cultural attractions are usually perceived as being icons of important streams of global culture" (Richards, 3-29). This global idea of culture has led to the expression of World Heritage sites which attracts millions of tourists yearly. Whereas, at the national and/or local level, culture is seen as playing a vital locale role in establishing and reinforcing people's unique identities and a sense of belonging to a particular **.**

Tourism has received global great attention as a means of holiday relaxation, catching glimpse of the wonders of nature and other people's culture as well as a means of boosting the national economy. African Traditional Religion to a large degree has contributed considerably to tourism development and also provides the facilities for the national development through its cultural tourism. It will be relevant to start first by giving a clear definition of the term "cultural tourism".

In his definition, Egbaji defines cultural tourism as "… the aspect of human culture that attracts others from different socio-cultural background to a particular region to witness and share in its glamour" (71). In the same vein, Eugenia Yunis in Asuquo viewed cultural tourism as "well preserved traditional arts, cultural displays, handicraft, folklore and other artistic expressions of the culture of people" (36). In his own opinion, Valen Smith who identifies six categories of tourism views cultural tourism as "… travel to experience and in some cases, participate in vanishing lifestyle that lies within human memory… meals in rustic inns, costumes festivals, folk dance performances, and arts and crafts demonstration in old style fashion" (qtd. In Goeldner et'al 286-288). From the above definitions, we can deduce as follow: that these view implies that tourists are well attracted to the cultures that are alien to them. They see these cultures as resources for education and recreation. That cultural tourism entails show-casing cultural identities in terms of education, local customs, local arts and craft, traditional dancers, music, food and drinks.

Therefore, African traditional culture is tourism itself, especially by the reason that its preservation, promotion and presentation are designed to arouse tourist's interest. Furthermore, the activities of the New Yam Festivals such as Leboku New Yam Festival celebrated in Ugep, Nigeria to honour the earth goddess and the ancestral spirits of the land in Ugep and other cultural carnivals are evidence that African traditional culture can enhance cultural tourism in Nigeria. This will in turn bring development in the nation. African Traditional Religion (ATR) has great potentials to unlock the growth and development aspirations of the nation. Its great artworks showcasing lifestyle and creativity of the Nigerian people abound. Since culture is the bedrock of what tourism is built on, the writer therefore urges the Nigerian government to organise seminars and workshops where the citizens and various Nigerian communities will be educated in this area because National Re-orientation is what cements them together.

A.T.R. helps to promote culture and the environment and is a veritable tool for economic empowerment and social development. African traditional culture has the ability and capacity to make a major and significant impact on the Nigerian society, economy and environment. One obvious benefit of the culture industry is its ability to create employment and national development. However, a conducive moral atmosphere is needed for culture and tourism to achieve the goals of economic enhancement and contribute to national development. This is why National Re-orientation is needed as it imbues every citizen of Nigeria with the right moral attitude to receive and interact with visitors to our country.

ANALYSIS OF ISSUES

The most significant part of the development of any country is unquestionably the development of the people that make up the country. To be certain, there are other aspects of development, for a country is a living organism with many parts, every one of which needs to be developed. As long as any of its parts remains undeveloped, the entire organism suffers. For, every fraction has its own unique contribution towards the growth

and well-being of the whole organism. A number of parts are of primary importance while others are of secondary importance (Omoregbe 147). In the organism of a country, the development of human dimension corresponds to the primary part of the organism while the development of the infra-human dimension corresponds to the secondary part of the organism. These latter include the natural resources, the land, the electricity, pipe borne water, the roads, the buildings, refineries, machines, industries and factories. All these are important in a country and need to be developed. But they are of secondary importance. Of primary importance is the development of human dimension. We can therefore infer that the development of a country is primarily the development of the human dimension, which is the development of human persons.

Now, the most important aspect in the development of the human person according to Omoregbe is his moral development. "Moral maturity is a mark of human development, and it is the most significant part of national development. Indeed, it is a conditio-sine-qua-non for national development for we cannot talk of the development of a country if its citizens are morally undeveloped and immature" (147). For any country or society to experience national development, the moral growth of its people provided by religion (African Traditional Religion) through its moral teaching have to go before other aspects of development or else the course of development would be let down by the dishonesty of the citizens. The dishonesty of the citizens is the highest and most terrible obstacle to the development of any country.

How can the economy of a country like ours develop if its citizens lack nous of duty, nous of moral responsibility and social accountability? Nor what kind of development can we be expecting in a country in which Law enforcement officers can without difficulty be bribed by criminals and where government officials defraud their fatherland by diverting public funds meant for developmental projects into their private and selfish ends. It is in this light that "Thomas Hobbes in his Leviathan portrays a society dominated by self-interest, a society in which everybody was only concerned about his own self-interest, with no sense of morality. Hobbes calls this society "the state of nature" and goes on to tell us that there was no development, no progress in that society" (Omoregbe 148). One could not have expected development, since great care was not taken to inculcate the ethics and moral values in the mind of the citizens. The tip Hobbes wishes to force home with his theory of the state of nature is that morality is a panacea for social progress and national development. This therefore means that morality is indispensable for any meaningful development of any nation. Hobbes was also trying to prove to us that civilization and social development came only with the enforcement of morality by the civil society. Hence any country like ours that desires to progress or develop must be prepared to firmly enforce morality. Any developing country therefore that is serious about development must take morality among its citizens very seriously. In this way African Traditional Religion through its moral education and teaching can lead to development in Nigeria.

Meaningful progress and development takes place only where peace and unity reign or exist. People of diverse culture, religion, tradition and language must agree to be together, communicate and foster a common front before their dreams can be realized. Conflict of interest does not help in the development of Nigeria state. Over the year, the unity and development of Nigeria state has been sacrificed in the altar of self-interest, ethnic chauvinism, religious acrimony and vendelta which hinders the road map of development. Individual aspirations at the expense of communal peace and progress would stall the development of any given society. Asouzu agrees with this when he contends that:

> "To survive better than others, we have the general tendency to highlight certain
> things we imagine are special or exceptional about ourselves. We encounter this
> tendency in almost all spheres of life and at almost all level of our existential
> situation. In this way, racism, ethnicity, nationalism, tribalism and all forms of
> exclusive tendencies drive their force from the primordial human natural
> inclination to self-preservation" (69).

From the above we deduct as follows: that promotion of individual interest cannot guide us to the pathway of development. This is evidence as individuals pursue and aspire for their own good with complete neglect for the good of other members of the state. This self-interest happens because the individual lack the spirit of communalism which is a common feature in the African society and ethics. Communalism is the basis of the African man's concern about the well-being of his neighbour which is at the heart of African traditional ethics. This is reason why Omoregbe sees African traditional ethics as "essentially inter-personal and social, with a basis in human well-being (140). Individualism is abhorrent to the traditional African mentality, hence, individualism and selfishness are seen as vices and it is condemned in a strong term.

African Traditional Religion through the ethical codes and sanctions as we have seen can supply the moral code which primary is the promotion of good and the maintenance of social order and harmony in society. This social order which ensured honest humane living and the security of lives and properties is translated into development. African Traditional Religion foster peace and unity in the community and a peaceful and harmonious atmosphere promotes   national development. It is my opinion that strict application and adherence to traditional ethical principles and sanctions that regulated the behaviour, conduct, and actions of

individuals in society by the citizens and government of Nigeria will quickly translate into development.

The notion of eschatology in African Traditional Religion makes the notion of final judgement of every soul to have meaning, as judgement is inevitable. Since this judgement is not averted nor be done in proxy and the great impartial judge is all seeing and all knowing. This notion obviously flag our moral disposition and learning in this life as we prepare for the life thereafter. It is this religious world-view that taunts Traditional African and acts as a prevention and restriction towards the propensity to oppression, embezzlement, cheat, and dupe, abuse of public office and trust, marginalization of the powerless and immorality. Furthermore, it acts as a deterrent and constraint on the traditional African from violating the sacredness of human life, human freedom, and from violating and degrading the ecological system which is translated into development. Hence, African Traditional Religion through its eschatological concept can play an important role in sustaining the moral coherence of Nigerian societies. Thus, acted as a form of checks, and balances, between members and, leaders of our country, Nigeria, thereby leading to national development in Nigeria.

African Traditional Religion through its ethical basis and practical support for natural resources management and conservation restraint use of forests, water and other natural resources. Through its beliefs and taboos, African Traditional Religion helped in enforcing rules and regulations for environmental preservation because people refrained from using natural resources carelessly. The conservation strategy which is one of preservation is enshrined in totems, taboos and sacrileges and other numerous cultural and religious rites and is maintained through respect for the gods and ancestral spirits. Traditional religious belief system and cultural practices encourages the conservation of natural resources and forestation. This will in turn earn the Nigeria nation carbon credits for sustainable development.

African Traditional herbal medicine is the future of pharmacy. It is the source of raw materials for most pharmaceutical drugs. With vast healthcare delivery and economic potential of traditional medicine can contribute immensely to healthcare delivery system and poverty alleviation in Nigeria. This in turn will bring national development in Nigeria.

African Traditional Religion provides enabling environments for tourism to thrive through its ethics and morality which teaches about relationship and interaction between the creator and fellow human beings. African Traditional Religion (ATR) through its arts and crafts is a greater motivator of tourism development the world over and has remained a crucial force in tourism. A people's religion and culture is expressed in arts and other architectural designs and most of these works of arts have religious historical antecedence. This is why tourists prefer to risk their lives in religious matters than in any other event for example, the magnificent building of the biblical King Solomon motivated the queen of Sheba among other things to visit Jerusalem (1 Kings 10 : 5). The great pyramids of Egypt, the temple of Artemis at Ephesus, the statue of Zeus in Greece among other simply referred as the Seven Wonders of the ancient world all have religious history.

ATR creates new jobs and provides employment for many which in turn brings development in Nigeria. Lending credence to the above assertion, Awake Magazine opines that tourism is important to the economy of over 125 countries. Highlighting the benefits tourism can bring a 2004 UN World Tourism Organization news release explained that tourism can alleviate poverty through the creation of small and medium size tourism businesses. As it creates new jobs, it can raise environment, cultural and social awareness (3 – 4). ATR can enhance Nigeria economy by providing her with foreign exchange reserve through its potential cultural tourism. ATR also brings to bear rural tourism which promotes the activities of the rural people. It is a kind of tourism geared towards redressing the problem of poverty in rural communities. This also contributes to the development of Nigeria. ATR also enhances peace and reconciliation through its rich cultural tourism which is a panacea for development in any nation. Thus, ATR should not be taken for granted or treated with disdain in the quest for tourism and national development.

CONCLUSION:
African Traditional Religion and its ethical principles and practices have been observed to be the only ways that can fast track national development in Nigeria if it is introduced into their legal systems and criminal codes. It is also shown that if Nigerian government through its agencies inculcate in the citizens, legislators, judiciary and executive arm of government through workshops and seminars the African eschatology concept, this will play an important role in sustaining the moral coherence of Nigerian societies and will also act as check and balances between members and leaders of Nigeria. The writer of this work also believed that the integration of traditional medicine into Nigeria healthcare sector will not only bring national development but will do a long way in the nation meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) target. It is also shown that the African concept of eschatology will act as a form of checks and balances between members and leaders of our great nation, Nigeria, thereby removing all the road blocks to national development in Nigeria such as corruption, nepotism, ethnicity, tribalism, bribery, and embezzlement and finally it will aid good behaviour in people. This work has also shown that traditional ethical principles on environmental conservation and protection discourage desertification occasioned by deforestation. This in turn will earn the Nigeria nation carbon credits which lead to national

development and will make Nigeria climate friendly. The writer of this work finally opines that ATR creates new jobs and provides employment for many which in turn brings development in Nigeria. Thus, ATR should not be taken for granted or treated with disdain in the quest for tourism and national development and as it has the potential to bring about development in Nigeria. A conscious return to and observance of traditional ethical principles, remains the only valid option, if social order, peace, sanctity, harmony and stability.

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