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Errors and Disfigurations in Nigeria's Census Data: Evidences and Implications

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ABSTRACT: The result of any census exercise in Nigeria especially since independence had been mired in controversy as a result of census data disfigurations. The evidences of these disfigurations and manipulations are infallibly set out in this paper. Some of these evidences include high margin of error and improbable growth rates, structural deformity in census data, abnormal pattern of population distribution and re-distribution etc. the overriding implications of such disfigured data is that socio-economic planning is now based on spurious data which does not augur well for development planning in the country. The paper concludes by refreshing us with a summary of the litany of recommendations so far and making a case for leadership with integrity and vision as the implementation of those recommendations could actually yield fruitful results.

KEYWORDS: *Errors, Disfigurations, Nigeria, Census Data, Evidences, Implications.*

I.   INTRODUCTION

The most important source of information about the population of a country or any locality within it is the population census. The census is a systematic and regular method of head counting the people and obtaining vital information on the individuals in the area. It is an official count of the population of a country at a given time by area of residence at the time of the count. It is defined by the United Nations (1958) "as the total process of collecting, compiling and publishing demographic, economic and social data pertaining at a specified time or times to all persons in a country or defined territory". The information derived from a census is therefore useful for analyzing the present and future population sizes and distribution which is fundamental to long term planning of many public programmes such as educational needs, health needs, housing needs and manpower planning. It is the basis for political representation and revenue sharing in Nigeria as in many other countries of the world; thus census data is pivotal to socio-economic and development planning.

In the view of Idike and Eme (2015), successive Nigerian governments during both the Colonial and Post-Colonial periods understood the importance of any accurate census as the basic tool for development planning. Consequently census of parts and the whole of Nigeria have been conducted since 1886. However, since Nigeria attained political independence, all efforts at conducting a national census have met with serious problems. Among the several reasons for unsuccessful attempts at census taking is inadequate education about the census and general ignorance regarding population issues in general and the use of census data in particular (Idike and Eme, 2015). The use to which census data is put has remained the underlying factor for deliberate errors and disfigurations in the census data among the various ethnic nationalities in Nigeria. This is census politics which according to Idike and Eme (2015), refers to the struggle amongst states and/or ethnic nationalities toward the inflation of census figures (disfiguration) to their selfish advantage. No issue has generated controversy, intense debate and ethnic antagonism than that of manipulation of national census figures (Idike & Eme, 2015). The arguments and controversies have always followed the traditional lines. The south versus the North, the South picking holes and condemning the result because they are at a disadvantage having been posted with lower figures and North justifying it and so siding with National Population Commission because they are at advantage, having always been posted with higher figures than the South (Eze, 2017a). It is however clear that no region of this country can be said to be guiltless on the issue of census figure manipulation and disfiguration. This paper therefore seeks to chronicle these evidences of falsification so as to bring them again to focus, and their implications. In doing so, we took the sequence thus; following the introduction is a refreshing on the features of a credible census; then censuses in review, in which we briefly looked at census taking in Nigeria till date, evidences of errors and disfigurations; clear cases of irregularities in 2006 census, implications, and then conclusion.

Characteristics and Features of a Credible Census

This section looks at the essential features of a census, what census is to determine in any population and the litmus test for a census to be deemed successful. Citing United Nations, Eze (2015), lists the six essential features of a census as follows:

i. A census must have a national sponsorship; only a national government can provide the necessary resources and enact suitable legislation, although provincial or local government may share a part of the responsibility and sometimes a part of the cost.

ii. A census must cover a precisely defined territory; boundary changes that affect comparisons between successive census should be clearly and explicitly stated.

iii. All persons in the scope of the census must be included without duplication or omission.

iv. The people must be counted as of a fixed time. Persons born after the census date are to be excluded and persons who die after the census date are to be included. Some information, such as that relating to labour force participation or migration, may relate not to the census date but to another period, which must be clearly defined.

v. Census data must be obtained separately for each individual. This does not preclude making some entries for the entire household and in exceptional circumstances summary information for a group of persons may be acceptable but the objective of a modern census, in so far as possible is to collect data separately for each individual.

vi. The data from a census must be published.

The United Nations equally went ahead to recommend that a census should determine.

❖ Total population, sex, age and status
❖ Place of birth, citizenship or nationality
❖ Mother tongues, literacy and educational qualification
❖ Economic characteristics
❖ Urban or rural domicile
❖ Household or family structure
❖ Fertility pattern

For a census and its figures to pass for a successful programme (credible), it must possess four major features viz: accuracy, Reliability, Acceptability and high level of utilization. According to Ezeoke, (2005) as cited by Eze (2015), any census that failed this test by lacking in any and or all of these yardsticks cannot be termed successful.

❖ **Accuracy**: Is the degree of the exactness of population census data. Infact an accurate census have a very narrow margin of error, desirably less than one percent.

❖ **Reliability:** Describes the consistent nature of the demographic data obtained. A reliable census data must be consistent with not only past censuses but also established demographic principles. The age composition and sex ratio of the census figure must be realistic enough.

❖ **Acceptability:** Describes the level of acceptability of the census figures by governments, groups and individuals; it is more of a political requirement.

❖ **Level of Utilization:** Is related to the acceptability of the census data in the society. The ultimate aim of a population census is its utilization as a tool for planning purposes. A census will be regarded as successful if its figures are widely utilized by governments, researchers, scholars, planners and the private sector.

Ordinarily these four yardsticks should be interlinked. That is an accurate census must be reliable, acceptable and well utilized. However, the relationship is not so straight forward. Undoubtedly, an accurate census must be reliable, but an accurate and reliable census may be unacceptable atleast to some people or groups while an acceptable census may be inaccurate and unreliable atleast in some respects (Ezeoke, 2005). Nigerian censuses are notorious for their wide departure from these yardsticks of a credible census and so have always faced rancorous and turbulent acceptance from the general polity.

II. CENSUSES IN REVIEW

Official census taking in Nigeria began in 1866 when data was collected from the people of the settlement of Lagos. The exercise was repeated in 1868 and again 1871, after which population count became decennial till the end of nineteenth century, to be specific 1891. The next census taken in 1911 was the first of a series of national decennial 'censuses' broken only in 1941 when a census could not be conducted owing to the exigencies of the second world war. These censuses lacked atleast three essential characteristics of the census; individual unit, Universality and simultaneity (Adegbola, 1984; Eze, 2015, 2017a). The first attempt at modern and scientific census was conducted between 1950 – 1953, popularly called the 1952/53 census which breached the important principle of simultaneity owing to economic and political exigencies. Consequently, the census was conducted in Lagos in February 1950, in Northern region, between May and July 1952, in Western region

in December 1952 and in Eastern region, between April and May, 1953. This census fell prey to either double or undercounting due to the staggering of the dates of enumerations across the different regions of the country in the face of the continuous inter-regional migrations (Eze, 2017a).

The first census after independence was held between May 13 and 27, 1962; the result could not command national confidence and acceptance and so the whole exercise was cancelled and a recount held in 1963 – which irrespective of stiff opposition from different sections of the country was accepted through a brokered political compromise. The third attempt at head – count after independence was conducted between Nov. 25 and December 2, 1973. The result was rejected and discarded. The result of 1991 and 2006 national censuses were accepted, however, not without a hot and rancorous questioning of their credibility especially that of 2006. So out of the five censuses held since independence three were officially accepted and two rejected and cancelled.

Evidences of Disfigurations of Nigeria's Census Data.

This section brings out facts and evidences in the censuses especially post – independence censuses that clearly portrays manipulations and disfigurations in the census result. The manipulations of census data can officially and formally be traced to the failed census of 1962 in which the result showed that Southern States posted a slightly higher figure than the north. This development according to Mbeke – Ekanem (2006), did not go down well with the then prime minister, Tafawa Balewa, a northerner, who saw no justification on why the south should be more populated than the north. After sacking the official in charge of the census, he made himself chairman of the census broad and conducted another census in 1963, giving the north an edge over the south. This very event therefore formally and officially introduced mistrust and flagrant manipulation of census figures among the different regions of the country. These evidences are hereby categorized and discussed along the following lines: High margin of error and improbable growth rates; structural deformity; Abnormal patterns of population distribution and re – distribution; Abnormal gaps between census results and estimates, wide departure from the internationally accepted standard of a credible census.

High Margin of Error and Improbable Growth Rates

As already mentioned, the first post – independent Nigeria head count was held in 1962. It put Nigeria's population at 45.26 million; having been discredited, a recount was done in 1963 which posted a figure of 60.5 million, a figure which the census officials believed to be impossibly high. It was eventually scaled down to 55.66 million (Mbeke – Ekanem, 2006). After detailed study by various experts, both national and international, it was found that the census figure has been inflated by 14% as each region strove to make the new figures the same or higher than the 1962 figures so as not to expose the region to guilt of inflation in 1962. The 1963 census was inconsistent with the census of a decade earlier since it implies a virtually impossible growth rate of 5.8 percent. The 1973 census posted a figure of 79.79 million of which a validation tests revealed serious irregularities in returns. A breakdown of the released result showed that all states in the north experienced annual growth rates of 4% except Benue plateau – a clear abnormality (Adegbola, 1984, Eze, 2015, 2017a). The 1991 census result was put at 88514501 million. After various analysis by different experts, serious doubts were cast that after 28 years (1963 - 1991), Nigeria's population will have remained at 88.5 million. The 2006 census put Nigeria's population at 140,003,542 which represents an increase of 63% in 15years. This has been described as incredible (tell magazine, 19th Feb, 2007).

Abnormal disparity between census results and estimates

There is usually a wide disparity between census results posted by NPC and estimates by both local and international organizations. The 1991 census posted a figure of 88.5 million people, but a projection based on 1963 census put the figure at 120.5 million. This same estimate was projected by international organizations. Looking at 55.66 million of 1963 census and projected and recorded population of 120.5 million and 88.5 million respectively doubts are cast on the credibility, wrongness and rightness of both 1963 and 1991 census results. What made these projections by several organizations so far off base? According to Mbeke-Ekanem (2006), an overestimation of more than 40 per cent is no estimation. one could as well simply pull a number from the top of his head or from the lottery machine and use that to represent the country.

Going further, the National population Bureau, in 1978, using growth rate of 2.5% per annum attempted a projection of the population of Nigeria. By this exercise, Nigeria's population was expected to increase from 84,731,600 in 1980 to 109,066,800 in 1990. Similarly, the population division of UNO estimated the 1980 population of Nigeria at 77,082,000. This figure was expected to increase to 107, 871,000 and 148,889,000 in 1990 and year 2000 respectively. These estimates were based on 1963 census figure with annual growth rate of about 3.2%. This excludes international migration into the country especially from the neighbouring countries of West Africa which was quite significant. Also population projection prepared separately for the whole country and 3 states (Cross River, Niger, Oyo) chosen as case studies, the national

figures were projected by age and sex while state figures were projected by age only. The result was shown on 5yr – interval but projection was made on yearly basis. According to the projection, if the annual rate of growth was 2.5% as officially taken by government, the population of Nigeria would have increased from 84.7million in 1980 to 138.8 million in the year 2000. This indicates an increase of about 54.1 million or about 40% during the twenty year period. Looking at these projections in relation to the result of 1991 census, one is left in doubt and the credibility of the result questionable. This is because between 1963 and 1980, the estimate showed that the population increased to 84.7 million with annual growth rate of 2.5% (NPB). If within 17 years, the population grew to 84.7 million, then extending to 1990, the population would have increased to 138.8 million, assuming the same annual growth rate of 2.5%. Thus, the figure of 88.5 million of 1991 was a far cry from the estimates.

      The 2006 census result of Lagos state could also be used as a case in point to illustrate this anomaly. The figure released for Lagos by the National population commission did not correlate with any available social parameters such as birth rate, number of houses and physical structures in a given area, vehicular density, children immunization, waste generation, school population and the cosmopolitan nature of the state through which population can be determined (Bamgbose, 2009). Available data shows that the number of children immunized in Lagos state in 2004 was 3,289,195. Besides the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated a figure of about 16 million for Lagos state based on the result of children immunized from 2000 to 2006. Lagos as at the 2006 census was having 26000 Enumeration Areas and going by National population commission(NPC) manual indicating that 500 – 1000 people should reside per Enumeration Area, then the population of Lagos state should be about 19,500,000 (750 x 26,000) (Kolapo et al 2007, Bamgbose 2009).

      Again according to Bamgbose (2009), the released figure for the Lagos state by the NPC stood at 9,013,534. This is actually far less from what the total number of the residents should be. There are twenty Local Governments in the State and going by the total number of both male and female, this should stand by 17,552,942. This data according to Bamgbose (2009) was gotten from similar census conducted by Lagos State itself. The point being made here is that the Lagos state situation in 2006 census could actually be typical of many other areas in the country which therefore points to disfigured census results.

Inconsistent Pattern of Population Re-distribution
      According to tell magazine of 19th February 2007, like in the previous rancorous census exercises, the 2006 figures fly in the face of universal demographic realities. Around the world, population cluster generally tends to be heavier along the coastal areas than in the interior regions, but curiously the nation's census experiences have always remained an aberration. The Northern population figures have consistently posted more population figures than the South. It is expected that settlement pattern would tend to follow established order as it is in countries like Austrelia and Canada where population and economic propensities tilt more towards coastal areas. The National Population Commission (NPC), however, argues that it is never a truism that all littoral areas are more densely populated. According to the commission, this used to be so at the beginning of industrial revolution but it is no longer tenable in a new world of service industry in a global economy. Also, Nigeria is witnessing population shift as it happened or is happening in other parts of the world. Nigerians are now moving up North to the so – called arid regions or have moved to newly created states and LGAs to take up opportunity of economic advantage that are there. This argument of NPC however flies in the face of environmental realities resulting from climate change that have forced population shift down South from all areas of the West African Sahel which includes many areas of northern Nigeria.(Eze,2018b). Increased drought resulting from climatic change has taken its toll in the Sahelian part of Northern Nigeria and has tremendously affected the pattern of population distribution and re-distribution. For e.g Herders typically graze their livestock in the north during the wet season and move south during the dry months; but today in Nigeria, the Fulani herders from the north with their families are becoming sedentary and permanently settled in the south as is evidenced by their settlements doted in many areas of the south irrespective of the season of the year. Ayodele (2007) equally argued regarding the population figure posted for Lagos state in comparison to Kano state with respect to 2006 census that if you take into consideration that between Kano and Jigawa that make up the old Kano which population is about the same as that of Lagos in 1991 now has a population of 13,732,331 against Lagos 9,013,534, it would seem that the result of the 2006 census leaves so much issues begging for answers.

Wide Departures from the Yardsticks of a Credible Census.
      We have already mentioned that for a census to be deemed successful, it must possess certain features which include accuracy, reliability, acceptability and high level of utilization. These features have not located high level of expression in our censuses. Accuracy for instance, involves narrow margin of error desirably less than one percent, but the margin of error in 1963 census was 14% and the 2006 census posted an incredible population growth of 63% within 15years. For a census to be reliable, the census data must be consistent with

not only past censuses but also established demographic principles. Nigerian censuses have been consistently inconsistent with past censuses, for instance, the official figure of 1963 census which is 55.7 million is inconsistent with the census of a decade earlier because it implies a virtually impossible growth rate of 5.8 percent and that of 1952/53 census is equally inconsistent with the 1931 census because it implies a biological impossible annual rate of increase of 5.6 percent. On the issue of acceptability, Nigerian censuses especially the post – independent ones have not enjoyed acceptance by the general polity rather they have been embroidered in rancor and altercations between and within groups and different regions of the country. Acceptance however has always been brokered through a political compromise, since the feature itself is largely a political requirement. Level of utilization is related to the acceptability factor of the census data. When a census is widely utilized by governments, researchers, scholars planners and the private sector, it will be regarded as successful, but according to NPC (2005), though the 1963 census was officially accepted, apart from government which used the figures for official purposes, there were very few other users. In the view of the author of this paper, this observation of NPC equally applies to other post – independent censuses.

Structural Deformity in Nigeria's Census Data

There are various forms of structural issues discernible in the various census data. Adegbola (1984) identified in 1973 census, among them as improbable population structure. According to him, Age and relationship recorded were highly unrealistic. For example, in one household, a father was 28 and his son was 38 years old. One head of household who was 55, had, among other ages, sons 45 and 48years old while a 95 year old head had children aged 07, 04, 02,01. A wife aged 80 had a one year old daughter. In a case of abnormal household distribution, there was found a household of 48 persons in Kwara State with 48 sons and daughters aged 00 – 06. Also it was found in some other areas an unlikely frequency of households with 8, 15, 22 persons which indicates maximum line household. For instance out of a total number of 62 households in an entire enumeration area, 53 were exactly 15 – member household. There was equally the issue of padding of household population by visitors. Households were unusually loaded with a large number of 'visitors', 'co-tenants' and 'houseboys'. For example; A 13 member household had 11 strangers in it (Adegbola, 1984). All these are evidences of inflation of figures by enumerators.

In terms of sex structure of the population, the picture is one of proportion of 50.30% to 49.7% for the male and females respectively, except in 2006 when change in the sex composition of the population became different. In 2006, the proportion was 51.2% for males and 48.8% for females. This structure has been widely criticized since it flies against the feature of population structure Worldwide. Some have blamed this abnormality on politics and sharp practices often associated with census exercises in Nigeria (Eze, 2018b). This same blame governs the motive for other evidences of disfigurations already observed.

In the area of age structure, it is also observed in some of the census data, preference for particular digits notably those ending with 0, 2, 5 and even number generally, and aversion to such numbers as 7, 13 or odd numbers, which in most cases results in unaccountable large difference in succeeding age groups (Umoh, 2001).

Clear Cases of Irregularities in the 2006 Population and Housing Census.

After the completion of the 2006 census there were clear cut manifestations of irregularities and manipulations that showed up, some of which are now take a look at.

It was alleged that in Rivers State, some officials were intimidated by the state's census monitoring committee in the distribution of census materials', whereas it was alleged that some loyal enumerators secretly double – counted some sections of the state in line with clandestine agreement reached with the political elites. This led to the release of 5,185,400 as the population of the state which almost equalled the population of Imo and Abia States put together (Ubochi, 2007).

In Ogun State it was gathered that the National Population Commission (NPC) deliberately failed to provide some localities such as Iperu Remo with the required registration forms. In 1991 census data, Iperu Remo had the population of 6,527 inhabitants. The community is adjudged the most populous town in Ikenne local government. However, it was gathered that in the 2006 census, the locality was provided with 6,527 forms assuming no change in populations since a decade and half. (Adekeye, 2006).

In Ebonyi State reports from several communities spanning seven local government Areas held that their households were not counted. The local governments affected include Afikpo North, Afikpo south, Ezza South, Ikwo, Ishielu, Ivo and Onicha Local Governments. These localities were not counted allegedly as a result of political skirmishes aimed at reducing the population of the state. On filing petition by these Local Governments demanding for a fresh exercise the census tribunal voided their enumeration figures as declared by the National Population Commission. In the released figures, Afikpo North and Afikpo South were said to be 156,649 and 157,542 respectively. Ezza ;South: 133,625, Ikwo; 214,969, Ishielu; 152,581,Ivo,121,363 and Onicha; 236,609 (premium Times, 2006).

Some locations were allegedly not counted in Cross River State while some others disputed the figure released against them. This is exemplified by the case of Nko Community which had 12,690 inhabitants by 1991 Census counts but came down to 5,383 in 2006 census. A census tribunal eventually ordered a fresh exercise for the community (Premium times, 2006).

Some location in Bornu state such as the people of Hawul, Askira/Uba and Chibok local Government Areas all in southern part for Bornu State cried out that their population were being manipulated due to some ulterior motive. For instance, the population of Hawul decreased from 173,604 in 1991 to 120,314 in 2006; Askira/Uba fell from 168,204 in 1991 to 137,000 in 2006; Chibok dropped from 91,000 in 1991 to 67,000 in 2006; but certain other areas known for their low population density had their population multiplied over five times. Such area include Gubio, Nganzi, Kaga and Magumeri in northern and central parts of the state (Bwala, 2010). It is believed that northern Bornu skimmed an advantage for themselves over the population of southern Bornu.

In Taraba state, it was argued that some localities were intentionally excluded from the census map for political gain. The census tribunal quashed the exercise in those areas as there was no evidence of enumeration in them (Umar 2006). More than 15 villages in Tarmuwa local government Area of Yobe State were identified not to have been enumerated while some others had the number of their household doubled with the sole aim of inflating their population (Umar, 2006).

The instances enumerated can go on and on, but we have just used the few cases mentioned here to illustrate the gross irregularities and disfigurations evident in 2006 census exercise. This is equally evident in other post – independent censuses as already shown.

One cannot be said to have exhausted these evidences, but the ones mentioned are here used as examples to illustrate the issue of the disfiguration of census data in Nigeria. These have resulted in lowering the quality and value of census data which is mearnt to be active input and ingredient for sustainable and effective national socio-economic planning, thereby creating a situation where our planning, has become based on faulty base data.

Implications of Nigeria's Disfigured Census Data.

Irrespective of the undeniable evidences of the disfigurations of Nigeria's census data, it is generally recognized that the development of a coordinated, systematic and responsive data base is necessary for the government to make informed decisions for policy and planning, assess the impact of such decisions and effectively execute its programmes. Without question, the need for information available from a census extend beyond the federal government to state and local governments, private providers and third–party players. Each one needs reliable, timely and comparable data and analyses which describe the ethnic composition, literacy levels, number of children ever born, number of children living, occupation, sex, age, presence and durability of disability and so on (Eze, 2017b). Absence of such data debilitates the ability and capacity of government to plan, manage and assess its investments in its economic and social programmes.

Ordinarily, census should be seen purely us a technical exercise mearnt to generate statistical data to guide planning, but in Nigeria, as in many other countries, a number of factors have made it a platform of politicking and ethnicism, thus geopordizing the authenticity of census data generated. This situation therefore poses challenge to effectiveness of census data usage as a planning tool and guide (Eze, 2017b). To ensure numerical supremacy during censuses, people leave their usual place of residence in the cities which are in most cases different from their ethnic or state of origin and return for enumeration in their homes of origin. This can then result to the allocation of services to areas with fewer population (Bamgbose, 2009). This situation where faulty census data are used in making economic, political and social welfare projections for the country creates a situation where socio-infrastructural amenities are overloaded, because according to Mbeke-Ekanem (2006), no one knows how many people they are serving. This can give birth to frustrations for both the planners and the populace. The situation where services are underutilized in some areas and overutilized in some others due to allocation of resources based on faulty census data can result to restiveness and social mayhem in the areas of overuse and pressure and equally wastage in the areas of underuse. This equally results to a drag in the development planning process and enjoyment of the dividends of development by the people.

III.   CONCLUSION /RECOMMENDATIONS

It has been adjudged and posited that politics and the census are inseparable since the results of the census are tools for social organization, national budgets, judicial decisions, governmental structures, revenue allocations and distribution of parliamentary seats or representations in the National Assembly. In well organized societies, social engineers usually allow census takers to deliver the goods before using them for national planning. In Nigeria, we are too sectional and parochial and the social engineers take it upon themselves to do a bad job out of it (Arowolo 1984). According to Mbeke-Ekanem (2006), the passion for doctored figures is stronger now than before because the higher a state is in population, the more revenue

allocation it receives from the Federal Government. This means that those at the helm of affairs must make sure that their states and ethnic groups are always higher in number to be able to receive the lion's share of the national cake. Apart from the oil revenue, with this posture, they can justify their dominance in the military, political positions, contract awards, and the rest. The end result is that the country does not have a population figure that is worth the paper it is written on (Mbeke- Ekanem, 2006).

Irrespective of the gloomy picture we have regarding our census data, the salience of census data in national socio-economic planning goes without question. This implies that every effort must be made to provide a credible census result that is worth its onions. In summary, according to Eze (2017b), it is suggested and recommended that to install sanity in our census, apart from the need to continuously create awareness on the administrative and technical essence of the census exercise, determination by the political class to ensure justice, equity and fairness in the polity, to douse the sense of marginalization and enhance a sense of belonging is imperative. Moreover, devolution of power and resources to the federating units for such a multi-ethnic country as Nigeria is indispensable as this will curb the wild desire to do everything possible no matter how corrupt, immoral and bizarre to grab a large share of the national cake from the centre through census rigging. Added to the catalogue of recommendations for a credible census data in Nigeria is the Biometric technology approach (Idike and Eme 2015). According to them, it is believed that every human being has a unique physiological and behavioural characteristics which cannot be forged or forgotten. Biometric technology is a science of measuring and compiling distinguishing physical characteristics of the people. It uses distinctive anatomical or physiological characteristics such as hand geometry, fingerprint recognition, iris recognition and facial recognition for automatically identifying or verifying people's identity. Biometric technology can be used to collect details of each citizen's physiological traits and other information which can then be stored in a centralized database (Idike and Eme, 2015). Eze (2017a) equally mooted the idea of 'population tax' in which each state will be made to pay tax to the federal government based on the population number allocation to them.

The suggestions or recommendations for credible census exercises and result in Nigeria may never have an end. The fact is that these recommendations can actually yield fruitful results if well implemented; what we need is a credible detribalized leadership with sense of integrity and vision. A leadership that can view Nigeria as a home for all with equal opportunity and stake and not a parochial one that exists to pursue the narrow and entrenched interests of its own section of the country. As long as this skewed leadership value persists, so will census politics and rigging remain. One has to conclude this paper by re-emphasizing that census exercise will always remain imperative in the country. This is because an accurate census provides the knowledge so that public resources can be shared evenly across the country and so equally ensure that services at the local level are relevant to the people who live there at such a quantum as is consistent with the population number in such a place.

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