

Variability of Voting Pattern among Ethnic Nationality in the 2015 Gubernatorial Elections of Delta State

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Abstract

The study assessed the variability of voting pattern among the different ethnic groups in the 2015 governorship election in Delta State. Data was collected in respect of the votes from the 8 major ethnic groups in the state, and was analyzed accordingly. The hypothesis formulated was tested at 5% level of significance with the aid of the Kruskal- Wallis test. Findings indicate that there was no significant variation in the voting pattern of Deltans across the different ethnic groups. This simply indicates that ethnicity did not influence the results of the 2015 governorship election in Delta State. Given this result, the study recommended that the winner of the 2015 governorship election should form an all-inclusive government and ensure that no ethnic group experience any form of marginalization. Government should also strive to sustain unity among the various ethnic groups in the State by ensuring good governance at all facets and levels.

Key words: Voting Pattern, Ethnicity, Election, Delta State, Governance

Introduction

The problem of ethnicity/ culture is a global issue and not a Nigerian phenomenon. It has been and is still been experienced in both developing and developed nations. In Nigeria the impact of ethnicity is more devastating as it has hindered national development and Nigerian leaders and people are more committed to their ethnic group more than to the nation. The 2012 report of the national opinion survey of international foundation for electoral system (IFES, 2012), Washington DC on independent survey of public opinion in Nigeria, state that ethnicity is the strongest type of identity among Nigerians. According to Salawu and Hassan (2011), the correlation between ethnicity and electorate is identified on aggregate and this shows that an electorate has the tendency to concentrate his/her vote along discernible ethnic line.

Delta State is a rich mix of ethnic nationalities and has often been referred to as a mini Nigeria. It is made up mainly of several ethnic groups with Oshimili, Aniocha, Ndokwa, Ika, Urhobo, Ijaw, Itsekiri and Isoko as the major ethnic groups. It is quite unfortunate that ethnicity is perceived to have continuously bedeviled politics in most states of Nigeria. This is why, Agba (2008), opine that Nigerian politicians may have learnt nothing and may have forgotten nothing since after many years of independence; the country's politics is still crammed with issues of ethnic trauma. Ethnic based politics is said to have been bequeathed to us from early misguided politicians who shaped most states' creation and this has serious effect on the political integration of most states in the country, Delta State inclusive.

The avalanche of ethnic crisis that ravaged the peaceful co-existence of Niger Delta unity, ethnocentrism, tribalism, persecution and prebendalism has played a visible role in Delta State politics. Kins selective altruism had made its way into Delta state politics to concentrate state power to a particular ethnic group of interest. In the present Fourth Republic, ethnic politics/voting pattern has been less prominence. This may be due to the informal rotation and zoning arrangement of principal political offices in Delta State among the three senatorial districts. Amongst all of these, there is no doubt that most people tend to cling to the communal ties that brings them to their senatorial district leading them to cast their votes along ethnocentric divides during elections.

The 2011 general elections in Delta State gave a clearer picture. The outcome of the governorship election shows a pattern of vote that was deeply ethnic both Uduaghan and Ogboru have more than 80% of

the total votes casted in their ethnic localities. Several analysts have argued that the political behaviour of some Nigeria is influenced heavily by the hyperbolic assumption that one's destiny is intrinsically and exclusively 'inked with one's ethnic linguistic.

Ethnic based politics deserves a complete research with the aim of ascertaining if it is one of the root causes of underdevelopment in nations as the researcher proposes that voting along ethnic ties promotes corruption and breakdown of social cohesion which may have wreaked havoc across various states in Nigeria and Delta State in particular. Bearing this in mind, this research investigate the variability of voting pattern among the various ethnic groups in Delta State in order to establish the effect of ethnicity on the results of the 2015 gubernatorial election in Delta State.

Objectives of the Study

This study was carried out to achieve the following specific objective:

- i. Ascertain the variability of voting patterns and establish if the voting behaviour and trends of the 2015 gubernatorial electorates was influenced by ethnic divide.

Hypothesis Statement

Based on the objective, a hypothesis was formulated to guide this study:

Ho: There is no significant variability in the voting pattern among ethnic nationality in the 2015 gubernatorial elections of Delta State

Conceptual Clarification

Ethnicity

Ethnicity is considered to be shared characteristics such as culture, language, religion and traditions which contribute to a person or group's identity (Otite, 1990). Ethnic groups has been defined as groups that regards themselves as distinct community by certain characteristics distinguishable from the other group from the surrounding community (Otite, 1999). They are categories of people characterized by culture, language, value system and normative behavior. It is the contextual discrimination by members of one ethnic group against the others on the basis of some exclusive criteria such as political and socio-economic development. To another scholar, ethnicity is perceived as a social problem characterized by competition among ethnic nationalities (Okolo, 1980). From Okolo's review, Nnoli sees these ethnic groups as social formations differentiated by boundaries, membership, language and culture; where the language is perceived as the most important variable.

Problems of Ethnicity in Delta State

Ethnic rivalry in Delta State cannot be overemphasized. However, problems of ethnicity are not peculiar to Delta state alone. In fact it is also a Nigerian problem. Some of these problems include:

- a. Breeding of disunity among the ethnic nations in Delta State.
- b. It resulted in the rival claims of ownership of Warri and followed by conflicts.
- c. It breeds marginalization of the minority ethnic groups by the majority economically, politically, socially, job placement.
- d. It causes democratic and governance crisis
- e. It causes violence and physical displacement and relocation
- f. It serves as medium for politicians of questionable characters to win election.
- g. It breeds divide and rules that brings about sectional development
- h. It encourages corruption and embezzlement (Osaghae, 1994).

Minority issues and Rights in Delta state

A numbers of scholars have traced the disadvantaged position of the minorities in electoral democracy in Delta State to the obnoxious colonial divide and rule policy of indirect rule which not only aimed at cultural distinctions of the diverse ethnic (minority) groups but enforced a deliberate policy of separatism. Gurr (2000), identifies several conditions that have contributed to the mobilization of ethnic minorities grievances since 1945, which include: (i) unequal treatment of minority communities by the dominant or mainstream group (ii) competition with other groups for accesses to power in the state (iii) the contagious effect of ethnic political activism elsewhere (iv) pattern of state building, political power and economic development that channel communal emergencies into either protest or rebellion.

Review of Literature

Azeez (2009), states that an important cause of social crisis in Nigeria is the ethnic virus. He adds that the negative implication of ethnicity in our country has affected efforts to stabilize politically develop, and consolidate our democracy. He notes that before Nigeria's independence, the forming of Political party were done alone ethnic grouping. He explains that the Action Group grew from a social cultural association called Egbe Omo Oduduwa; the National Council of Nigerian Citizens was associated with Ibo State union, which the Northern People's Congress was established by the Fulani Aristocrats. He opines that a very strong feeling of regional commitment was developed as a result of the division of the country into three regions by the 1946 Colonial Constitution.

He adds that at this point the key Political parties by 1953 were associated with the different ethnic nationalities and the leadership, structured along the ethnic cleavages. He concludes by calling for the re-structuring of the country with the re-orientation of the people on what nationhood entails.

Nnabuihe, Aghemalo and Okebugwu (2014) state that ethnicity has destroyed Nigeria's Politics. They assert that evidences have shown that ethnicity directs voting choice and patterns. They maintain that the choice of Nigerians in any election are ethnically coloured just as the emergence of Political parties are motivated ethnically, consequently, parties that emerged from the dominant ethnic group overshadows the said region and 2/3 majority in elections become difficult to attain, except by coalition. They examine the history and Nigerian voting behaviour and opine that the First and Second Republic had ethnic colouration. They identify institutional structures that encouraged ethnicity in Nigeria to the detriment of our democratic consolidation. They conclude by showing that ethnicity remains the key factor affecting the establishment of a truly democratic state

Noko (2017) states that ethnicity in Nigerian government and politics has been a burning issue in the system since the beginning of democratic government in Nigeria, and it deserves an attention. He opines that in Nigeria, there had been treats to national political development; and since the time of colonial dominance one geo-ethnic group has tried to establish hegemony over the remaining geo-ethnic groups. He adds that this treat of dominance has led and is still leading to sub-national groups treating to succeed from the rest of the country. He gave an example of the North treating to leave in 1953, the West followed suit and lastly, the East in 1967. He asserts that this succession attempt has greatly affected Nigeria's political development. He explains that Nigeria have over 400ethnic groups with different languages and traditions. He adds that the Hausa/Fulani dominates the North; the East is dominated by the Igbo's, while the Yoruba's dominates the West. He maintains that the gradual incorporation of these ethnic groups, their areas and people led to the existence of Nigeria. He asserts that the British imported ethnicity into Nigerian government and politics, when she was colonized; and at independence the political system they left found it very difficult to contain with the problems of ethnicity. He states that Nigeria was described by a colonial Governor as an assemblage of self contained independent native states. He concludes by stating that ethnicity constitute a major problem to political development in Nigeria.

Ebinum (2013) starts by stating that Delta state emerged from Bendel State in 1991. He adds that before its emergence, ethnic groups in the current Delta State had lobbied for the creation of their own states. According to him, the Urhobo's wanted their own state, the Ibo speaking clamour for Anioma state, while some of the minority ethnic groups in the South of the state required theirs called a Costal State. He adds that Babangida out of marital favouritism decided to create Delta State and made Asaba the Capital, thereby neglecting the request from the different ethnic groups. He maintains that, since its creation there had been calls by the different ethnic groups for rotation of leadership position among them. According to him, the ethnic group leaders believe that this is the only way to maintain political and economic powers in the state. He states that no conscious effort has been made to bring in leaders that will help to develop the state economically and socially. Consequently, they clamour for zoning. He maintains that this clamour is not based on patriotic efforts, but for self aggrandizement; and this to him, has been the problem of the state. He asserts that for their selfish act to be achieved, mediocre and people with questionable characters are projected as leaders. He maintains that the qualities and attribute that characterize a good leader are ignored by the few selfish ones, who are reaping from ethnic politics. He states that, after the proposed leaders of this selfish few comes in, only his cronies, who lacks an agenda for the states development; benefits. He asserts that after his tenure, he struggles to get someone who can take over and cover up his deeds. He concludes by stating that Delta States does not require ethnic stooge imposed by those who destroyed and plundered their way to be governor.

From the literature, it was very clear that ethnicity has permeated the Nigerian political system, influencing elections and voting pattern. But did it influence the 2015 voting pattern in Delta State?

Theoretical Framework

The framework of analysis for this study is the group theory. This theory was primarily home grown with the ground breaking work of Arthur Bentley in 1908 (Robertson, 2004). It originated as a reaction against the atomistic liberalism of Locke and Bentham, and the idealist socialism of Green and Bosanquet. Since then the theory has been developed and used by Political and Social Scientists.

Some Political Scientists have agreed that a political group exists when men with shared

interests organize, interact and seek goals through the political process (Isaak, 1985). Bentley's core argument was that people can understand politics properly only in terms of an ongoing struggle among group interests in society. **The group theory therefore postulates that decision-making is the end product of the activity of organized groups (Ray, 2009).** Exponents of this theory posit that the form of politics of any society is ultimately determined by the interaction among groups within the society and the competition among such groups to influence government in allocation of societal resources and exercise of power. Ethnicity had manifested much in the rival claims of ownership of warri by Itsekiris, Urhobos and Ijaws. The root cause of violence that erupted between the Ijaws and Itsekiris and later Urhobos in Warri, 1997 to 2003 was ethnically motivated, the Urhobo and the Ijaw see Governor Uduaghan's government in which Itsekiri dominate government structure in the three Warri Local governments as unfair (Egbosiuba, 2011). This explains the competitive struggle by all ethnic groups for the governorship seat which was more noticeable during the Peoples Democratic Party (P.D.P) Governorship primaries in December 8, 2014 in Asaba. It also explains the gang up by some ethnic groups such as the entire ethnic groups in Delta North, Ijaw and Itsekiri that resulted in their voting pattern on April 11, 2015 gubernatorial election in favours of the P.D.P governorship candidate (Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa) (Fund for Peace, 2015).

Research Methodology

This study is an ex-post facto design which uses the 2015 governorship result in Delta State to find out the variability of voting patterns among different ethnic groups in Delta State. This design is most appropriate because the study assesses what has already occurred and the researcher has no influence over the data used for the study. The population of this study was the 2,275,264 registered voters in Delta state for 2015 general election. The purposive sampling technique was employed in the determination the sample size. The sample size therefore was determined based on the number of total valid vote cast during the gubernatorial election which was put at 931,808 votes. Although 18 political parties/candidates participated in the election, only the results of the total vote cast for the three major political parties/candidates that participated in the election were considered for convenience since the total number of votes accrued to the other fifteen political parties were insignificant and negligible relative to the votes accrued by the three major political parties (APC, LP and PDP). Having done this, the sample size used for this study was put at 922,478 votes

during the Delta 2015 gubernatorial election. The INEC certified results of the 2015 governorship election in Delta state was obtained from the website of INEC and were considered according to the eight ethnic Nationalities that make up Delta state as follows:

Table 2: Geographical Spread of the Various Ethnic Nationalities by Senatorial District

Local Government Area	Senatorial District	Ethnic Nationality		
Aniocha South	Delta North	Aniocha		
Aniocha North				
Oshimil South	Delta North	Oshimili		
Oshimili North				
Ika South	Delta North	Ika		
Ika North East				
Ndokwa West	Delta North	Ndokwa		
Ndokwa East				
Ukwuani				
Ethiope East	Delta Central	Urhobo		
Ethiope West				
Ughelli South				
Ughelli North				
Uvwie				
Udu				
Sapele				
Okpe				
Isoko South			Delta South	Isoko
Isoko North				
Warri North	Delta South	Itsekiri		
Warri South				
Warri South West				
Bomadi	Delta South	Ijaw		
Burutu				
Patani				

Source: Author's Compilation, 2017

Nature of Ethnic Identity in Delta 2015 Election

APC governorship candidate Chief Emerhor Otega when interviewed said, I will not deny my Delta central senatorial district identity. It is natural for ethnic nationalities that make up the state to have interest on who becomes the governor of Delta State (The Vanguard, 2015). According to Ake (1996) identity is a word characterized by the phenomenon. The nature of ethnic identity on election in Delta state with focus on the April 11, 2015 gubernatorial election cannot be ruled out. This is summed up with a statistical presentation below using three local government areas to represent the three senatorial districts (Ika North East, Ethiope East and Warri South West).

Table 1: Nature of Ethnic Identity across the 3 Senatorial Districts in the State

Local government Area representing senatorial District	Vote cast for two major contestants (Great Ogboru LP and Okowa PDP)	
Ethiope East (Delta central)	23, 747	8, 776
Ika North East (Delta North)	66	72, 612
Warri South West (Delta South)	470	73, 328

Source: Nigerian Forum 2015

This statistical table shows that electorates voted for candidates that is from the same ethnic nationalities with them, this explain the overwhelming votes pulled by Ogboru (LP) in Ethiope East and almost all the vote casted in Ika North East was for Okowa (PDP) and finally Warri South West voted overwhelmingly for PDP because Okowa's running mate hail from there (Adfeleye, 2017).

Data Analysis and discussion

The data obtained were first arranged and sorted according to the various ethnic nationalities, after which they were analyzed using simple percentages and presented in bar charts so as to give a clear view of the voting trend in the various ethnic nationalities.

Presentation of Result

The total vote pulled by the various candidates and their political parties in the ethnic nationalities are presented below:

Table 3: Total Votes Pulled by the Candidates of 3 Major Political Parties in The State

S/NO	LGA	Senatorial District	Ethnic Nationality	APC	LP	PDP	SUB TOTAL
1	Aniocha South	Delta North	Aniocha	2168	841	31705	34714
	Aniocha North			6.25	2.42	91.33	100.00
	Percentage (%)						
2	Oshimil South	Delta North	Oshimili	2231	1723	67306	71260
	Oshimili North			3.13	2.42	94.45	100.00
	Percentage (%)						
3	Ika South	Delta North	Ika	1233	539	96234	98006
	Ika North East			1.26	0.55	98.19	100.00
	Percentage (%)						
4	Ndokwa West	Delta North	Ndokwa	5904	4331	60506	70741
	Ndokwa East			8.35	6.12	85.53	100.00
	Ukwuani						
	Percentage (%)						
5	Ethiope East	Delta Central	Urhobo	31035	101506	122394	254935
	Ethiope West						
	Ughelli South						
	Ughelli North						
	Uvwie						
	Udu						
	Sapele						
	Okpe						
	Percentage (%)						
6	Isoko South	Delta South	Isoko	15096	7684	74564	97344
	Isoko North			15.51	7.89	76.60	100.00
	Percentage (%)						
7	Warri North	Delta South	Itsekiri	7732	10932	136272	154936
	Warri South						
	Warri South West						
	Percentage (%)						
8	Bomadi	Delta South	Ijaw	2426	2426	135690	140542
	Burutu						
	Patani						
	Percentage (%)						

Source: Author's Compilation from INEC database, 2017.

From Table 3, results for Aniocha revealed that the APC candidate (Chief E. Otega) polled 2,168 votes (6.25%), the LP candidate (Chief Ogboru) polled 841 votes (2.42%) while the PDP candidate (Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa) polled 31,705 votes (91.33%). This result showed that the PDP 2015 governorship candidate won in Aniocha with the massive support which PDP and Dr. Okowa enjoys in Aniocha. Similarly, for Oshimili, out of the 71,340 votes casted for APC, LP and PDP governorship candidates. APC candidate (Chief Otega) polled 2,231 votes (3.13%), the LP

candidate (Chief Ogboru) polled 1,723 votes (2.42%) while the PDP candidate (Dr. Okowa) polled a total of 67,306 which is about 94.45% of the votes casted for Oshimili alone. The victory of the PDP candidate clearly shows the support which PDP and Dr. Okowa enjoyed in Oshimili.

Also from Table 3, out of 98,006 votes casted in Ika, APC candidate (Chief Otega) polled 1,233 votes (1.26%), LP candidate polled 539 votes (0.55%) and the PDP candidate polled 96,234 votes (98.19%).

PDP candidate also won an indication of the level of support which PDP and Dr. Okowa enjoyed in Ika during the 2015 governorship election. The result for Ndokwa also showed a similar trend in which, of the 70,741 votes casted, the APC candidate (Chief Otega) polled 5,904 votes (8.35%), LP candidate (Chief Ogboru) polled 4,331 votes (6.12%), while the PDP candidate (Dr. Okowa) polled 60,506 votes (85.53%). Again, the PDP candidate won in Ndokwa and this show the level of support that PDP and Dr. Okowa enjoyed in Ndokwa.

Table 3 equally revealed that in Delta Central (Urhobo speaking), out of 254, 935 votes cast, the APC candidate (Chief Otega) polled 31, 035 votes, representing 12.17%, the LP candidate (Chief Ogboru) polled 101, 506 votes, representing 39.82%, while the PDP candidate (Dr. Okowa) polled 122, 394 votes, representing 48.01%. This result showed the support enjoyed by the PDP candidate among the Urhobo nation. Although, some felt it came as a result of electoral fraud. Similarly, in the same Delta South (Isoko nation), out of the 97, 344 votes cast, the APC candidate (Chief Otega) polled 15, 096 votes, representing 15.51%, the LP candidate (Chief Ogboru) polled 7, 684, representing 7.89%, while the PDP candidate (Dr. Okowa) polled 74, 564, representing 76.60%. This result showed that the PDP candidate is generally accepted by Deltans.

Also from table 3, in another part of Delta South (Itsekiri), out of the total of 154, 936 votes cast, the APC candidate (Chief Otega) polled 7, 732 votes, representing 4.99% of the votes, the LP candidate (Chief Ogboru) polled 10, 932 votes, representing 7.06%, while the PDP candidate (Dr. Okowa) polled

136, 272 votes, representing 87.955. This result showed the massive support enjoyed by the PDP candidate. Even though, the former governor, who is from the Itsekiri nation, worked against him. Equally, in the other part of Delta South (Ijaw), out of 140, 542 votes cast, the APC candidate (Chief Otega) polled 2426 votes, representing 1.73%, the LP candidate (Chief Ogboru) polled the same 2426 votes, also representing 1.73%, while the PDP candidate (Dr. Okowa) polled 135, 690 votes, representing 96.55%. This result showed the overwhelming support and the acceptance of the PDP candidate.

Descriptive Statistics

The result of the descriptive statistics is presented in Table 4. This include results for the mean, standard deviation, minimum values and maximum values of the number of votes cast for each political party (APC, LP and PDP) across the 8 ethnic groups.

Table 4 outlines the summary of results for descriptive statistics for the 3 major political parties. The minimum votes for APC was 1,233 votes which came from Ika, while the maximum vote of 31,035 was from Urhobo (Delta Central). Also, the minimum vote of LP was 539 which again was from Ika, while the maximum votes of 101,506 was from Urhobo (Delta Central). For PDP, the minimum number of votes of 31,705 was from Aniocha, while the maximum vote of 136,272 was from Itsekiri. The mean votes for APC, LP and PDP were 8,478.125, 16,247.75, and 90,583.88 respectively. The large value of the respective standard deviation in all 3 cases is an indication that the votes were not normally distributed. This could be as a result of the variance in the number of registered voters in each senatorial district.

Table 4: Summary of Descriptive Statistics

Parties	Obs	Mean	Std.Dev.	Min.	Max.
APC	8	8478.125	10196.33	1233	31035
LP	8	16247.75	34638.37	539	101506
PDP	8	90583.88	38425.57	31705	136272

Source: Author's Compilation from Stata Output, 2017

Test of Hypotheses

Given the non-normality trend of votes, the Kruskal-Wallis test was deemed to be useful in testing the hypotheses of this study. The result based on the Kruskal-Wallis test is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: result for Kruskal Wallis Test

APC			LP			PDP		
Ethnic Group	Obs	Rank Sum	Ethnic Group	Obs	Rank Sum	Ethnic Group	Obs	Rank Sum
Aniocha	1	2.00	Aniocha	1	2.00	Aniocha	1	1.00
Ijaw	1	4.00	Ijaw	1	4.00	Ijaw	1	7.00
Ika	1	1.00	Ika	1	1.00	Ika	1	5.00
Isoko	1	7.00	Isoko	1	6.00	Isoko	1	4.00
Itsekiri	1	6.00	Itsekiri	1	7.00	Itsekiri	1	8.00
Ndokwa	1	5.00	Ndokwa	1	5.00	Ndokwa	1	2.00
Oshimili	1	3.00	Oshimili	1	3.00	Oshimili	1	3.00
Urhobo	1	8.00	Urhobo	1	8.00	Urhobo	1	6.00

chi squared = 7.000 with 7 d.f.
probability = 0.4289

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probability = 0.4289

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probability = 0.4289

Source: Stata Output, 2017

Results from the above shows a chi square value of 7.000 ($p\text{-value} = 0.4289 > 5\%$) for the 3 major political parties. The implication is that there is no significant variation in the voting pattern of Deltans across the different ethnic groups in the 2015 gubernatorial election. This means that the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the voting pattern of the different ethnic groups in Delta State in the 2015 gubernatorial election is rejected. We therefore conclude that ethnicity did not influence the results of the 2015 governorship election in Delta State.

Summary and Conclusion

The study has shown that ethnicity did not influence the voting behaviors of the ethnic groups in the 2015 governorship election in Delta state and analysis of the vote showed that there was variation in the voting patterns of the people. His ability to win in all the eight ethnic groups that made up Delta State showed that Delta State is a stronghold of PDP and Dr Ifeanyi Okowa has more acceptability by all the ethnic groups in Delta State; than all the other contestants. The 2015 governorship elections help to discourage tribalism, nepotism, inefficiency and ineffectiveness in governance. The result of the election showed that there was unity among the ethnic groups in Delta State, also the minority ethnic groups in Delta State are not marginalized but were treated fairly by the majority ethnic group economically and politically.

Recommendations

From the findings of this study come the following recommendations:

- i. The winner of 2015 governorship election in Delta State should ensure good governance, enthronement of rule of law and respects for human dignity to avoid politics of ethnicity re-surfacing again in Delta State.
- ii. The political parties should not be more than two contesting in governorship election and these political parties should field candidates of unquestionable characters in elective post or public offices.
- iii. There should be improvement on the living standard of the masses in Delta State to sustain the hope Deltans have on the elected governor (Dr Okowa).
- iv. Appointment, job placement, opportunities and the distribution of public goods should be devoid of tribalism and ethnic sentiment.
- v. The winner of 2015 governorship election should form all ethnic inclusive government and ensures that no ethnic group would complain of marginalization and also the government should sustain unity among ethnic group in Delta State and discourage disunity.

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