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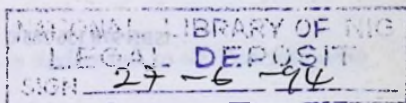
INDIGENOUS TECHNOLOGY: THE DEVELOPMENTAL PHILOSOPHY OF **Ogbonnaya Onu**



Agbafor Igwe

First Published 1984 by
Fourth Dimension Publishing Co. Ltd.

Indigenous Technology: The Developmental Philosophy of Ogbonnaya Onu



By

94-1210

Dr. Agbafor Igwe

Fourth Dimension Publishing Co. Ltd.

First Published 1994 by
Fourth Dimension Publishing Co. Ltd.
16 Fifth Avenue City Layout. P.M.B. 01164
Enugu, Nigeria.

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ISBN 978 156 385 0

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Dedication

**This book is dedicated to all Patriots who
are genuinely thinking and working for
the development and greatness of
Nigeria and Africa.**

Acknowledgments

I most prayerfully acknowledge the supremacy of the Almighty God who gave me life, energy and wisdom without which this research would have been impossible. Next, I wish to express my gratitude to His Excellency, Dr. Ogonnaya Onu, the First Executive Governor of Abia State, for his invaluable assistance to me towards the completion of this work. For without his affability and genial disposition, it would have been impossible to hold the series of interviews I had with him both at Government House, Umuahia, and Uburu when he was at home on one of those rare weekends. Those interviews which often stretched through midnights and early mornings helped to give the work the coherence it enjoys. I also thank Her Excellency, Lady Chinyere Onu, whose tacit co-operation ensured that we had hitch-free interview sessions.

I am very grateful to Chief Obasi Odefa, former Commissioner for Works, Housing, Land and Transport, Abia State, for his immense assistance to me in the course of this project. He made his house and office accessible to me and usually facilitated my seeing the Governor for any information. He was a great source of encouragement to me.

I equally acknowledge the kind assistance of Mr. C.P. Akuma, D.G. and Personal Secretary to the Governor, Mr. Anyasi, Personal Assistant to the Governor, Mr. Patrick Chukwu, A.D.C. to the Governor, as well as Mr. Nwoha who helped to make the Governor's speeches available to me.

Furthermore, the Owelle of Onitsha, the Rt. Hon. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, who accepted to write the foreword; Mr. Odii Nwigwe, my God-given brother; Mrs. Akpa Igwe Chima, my beloved mother; Hon. Agwu Nwogo Agwu and Mrs Rose Agwu (My parents-in-law), all deserve my profound gratitude for their useful encouragements.

I also thank Apostle (Dr.) Isaiah Issong, President of the Believers Assembly Evangelical of Nigeria and his dear wife Rev. (Mrs.) Eno-Obong Issong; Rev. and Mrs. Albert Umoh, Rev. Ime-Obong Essien (our young pastor at Uyo Assembly); Rev. Dr. S.U.Essien and his wife; Deacon Monday James, for their prayers and encouragement.

Elder Maxwell Onyemaeke, Managing Director and Chief Executive of Onyms Nig. Ltd., has been a great source of encouragement to me both financially and morally. He never spared any effort to see that this project is successful. Elder James Ekiko also gave me moral and spiritual support.

I cannot forget to acknowledge the kindness of the mother of His Excellency, Mrs. Enyidiya Onu, who spared her busy time to grant me an interview in her Uburu palace.

I am also grateful to Mrs. Grace Ben who painstakingly typed the manuscript. Mr. Ogbonnaya Nwankwo has been helpful in assisting me run around in Lagos in connection with this work.

Finally, I owe my beautiful, darling, loving and caring wife, Mrs. Nnenna Agbafor Igwe, a world of gratitude for encouraging me to embark on this project; often sitting by me while I read or write and for thoroughly going through the manuscript and making useful comments. She is my source of inspiration. Also, my twin daughters, Amarachi and Ihunanyachi have been wonderful.

Foreword

I am pleased to write the foreword of the latest book by Dr. Agbafor Igwe, entitled *Indigenous Technology: The Developmental Philosophy of Ogbonnaya Onu*. My pleasure stems from the fact that this young man has consistently applied his training to tackle some contemporary problems. This gives the hope that Nigeria still has some future through her intellectuals who, as the supposed torch-bearers of our civilization, must task their intellects to bail the nation.

It is indeed gladdening that a few perceptive intellectuals, like Dr. Igwe, are worried, like some members of the old generation, about the problems of development in our nation and continent, and have been applying their intellect towards solutions of those problems.

The central concern of Dr. Igwe in his new book, as he expressed in his earlier work: *Zik: The Philosopher of Our Time*, is the developmental problems of Nigeria and Africa in general, and how these problems can be surmounted in order to achieve progress in the economic, social, and political spheres of life.

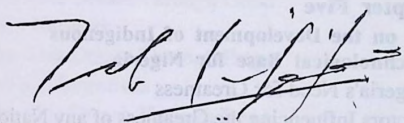
As in his earlier work, the new book analyses the poor economic, social and political conditions of Nigeria and Africa at large and appraises the recommendations of Nigerian intellectuals towards the amelioration of the situation. In his former work, he agrees with me that the articulation of an effective ideology which is informed by indigenous mores is essential in charting the path of development in Nigeria and Africa.

In his latest book, he appraises Governor Ogbonnaya Onu's contention that the path to Nigerian and African development lies in the development of indigenous technology. Dr. Igwe agrees with this and maintains that effective technological development-policies still fall within the ambit of a national ideology. For, in the final analysis, technology is often developed in response to the demands of a national ideology.

Dr. Igwe agrees with Governor Onu that Nigeria possesses all the necessary factors in the greatness of any nation, except technology, which has been described as "the missing link". The book goes on to explore the causes of this anomaly and, accordingly, prescribes solutions on how the requisite indigenously-inspired science and technology can be developed for the over-all development of the nation and the continent at large.

Beyond the realm of theory, Dr. Igwe also focusses on how far Governor Onu, as the first Executive Governor of young Abia State, has so far applied his philosophy of indigenous technology to the development of the State as a model for the entire nation. Dr. Igwe's verdict is that, given the policy-thrust of the Onu's Administration and the institutions already established by Governor Onu to give muscle to his philosophy of development through indigenous technology, especially the establishment of IBB Technology Village Complex and technologically-oriented institutions, Governor Onu may very well be on his way to making history in Nigeria as one who thinks as a man of thought and acts as a man of action.

I strongly believe that both professionals and general readers will have much to learn from this philosophical x-ray of some of the most important issues in Nigeria's and Africa's developmental problems. This is a book that anyone who is interested in the developmental dynamics of Nigeria and Africa must possess.



The Rt. Hon. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe
The Owelle of Onitsha
Onuiyi Haven, Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria.

Table Of Contents

	Page
<i>Dedication</i>	iii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	iv
<i>Foreword</i>	vi
<i>Introduction</i>	x
Chapter One	
Birth and Childhood Days	1
Chapter Two	
The Educational Career of a Genius	10
Chapter Three	
Working Life and Experiences	34
Chapter Four	
Onu's Philosophy of Life	46
Onu's Conception of Reality	47
The Nature of Man and Man's Relationship with	
His Fellow Human Beings	51
His Political Beliefs	52
Onu on Racial Equality	57
Chapter Five	
Onu on the Development of Indigenous	
Technological Base for Nigeria	58
Nigeria's Need for Greatness	58
Factors Influencing the Greatness of any Nation	71
Possession of Natural Resources (Raw Materials)	72
Large Population	73
Geography	74
Technology	76

Reasons for Low Technological Development in Nigeria	87
Conditions for the Development of Science and Technology in Nigeria.	95
Onu's Treatment of the Leadership Question	120
Chapter Six	
From the Class-room to Government House	126
Chapter Seven	
Onu's Vision and Mission	137
Onu's Vision and Mission in Abia State	137
His Vision for Abia State	137
Towards Realizing the Abia Dream	140
Mobilization of Abia Citizens	141
The Dream of Making Abia State the Technology Nerve-Centre in Nigeria and the entire Africa	144
The Dream of Making Abia State the Food Basket of Nigeria	150
Realizing the Abia Dream Through Ensuring a Healthy Citizenry.	152
Realizing the Abia Dream Through Efficient Educational System	155
Realizing the Abia Dream Through Good Information Network	158
Realizing the Abia Dream Through Proper Motivation and Incentives	158
Realizing the Abia Dream Through Road Construction and Maintenance	159
Onu's Vision and Mission in Nigeria	162
His Vision for Africa.	164
Conclusion	166
References	168
Index	171

Introduction

Philosophy should serve man, and to serve him well, it must have intimate bearing on man's enduring interests. Indeed, philosophy has served man in diverse capacities since the ages. In the analytic-critical nature of the discipline, philosophy has helped to clarify the ideas that man can claim to possess; in its cosmological-speculative nature, philosophy has ever ministered to the innate desire in man to know himself and his world better than what the senses tend to yield; and in its synthetic nature, philosophy has tended to unify the different knowledge-claims of man into a consistent whole. It is evident, from the characteristics of philosophy so far outlined, that no philosophical endeavour can be totally divorced from human needs no matter how abstruse the product may be. It is for this reason that we find philosophers seriously battling with the problems of their age depending on their sensitivity and interests.

It is for the reason that every philosophical enterprise is a reflection of certain problems of man and society, either directly or indirectly, that sharpened my interest in man and society which falls within the branch of philosophy called "socio-political philosophy". My professional training in this area has acquainted me with how ancient, medieval, modern and contemporary socio-political thinkers have philosophically responded to the problems of their age and circumstances. For instance, Plato's (real name is Aristocles) concern for "justice" was the direct product of the perceived injustice which the Athenian authorities meted to his master and mentor, Socrates. Again, the "social contract" theorists such as J. J. Rousseau and Thomas Hobbes sought to counter anarchism by philosophically establishing the basis of political authority and why it should be obeyed. It is in this spirit of philosophy that the socio-political conditions of our nation and continent have formed the major focus of my philosophical endeavour.

Indeed, the social, economic and political conditions of our nation provide much food for philosophical thinking. Here is a nation that has all the potentialities for greatness in terms of human and material resources, yet is recently classified among the 13 poorest nations of the world. In fact, Nigeria has become a blind giant which even cripples make fun of. This anomaly has elicited serious philosophical thinking from many perceptive Nigerians. Consequently, various diagnoses have been made to explain as well as proffer solutions to the nation's malady. Most thinkers on Nigeria's social, economic and political problems seem to be unanimous that the non-articulation or adoption of an effective ideology is the major obstacle on Nigeria's path to development. Thinkers with this persuasion include, Claude Ake, E.K. Ogundowode, and Nnamdi Azikiwe. However, thinkers like Chinua Achebe and Jide Osuntokun maintain that the major obstacle on Nigeria's path to development is poverty of leadership. But as far as Ogbonnaya Onu is concerned, the missing link between Nigeria and greatness is the non-development of indigenously-inspired science and technology. I agree with these views and maintain that they are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary. For, to a greater or lesser extent, effective leadership and appropriate technology are dependent on national ideology. However, strong and purposeful leadership is a *sine-qua-non* in the realization of the objectives of national ideology, including the development of the appropriate technology.

There has been a growing conviction in me that the poverty of leadership in Nigeria is the poverty of ideas among the political class which aspires to leadership positions. For if a supposed leader has no ideas about what he is supposed to do or achieve while in office, it would tantamount to the blind leading a group of one-eyed people. This is because, whether we accept it or not, the people of Nigeria at least know what they expect from their leaders. I expected that when someone who aspires to leadership position has mental vision of what to do and how to do it, such a person is more likely to succeed.

It is on the above account that this work focusses on the developmental philosophy of Ogbonnaya Onu, the Governor of Abia State. The developmental philosophy of Onu attracts attention not only on account that I am interested in knowing the

ideas that inform the governance of my dear state, Abia, but also that being a former academic, Onu seems to be poised to approach the developmental problem of Abia and Nigeria from the point of view of earlier academic analysis of, and prescriptions for, the problems of development which bedevil the states and the nation at large. Most important of all, I find his analysis of contemporary problems and the conclusions he reached quite agreeable as a basis for development.

His ideas are articulate and lucid, and his reductive analytical technique that pin-points the non-development of indigenously-inspired technology as the missing-link between Nigeria and greatness has been impressive. It is therefore an interesting thing to follow Onu's developmental efforts in Abia State where he is the Chief Executive vis-a-vis his ideas in this regard. But for this to be done effectively it has been necessary to make a critical exposition of those ideas as they provide the authentic parameters of judging his performances on the practical plane.

In furtherance of the objective of exposing and clarifying the ideas with which Onu governs Abia State and which he seems to suggest for the whole country at large, we first of all sought to know this man and his background in the first chapter of this book. This inquiry enables us to understand the early formative influences in the life of Onu.

The second chapter discusses the educational career of Onu. Here, we come face to face with a genius who seems to be born to excel. Here again, we see the various ideas which helped shape his character and his penchant for being 'the best in all his endeavours.

Chapter Three deals with his working life and experiences. Here, we see how personal experiences have greatly influenced his ideas on man, politics, economics and social institutions.

In the fourth chapter, Onu's Philosophy of Life is highlighted. This enables us to probe into the recess of his mind in order to understand the various thoughts which have greatly shaped his policies as the Chief Executive of Abia State. His humanistic ideas greatly account for his interest in man and society and the acquisition and use of State power which are the hallmarks of politics.

Chapter Five extensively deals with Onu's Philosophy for Development. Here, we examine Onu's analysis of factors

militating against the attainment of greatness by Nigeria despite abundant human and material resources; the development of indigenous technology as the panacea to Nigeria's developmental problems as well as how this can be achieved.

The sixth chapter discusses how Onu got involved in active partisan politics and how he eventually left the classroom for the Government House at Umuahia.

Finally, the seventh chapter examines Onu's vision and mission in Abia, Nigeria and Africa at large. It is in this chapter that attempts are made to appraise the extent to which Onu has been able to realize his vision in practical terms within the first eighteen months of his tenure as the Governor of Abia State. This is an area which we can concede more jurisdiction to the political scientist than the philosopher qua philosophy. For the political scientist employs the scientific method of data collection and analysis while the philosopher is far more competent in analysing ideas and drawing logical conclusions from them. However, the synthetic view of knowledge, which I share, makes it possible for one to be able to share in the two worlds of fact and theory as denoted by science and philosophy respectively, without confusing the two.

All in all, my efforts in the present work has been designed to expound the ideas with which Onu exercises the mandate of the people of Abia State. This is because, it is on the basis of the ideas and programmes of Onu that his performances can be correctly assessed at the end of his tenure. So it is hoped that this work will serve, to a great extent, to remind Onu, the Abia people and the Nigerians at large about the developmental needs of the people and Onu's ideas in meeting them. This is to me both a philosophical duty as well as a patriotic duty far beyond the petty sentiments of sycophancy and personal ambitions. I hope the work will serve its intended purpose well.

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Birth And Childhood Days

Dr. Christopher Ogbonnaya Onu, a former Research Staff, Engineering Research Centre, Western Electric, Princeton, New Jersey, USA; first Head of Department of Chemical Engineering, University of Port Harcourt; several times acting Dean of Faculty of Engineering of the same University; former Director, Nigerian Cement Company Limited, Nkalagu; former member of the Governing Council of the University of Port Harcourt; member of Executive Council of Nigerian Society of Chemical Engineers; former National President, Raw Material Society of Nigeria; former President, Rotary Club of Port Harcourt, (among others) and now the first Executive Governor of the young Abia State, is a charmer both physically and intellectually. The more one gets to know him, the more one is irresistably attracted to his charming handsomeness usually underplayed by his simplicity, humility, drive, initiative, vision and mission.

The eldest son of late Eze David Aba Onu, *the Eze Adu of Uburu* from his second wife, Mrs. Enyidiya Uzor Onu, Dr. Onu was born in the salt-rich Uburu autonomous community of the present Ohaozara Local Government Area of Abia State on December 1, 1951. Although Dr. Onu was the first son of Eze David Aba Onu, he was actually the fourth child as he had three elder sisters.

The joy that would have followed the birth of a male child in the family of Eze David Onu can best be imagined. This, perhaps, explains why he named the child after himself; for the name *Ogbonnaya* means father's namesake.

The desire to see a male child born early in marriage is the consumating passion of every Igboman, if not every African. Indeed, a man is said to be really active if he has fathered male

children. Thus the desire for male children is very strong not only on this account but also on the account of perpetuating the family names. The female children easily change their family name(s) as soon as they are married. This is why the absence of a male child in any marriage among the Igbos usually led to despair and often, disaster. For the thinking is that, without a male child, the family name will be lost for ever.

But for Eze David Onu and his three wives – Mrs. Comfort U. Onu (first wife), Mrs. Enyidiya Uzor Onu (second wife) and Mrs. Grace Ogo Onu (third wife) there was no danger of losing the family name as God blessed them with eleven male children to perpetuate the family name and ten females to be the family's ambassadors to other families.

By the time Eze David Onu was laid to rest on 30th May, 1992 at the age of 72, three wives, twenty-one children and fifty-five grand children were in the fore-front of an unprecedented crowd in Uburu that mourned his death. The large size of the family is suggestive of the wealth of Eze David Onu. For in the traditional society, a man's worth is computed in terms of how many wives, children and grand children he has as well as the size of his compound and ban. On this score, Eze David Onu was an accomplished man by all standards. He was equally quite blessed to have nurtured his children to maturity and success.

Talking of nurturing, it is important to note that Ogbonnaya Onu literally grew at the feet of his father. As his namesake, Eze David Onu became very fond of young Ogbonnaya Onu on account of his obedience, dutifulness and intelligence. Thus Ogbonnaya was always near his father, eating at his feet after his father had finished eating and intently listening to him as he settled disputes among the villagers. These early experiences stuck in the receptive mind of young Onu and were later put into a good account by the adult Onu.

Ogbonnaya Onu was a diligent and respectful child. At an early age, he would wake up in the morning, pick a broom and sweep the whole compound without prompting. He would go to the pond to fetch water before coming to stay with his father. He

was doing this during his primary school days when he was at home and some times when he returned home on holidays after he had entered the secondary school. Sometimes, too, he would go to the market to carry things purchased by his mother.

In the process of carrying out some domestic chores, Ogonnaya Onu, had some enduring experiences that indelibly shaped his mind in so many areas of life and which presently inform some of his policies as the first Executive Governor of Abia State.

Being born in a rural area, even though to a wealthy father by the standard of the people, Ogonnaya Onu experienced rural life with its pathos and anguish. He clearly remembers those youthful days when he used to go to the ponds or streams to fetch water. He usually trekked along the muddy foot-paths which led to the pond or stream with other children in order to fetch water for domestic use. The water was always coloured and becomes exceptionally muddy when it rained.

He would notice many other children and women who equally came to the pond or the stream to fetch water. Some of the children looked sickly and unkempt with their small water calabashes while some of the women barely managed to keep their wrapper over their protruding bellies and usually seemed heavily burdened when they raised their clay pots of water to their heads to begin their homeward journey. Young Onu often felt that there were certain needs of those children and women that should be met. He wished he could meet those needs. But what are they? His youthful mind could not fathom them but his humanistic instincts were very strong concerning the reality of deprivations.

Because of the absence of regular source of clean drinking water, except for the one collected from the corrugated iron sheets sparsely scattered in the clan during the rainy season or from the Esu-Uburu River, which is very far from most families, guinea-worm and other water-borne diseases were the most menacing ailments in Uburu and other neighbouring communities. Young Onu usually sympathised with the victims of guinea-worm attacks and hated the sight of the worms. He

often wished he were in a position to do something to eradicate it.

Before he began his primary education, Onu was always at his father's feet while not sleeping or playing. Even when he commenced his educational career, he usually returned to those feet after school and after doing his assignments. Indeed, Ogbonnaya Onu whom his father fondly called *Ogbom* (meaning, "My Namesake") was truly a father's favourite. Eze David Onu, the Traditional Ruler of Uburu, was very fond of his namesake and treasured the intimate relationship between them.

Apart from being obedient and dutiful, Eze David Onu usually desired the company of young Onu, because he was usually attentive and never disturbs his seemingly endless visitors on courtesy calls or dispute-settlements. His father usually sent him on numerous errands to his mother or step-mothers. He usually ran to deliver such errands to the satisfaction of his father who called him *O ji oso eje* (one that runs on errands).

His regular presence at his father's court while disputes are settled among the villagers taught him enduring lessons about man and his social relations. Young Onu always watched the proceedings in settling many disputes that were brought before his father with rapt attention and usually looked forward to every *Eke* day when his father usually held court. *Eke*, the second day of the four-day market week for most Igbo villages (starting from *Nkwo*) was the day set aside by Eze David Onu specially for deciding cases and entertaining complaints from the villagers. However, special court sessions could be held to hear and decide serious cases which needed urgent attention.

Reflecting on the lessons he learnt while watching and listening to his father decide cases among the villagers, he tells us that it is often very interesting to observe how, often times, people may paint the pictures of what might have happened to favour them and when the time comes for adjudication and both parties meet face to face, the colourations often disappear. Equally, he learnt the following:

1. that it is always good and necessary to listen to both parties to a dispute before making up one's mind;
2. that one must cultivate the virtue of being a patient listener in order to be a just judge;
3. the intricacies of human life and the frequent misunderstandings, that seem to be part of human nature;
4. that it is good to make peace in order to prevent the disintegration of family and societal life;
5. that no community could progress without peace and harmony;
6. that justice is important in trying to bind people together.

He recalled that his father's ability to settle disputes to the satisfaction of the villagers, who on many occasions had paid homage to his sagacity, helped to forge peace, unity and progress in the community. On the contrary, he recalled a neighbouring community that was constantly torn by internal strife and noted that it never knew real peace and progress while that situation prevailed.

For the young Onu, it was indeed a rare privilege to be continually allowed to squat near his father while adults are engaged in serious discussions. Perhaps, it was partly the influence of Western education and partly the mature comportment of his namesake that explains why Eze David Onu usually allowed this youngster to be present while elderly people are engaged in sober discussions.

Indeed, in strictly Igbo traditional setting, children are not allowed to stay where elders gather to discuss important matters. The reasons for this practice may not be far fetched. First, children may not understand the gravity of the situation for which the elders have assembled and may constitute a nuisance to the occasion. Secondly, for the purpose of keeping important matters secret. Many children are talkatives and can hardly keep secrets. These and other reasons informed the adults' practice of keeping children out when important matters are being discussed.

Luckily for Ogonnaya Onu, he was not given to those childish behaviours that the adults judge to be offensive to their

status as adults. He was thus not only accommodated but also loved by his father and other adults who noticed his quiet manners.

It was not only the privilege of sitting with adults that the young Onu enjoyed, he was always glad to sit at his father's feet to eat the varieties of food which were usually served his father. Eze David Onu would eat some quantity and pass on the remaining one to him. He usually cherished and relished this constant gesture of love from his father.

Being constantly near Eze David Onu was really a privilege. Although he loved and cared for his children, they in turn respected and feared him more than their mothers, as is normal with most children. Besides, he was a disciplinarian. He always insisted on his wives and children doing the right thing. He disciplined his family in such a way that there was no pronounced segregation among his wives and children as often obtained in polygamous homes.

As a result of the positive influence of Eze David Onu, his children were brought up under the conducive family atmosphere of peace, love and care. Thus Ogbonnaya Onu really enjoyed good parental care: the masculine character-moulding influences of his father and the devoted love of a mother whose loyalty to her husband was unalloyed.

In the course of time, Ogbonnaya became very sensitive of his environment and his awareness of people and life increased. He would watch people walking long distances to farm, to the ponds, to fetch firewood or to collect brine which has about 7% sodium chloride at the Uburu salt - lake. He often watched the women filter the brine, dry it and crystallize it. His keen mind did not lose sight of the tasking nature of this manual way of refining salt. He wished that he were in a position to do something to make their burden lighter by finding a better and easier way of refining salt.

Sometimes, he accompanied his father or mother to farm. There in the farm, often in hot December/January sun, during cultivation, he used to watch labourers tilling the hard and harsh land with their hoes. He would watch rivulets of sweat running

down their dehydrating bodies. He often wondered at their patience and capacity to endure the harsh heat of the sun and the hard earth that seemed to have conspired against them. He felt for them from his safe distance under a shed.

Despite the sullen emotion which the sight of toiling labourers evoked in him, he usually liked the season and sight of brown earth when the labourers have moulded their mounds for yams, cocoa-yams and cassava. For rice cultivation, no mounds are made. The land is usually swampy and the time of cultivation ranges from May to July depending on how early the raining season sets in.

Actually, Uburu, Onicha and other neighbouring communities that made up old Ohaozara (ie before the creation of Onicha Local Government Area from the then Ohaozara Local Government Area in 1989) are highly agricultural areas. The nature of their land which contained large portions of rice-yielding swamps, fertile grassland and forests greatly encouraged agriculture. Thus Ogbonnaya Onu came from a highly agrarian society where the chief occupation was farming. Indeed, even without being so recognized, Ohaozara and Onicha Local Government Areas were the food baskets of old Imo State and now Abia State. It is really a cruel irony of fate that even though about 60% of rice consumed in Imo and Abia States come from these areas, their importance as rice-producing areas is still to be recognized and acknowledged. The irony of the situation is that even though numerous lorry-loads of rice leave these areas to various destinations in Nigeria, especially Abakaliki, most of the rice consumed in the eastern states are tagged Abakaliki-rice. Thus the areas are usually denied the benefits that should have accrued to them as rice-producing areas. The major cause of this irony is the fact that there were no rice-mills in the areas which made it imperative that the rice should be transported to somewhere else for milling. This somewhere was usually Abakaliki which is quite near to the areas. Even at present, rice mills are only two in two Local Government Areas. These two mills located at Isu in Onicha and

Okposi in Ohaozara are grossly inadequate and cannot cope with one-tenth of the rice produced in the areas.

So Onu's parents had many farms and produced rice, yams and cassava both for domestic consumption and for sale. In truth, Eze David Onu was a big-time farmer. They used to hire many labourers to work for them. Sometimes, the labourers were from Uburu or its environs, sometimes, they were from Abakaliki area.

Because of the high level of farming activities in these areas, food was no problem but lack of social amenities was. For instance, there was only one missionary hospital, Joint Hospital Uburu, established by the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria in 1913, in the old Ohaozara Local Government Area. Although the missionaries were doing their best, the hospital could hardly cope with one-tenth of the health needs of the people. This was partly due to the size of the hospital, lack of certain sophisticated medical equipment and some calibre of medical experts.

Even at that, many people in the area could not enjoy medical services provided by the hospital on account of distance and cost. They found the hospital too far from home and the cost beyond what they could afford. Consequently, many people died from lack of medical attention. This was particularly the fate of many pregnant women who died during child-birth.

Given the rural-traditional nature of the areas and the apparently high cost of medical services, many pregnant women were allowed to give birth to their babies at home under the traditional "midwives": consequently, when complications set in, death often results. Thus the mortality rate among pregnant women was usually very high.

In this circumstance, news of deaths during child-birth was almost a regular feature in the life of the people. Ogbonnaya Onu was usually distressed at such news. He was often sad to remember some of his playmates whose mothers died during child-birth due to lack of medical attention. He was convinced that some of those deaths could have been prevented if medical services were available and affordable. This view persisted in his mind and informs his government's policy of "Free Maternal

Delivery Care System' which took off from April 1,1992 (see chapter seven). This programme was designed to save both the life of the woman and the unborn child as far as it is humanly possible.

The village life at Uburu was not only that of gloom and hardship, there were ceremonies and festivals during which merry-making overshadows the gloomy aspects of rural life. The ceremonies included, naming, marriage and various forms of initiations. At such occasions, which were regular, the joy and laughter of the people would seem to recreate life in such a meaningful form that might suggest to urban-dwellers that the rural people understand the meaning of life and how to live more than they do.

Onu liked such occasions during which he freely mingled with other children and play-mates all dressed in their best attires. This is not to say that his parents prevented him from associating with other children except, of course, those who are of dubious characters. The point was that his intimacy with his father made him to stay around in the house most of the time except while in school or when doing some assignment(s).

Generally, Onu had a good up-bringing under proper parental care and affection. Our excursion into his birth and childhood days exposes us to the formative influences which have helped to shape the life and vision of this man in whose palms the destiny of young Abia State seems to squarely rest. However, we need to consider the educational career of Ogbonnaya Onu in order to gain further insights into his intellectual ability and other sources of influence on his life.

The Educational Career Of A Genius

Ogbonaya Onu began his educational career at St. Jacob's Primary School, Uburu in 1957 at the age of six. This age may be considered the normal school age from the 1980s upwards, but in the 1950s and '60s, it was seen as being under-age. Indeed, one was considered to be of school age in those day if one's hand placed over one's head could touch the opposite ear. In Ogbonnaya's case, his hand could not touch his ear in the way described above at the time he began his primary education.

The process of determining who was of school-age in those days by this process of physically examining whose hand could cross his/her head to touch the opposite ear was indeed a colonial method which was still being employed in most rural Nigeria (at least in the East) till sometime towards the end of the sixties. It was probably informed by a desire to find a common standard for selection and placement of pupils in the few available schools in the absence of birth certificates and sworn declarations of age. This practice continued until the necessary documents for age determination became readily available and many schools established to absorb the continually increasing number of children seeking western education.

The practice then was, if a child's hand was long such that it passed his ear by the process outlined above, he was judged to be over-aged whereas if his hand was short such that it could not reach his ear, he was judged to be under-aged. In many areas where this process of selection was employed, the fate of those children judged to be either over-aged or under-aged was that they were not selected. Such children often went home weeping. In the case of an under-aged child, not much harm was done. But for the over-aged child, that was the end of his desire to acquire the white man's magic and power. Thus, by this crude method which did not take account of the fact that some children

could grow faster than others, many children who would have grown up to be professors or high-level professionals and administrators were denied the opportunity of ever going to school.

For Ogbonnaya Onu, his problem at the time was that he was not yet qualified to go to school by the standards of the time. But destiny has a way of setting aside man's rules when they go against its decree. So it happened that even though Ogbonnaya was not yet qualified to go to school, he usually cried to be allowed to follow the elder ones to school.

Initially, his parents did not allow him fearing that he was too young to be able to cope with trekking the long distance to and from School. But whenever the older pupils left home without him in their company, he would cry and disturb the peace of the house. He was not deterred by the threats of punishment even by his beloved father. So his parents eventually gave in and he began to follow others to school. Whenever they got to the school, he would carry the little slate his parents gave him to the beginner's class. His parents gave him the slate not because they meant him to use it but merely to appease him!

In the Beginners' Class Ogbonnaya usually took part in class activities. Initially, he was not taken serious either by the teacher or the older pupils. But this attitude towards him changed when the teacher began to notice that whenever he asked the class to solve some problem set on their subjects, Ogbonnaya always got it right. Soon, he became his teacher's favourite. During the examination, he took the first position to the astonishment of all. His parents were particularly very happy about it. His performance made him to earn double promotion from "Infant One" (the beginners' class) to Standard One, thus jumping "Infant Two Class."

He was at St. Jacob's Primary School, Uburu, till the end of 1960 when he completed his standard three, taking the first position. In fact, it was as if his other rivals in academic competition all gave up hope of ever beating him even to a second position. He took the first position in every examination he sat for while at St. Jacob's Primary School. His teachers

adored him while other pupils envied him but his obedience, unassuming and peaceful nature made him to enjoy excellent social relationship with his peers and seniors alike.

Even though he was the smallest and youngest pupil at St. Jacob's Primary School, if not throughout his school days, his brilliance shone so brightly that there was no pupil or teacher who did not know him. His performance was a source of pride to his parents. His father became so interested in the academic progress of his namesake that each time he returned from school, he would demand to see what he had done. This was the tonic that Ogbonnaya needed to encourage him to do even better at school. The realization that his father would always ask him what he did at school made him to be careful to record his daily activities, including the class exercises in the various subjects.

It is interesting to note that Ogbonnaya did not get swollen-headed on account of his great academic exploits as could happen to some children. Rather, he continued to be obedient and respectful; and to help in domestic work. This fact made him an exemplary child whom other parents in the neighbourhood wanted their children to emulate.

Some neighbours usually prayed to God to give them such a son as Ogbonnaya who does not fight nor gossip but would normally perform his domestic chores before going to school. Yet each time the result of his class was announced, he took the first position. On account of his good manners, inside and outside the home, neighbours always rejoiced at his academic exploits and asked God to keep him and guide him. They all took him as their son in accordance with the saying of the people that "a good child does not only belong to his parents: he belongs to his community." In truth, Ogbonnaya behaved like a son to all elderly people. He ran errands for whoever sent him and never grumbled nor ever did so sluggishly. He was always an *O ji oso e je*.

Eze David Aba was very happy with, and proud of, his namesake. As one of those traditional rulers who had missionary influences, being an ardent member of the Catholic Church, he knew the value of the whiteman's magic – education. Thus he

was very glad that his son, and namesake, was fast acquiring the power and fame which education confers. He often remarked to Ogbonnaya's mother that "if this boy lives, he would go very far in learning".² How accurately fulfilled this prophecy has been!

After Standard Three at St. Jacob's Primary School, Ogbonnaya Onu had to transfer to St. Paul's Primary School, Enuogu, Uburu for his primary education in Standard Four. This transfer was necessitated by the fact that the highest class at St. Jacob's Primary School was Standard Three. So he had to transfer to a school that had classes up to Standard Six.

Ogbonnaya continued his excellent academic performances at his new school. In their first term's examination, he took the first position as usual – leading other pupils in all the eight subjects. His star performance endeared him to the hearts of the teachers and pupils in his new school.

Within the first year in this school, a very interesting thing happened which confirmed that Ogbonnaya was actually the most brilliant pupil in the whole school, including those in Standards Five and Six. It happened that there was a problem in mathematics that the Standard Five teacher asked his class to solve. He would ask a student to come to the board and solve it but the student would get the answer wrong. He continued that way till all the members of the class had tried solving the problem without success. The pupils complained to the teacher that the problem was too difficult for their standard. Then the teacher, who had heard how good Ogbonnaya was in Mathematics, told the class that he was going to bring somebody in Standard Four to solve the problem and the pupils dared him to do so.

The teacher decided to carry out his threat with the hope that even if Ogbonnaya failed the test, he would not lose face since he was their junior. So the teacher came to Standard Four class and obtained the class-teacher's permission to allow his pupil to come to his class to solve a mathematical problem. The Standard Four teacher gave his consent and Ogbonnaya was called up to follow him. He began to wonder why the Standard Five teacher should come to fetch him. But as he could not remember having

committed any offence, he felt relaxed. He followed the teacher out of the class and the Teacher told him his mission. He was to attempt a mathematical problem which Standard Five pupils had tried and failed. He followed the teacher calmly to the class and the pupils mockingly asked the teacher whether the small boy beside him was the super genius. He ignored them and pointed at the blackboard for Ogbonnaya to look at the problem.

The board was high and his hand could only reach half of it when he stood on his toes. He looked at the problem carefully and with full concentration. The class began to jeer at him: asking him what type of brain he had to be in Standard Four and be able to solve a problem which the best in Standard Five could not solve. The Teacher himself was mute and began to doubt whether the boy could do the magic.

Then slowly but calmly, Ogbonnaya began to write on the board and in less than one minute, he had concluded the problem and looked up to the Teacher and there was a great silence. The Teacher who had been following his solution step by step glowed with excitement which baffled Ogbonnaya. In a swoop, he carried him shoulder-high and shouted to the class "Did I not tell you?" "Did I not tell you?"

He carried him thus to his class and told his class teacher what had happened. The news quickly spread in the whole school and other pupils who heard it left their classes to behold this wonder-boy. He became an object of attraction and admiration to the entire pupils and teachers of St. Paul's Primary School. And his fame spread far beyond the school to other schools and the entire village.

By the end of the year, when the final term's result for Standard Four was released, Ogbonnaya did what he knew how to do best – he took the first position. Eze David Aba was so excited that he bought him a special dress, in addition to the usual Christmas dress.

Now in the Standard Five, Ogbonnaya showed more determination in his learning. He was always studying ahead of the class, often to the surprise of his Teacher. Then the class Teacher and the Headmaster decided that there was no point

wasting the boy's time by making him complete the usual number of years before sitting for Standard Six Certificate Examination. They then called him and inquired whether he would like to sit for the final examination with Standard Six pupils. He answered in the affirmative. Thus he registered for the examination while he was still in Standard Five in 1963.

He continued to lead his class in the terminal examinations while making intense preparations for the Standard Six final examination. He maintained his calm. The thought that he was going to sit for an examination a year before the time did not create any tension in him. He carried on as if nothing unusual was about to happen.

Then the time came and he took the examination. The Standard Six Certificate Examination was handled at the Divisional Level. By that time, Ohaozara was a council under Afikpo Division. So the examination was handled by the educational authorities at Afikpo. This meant that the result of the examination took longer time in coming than the usual school results.

He also took the Common Entrance Examination into secondary school. When the Standard Six final result was released, it was discovered that Ogbonnaya had passed, leading other pupils in the entire school. He equally performed excellently well in his Common Entrance Examination and had the best result among the pupils who sought entrance into the then reputable Mary Knoll College, Okuku, Old Ogoja province. So, at the beginning of the 1964 school session, Ogbonnaya travelled to Mary Knoll College to continue his dazzling educational career in Form One. This means that it took him only six years to complete his primary education which, in those days, was designed to last for eight years from Infant One, Infant Two, Standard One to Standard Six. Indeed, it would have taken him shorter time if teachers had continued to encourage him to jump classes alternately. This belief is based on the fact that he made the first position his permanent place throughout his primary school days: be it in class-work, assignments, tests or examinations.

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In real terms, it means that while those pupils he led in the beginner' class in 1957 were still in their Standard Four – that is for those of them who continued to pass their exams he has already entered into college. His name continued to ring bell in the two primary schools he attended several years after he left them. And the records in those schools that survived the ravages of the Nigerian Civil War still bear testimony to the fact that once upon a time, a genius called Ogbonnaya Onu had passed through those institutions whose high academic records remained ever unequalled and unsurpassed.

His admission into Mary Knoll College, Okuku, Ogoja, was remarkable in many respects. Apart from confirming his intellectual class, it marked the beginning of his stay away from his parents and their strict supervision. This afforded him a greater opportunity to develop personal initiatives outside his parental shadows. It equally afforded him the opportunity to compete academically and interact with students from different parts of the country.

Mary Knoll College, Ogoja was quite far from Uburu where Ogbonnaya was born and where he grew up and completed his primary education. The distance between his home and the college was about 120 miles (about 192 kilometers). This was the furthestmost distance he ever travelled from home and indeed, the first time he lived outside his father's house. For his primary schools were all day-schools and he usually travelled from home and returned to the the house everyday.

Luckily, Mary Knoll College had boarding facilities. So he lived in the boarding house with other students. He did his best to adjust to the new way of life and his new environment. Initially, it was difficult coping with the bullying of some senior boys. But soon, his humble and quiet nature endeared him to most of the senior students who protected him from the hands of other bullies.

He tried his best to focus attention on the reason of his being at the College – to acquire more knowledge. However, the first few months at the College were difficult and the feeling of nostalgia was very strong. He frequently remembered how he

used to sit by his father's side, listening to him and members of his cabinet decide cases among the villagers on *Eke* days; how he used to enjoy the left-over food and meat from his father; his mother and step-mothers; his numerous brothers and sisters from his father, and some local delicacies his mother used to prepare for him. These thoughts often led him to live in the dream of the past. But his reverie was usually disrupted by the reality of the moment such as the "gring-gring-gring" of the bell for one school activity or the other, or the calls of a friend or a senior student. At such moments, anger would well-up in his mind at the realization that in reality, he was very far from home.

However, as time went on, he managed to subdue the nostalgic feeling that often seized him by focussing his whole attention on his studies. He studied very hard and at the end of the first year he led his class in the term's examination. Thus he continued his record of maintaining the first position ever since he commenced his educational career.

During the holidays, he gladly rejoined his parents at home. They were very happy that he had not abandoned his tradition of excellent academic performance. They all told him that they missed his company as he had told them that he missed theirs.

His father had felt the absence of his namesake so much, that but for his great love for education and Ogbonnaya's assurance that he was coping with the situation, he would have withdrawn him from such a far-away-from-home college.

At the end of the holidays, he went back to the college and continued his studies.

He was at Mary Knoll College for four years (1964-1967). He remained unbeaten, academically, throughout his stay there. In other words, he took the first position in all the examinations he took in that school.

He left Mary Knoll College at Class Four because of the Nigerian Civil War which broke out in 1967 and disrupted education in most of the then Eastern Nigeria. Mary Knoll was one of the first schools to be shut because it was too close to where the fighting began. He returned home to his parents.

The war reports usually distressed him a great deal. The frequent news of violent death, on the Nigerian or Biafran side was often a source of grief to him. Although, he did not quite understand the issues at stake at that time, he hated wars for whatever reason(s) just as he hated fighting (physical). His study of History had taught him how the then three regions (East, West and North), later brought to four with the creation of Mid-Western Region, came into being and how they all stood together to fight for the emancipation of Nigeria from the British colonial rule.

He sought to understand why one section of Nigeria should engage another in a fratricidal war but was unable to do so at that time. He had read about some ancient empires that were destroyed by internal strife and feared that such fate might befall Nigeria if care was not taken.

Luckily for the people of Ohaozara and Onicha their areas were not at any time, throughout the thirty months the war lasted, turned into theatres of war. However, some local army recruits on the Biafran side who deserted the army but yet retained their uniforms were always around to harass and extort money from the villagers. Their main business was to forcefully collect money, goods and, at times, beautiful women from people. They were known in local parlance as "Army Cash." This is to say that they are not genuine soldiers but robbers in army uniform.

Those fake soldiers were so rapacious and ferocious that their activities often led to the break down of law and order which the areas were known for. For Eze David Onu and his other colleagues in the neighbouring communities, the protection of innocent subjects from the rampaging activities of "Army Cash" was a very arduous task. This was because, with their guns fully-loaded and their whole beings totally controlled by alcohol and marijuana, they could be more ruthless than present day armed-robbers. The war situation seemed to give them the audacity to operate at will, any time, anywhere.

Thus, complaints concerning them were usually treated with caution as they often refused to appear before the chiefs to

answer to the charges against them. In fact, they made life very unbearable for many prominent citizens of the area who often fled their homes. This continued until their activities became quite intolerable so much so that many communities took decisive actions against them.

Such communities as Onicha autonomous community mounted operation rid the community of "Army Cash." This often consisted of using family members of some of the members of "Army Cash" gang to restrain them or, when such approach failed, outright use of violence against them at night.

This made most people in the areas to live in two-pronged fear: fear of the "Army Cash" gang and fear of the possibility of the war reaching them directly. For, even though the war did not take place on their soil at any stage of it, they felt its ripples at the initial stage when the battle zones were afar off. But the hardship of the war was felt intensely after the Nigerian soldiers had captured such nearby places as Okigwe and Abakaliki in the present Imo and Enugu States respectively.

Constant fear of invasion, influx of refugees, scarcity of essential goods and occasional raids by soldiers whose sight became a regular feature in the villages forcefully brought the hideous faces of war to a people who never saw large-scale wars save the infrequent communal clashes which involved local weapons of war. The unpleasant message of war did not fail to reach every home and age. Many people died of malnutrition, especially among the children and pregnant women. Food situation was desperate as the war-news created panic among the people and slowed down productive activities in the areas. Besides, the influx of returnees (indigenes fleeing the war zones) and refugees meant more mouths to be fed such that the available food stuff could hardly cope with.

To compound the problem, medical facilities were scarcely available. There was only one mission hospital, The Presbyterian Joint Hospital, Uburu, serving communities densely populating the several kilometers expanse of land which Ohaozara and Onicha are noted for. Even at that, the war had hindered medical and personnel supplies to the hospital. And

those available could not in any meaningful way cope with the unprecedented flow of patients that sought medical treatment. As a result, many people died such as of a combination of factors: absence of needed drugs and/or equipment, inability to obtain medical service either because of distance or lack of fund or sheer ignorance.

Ogbonnaya was sensitive to the disruptive effects of the civil war on the hitherto boisterous and generally, peaceful community of his birth. Social services were disrupted, education grounded to a halt as most schools were closed down, law and order became increasingly difficult to maintain and his father and his cabinet worked ever harder to keep their people together.

Initially, Ogbonnaya thought that the war might not last long and that they would soon be back to school. But as days turned into weeks, weeks into months and months into years, he wondered whether the war would ever end? He did not experience the agonies of war directly as his father's wealth and influence went a long way in shielding all the members of his family from the harshness of the time, but he was sensitive to the general atmosphere of suffering that pervaded the entire place. He grieved for the malnourished and disease-ridden children and the famished adults. He rued the death of so many people he knew. His observation of the effects of war on his people and his career made him to conclude with, huge sadness, that war was an unmitigated evil that should be avoided at all costs.

However, despite the heady atmosphere of war in the areas, the living still tried to assert themselves and recreate life in some festivals, rituals to the gods and masquerade dances amongst children. The children, often in their innocent ignorance, would stage their masquerade dances at market places or village squares for people to watch. Such displays usually provided moments of laughter to the otherwise sullen faces.

Adults, too, were not left out in certain dancing activities. But theirs were often restricted to funeral ceremonies, which were held so frequently that one can hardly remember how many there were each month.

Ogbonnaya often went out with other boys to watch those performances. He found them a necessary distraction from the seemingly helpless hardships which war has unleashed on people. He continually prayed for the war to end so that normal life will start again and so that he would continue in his education.

Eventually, when all hope seemed lost to those on the "Biafran" side, the war finally came to an end on January 15, 1970. The jubilation of the living drowned the mourning of the dead as the news of the end of the war continually came on air. Fortunately, it was not a mere dream, it was a reality that the avoidable destruction of a nation had ended.

Most people congratulated themselves for surviving the war. And Ogbonnaya was particularly happy that all members of family survived the war. He was very glad that he now had the opportunity to continue his education. It was after the war that he learnt that even while the war was going on, his former principal at Mary Knoll, Father Thomas McCracken did everything possible to reach him and get him back to school when normal school activities resumed in the then South-Eastern State after the area had been captured and made part of Nigeria. He sent Father Mcgetrick to try to locate him and bring him back to continue his studies but could not succeed as he could not be reached. And if that plan had worked, Ogbonnaya would not have lost any time because of the war. But, perhaps, what happened (he told me in an interview) "was the will of God" for him.

When eventually, the situation was calm enough, he did not go back to Mary Knoll College due to certain consequences of the civil war. Instead, he gained admission into the then Izzi County Grammar School, now Izzi High School Abakaliki, in 1970.

At his new school, Ogbonnaya and his other colleagues who were in Class Four before the war had the option of being in Class Five with those who were in that class before the war. Those in Four before but who opted to be in Five were called "Five Special" while the former Class Five students who

remained in the class they were before the war were called "Five Normal." Of course, Ogbonnaya chose to be in "Five Special."

However, one disturbing discovery he made early in his new school was that they did not have any teacher to take them in Additional Mathematics, a subject he had begun in Class Four at Mary Knoll College. Other students dropped the subject but he read it on his own and passed very well with an alpha. He was the only student who offered Additional Mathematics in the whole school that year.

He continued to do what he knew how to do best – taking the first position – in his new school. When the result of the final examination was released, he had the over-all best result with "Grade One Distinction. That was 1970/71 school year.

In 1971, he gained admission into College of Immaculate Conception, (C.I.C), Enugu to do the two-year Higher School Certificate programme. As was required of every student, he chose three subjects, namely, Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry. These can be said to be tough subjects then and even now. Mathematics was particularly difficult at the advanced level. The few students who dared register for it hardly passed and those who managed to pass it often had the lowest grade, which is "E".

Ogbonnaya was not daunted by the tasking demands that his subject combinations would make on him. He chose those subjects because of interest and competence. In fact, although every subject seemed to be his favourite, judging by his excellent performances, he had a very soft spot for Mathematics.

As a Lower Sixth Former, he applied himself very seriously to his studies. His policy was always to study harder against any subject that is recognized as being difficult. At the end of his first year at C.I.C, Enugu, he led his class in all the subjects. That year (1971), none of those who took the Higher School Certificate Examination in his School passed. In other words, none of them got his papers.

The 1971 Advanced Level result in C.I.C. was a bad omen for the Lower Sixth Formers who were going to sit for the examination the following year. Fear gripped most of the

students who shuddered at the prospect of spending two whole years on H.S.C. (Higher School Certificate) programme without passing even one subject. Many students who would never allow such fate to befall them, studied harder than ever.

In 1972, Ogonnaya and his mates took the H.S.C. Examination. During the examination, something very serious happened to him: he fell ill shortly before the examination on Mathematics was taken. Because of the seriousness of the Malaria attack he had, he was hospitalized. In fact, he managed to leave his hospital bed to sit for the examination. The Doctor treating him tried to dissuade him from going to sit for the subject since he appeared very weak but he insisted that he must go, for he could not contemplate his not sitting for his favourite subject. So it was with some difficulty that he managed to sit for Mathematics, his temperature was higher than 100° centigrade.

His teachers and colleagues were very sympathetic towards his plight and some of the teachers wondered aloud why he should fall ill at the eve of the dreaded Mathematics exam. As a result, not many of them gave him much chance of making a good grade in the subject even though they knew that he was very good at it. They seemed to reason that some of his predecessors who had shown signs of good performance in Mathematics and had taken the examination in good health had often failed to make even a bare pass and wondered by what magic Ogonnaya, even though the most brilliant of all the students, in the subject could do better than just pass the examination at a low grade given his state of health.

Ogonnaya did not bother himself to lament over his health situation as he assured himself that by God's grace, the Malaria fever would go soon. He did his best to concentrate on the questions and solve them. He managed to finish the numbers of questions required before the time was up.

When the school's result was released, it was round, to the surprise of everybody and the joy of Ogonnaya and his Mathematics Teacher, that he made Grade "B", the highest grade in Mathematics. This was the best result recorded in Mathematics.

His other results were simply excellent. He garnered the highest grades in the remaining two subjects: "A" in Physics and in Chemistry. So his over all result was A,A,B. This was the best A/Level result in the entire Eastern Nigeria and indeed, the second best in the whole Federation. The result that beat his own was obtained by a candidate from Warri who had A,A,A. But whether this candidate offered Science subjects, including Mathematics, was not known.

Ogbonnaya's final result confirmed the honours and prizes he garnered during the Annual Prize-giving Day of the School. He was the best Mathematics student as well as the best in over-all performance.

After his Higher School programme, he taught at St. Augustine's Seminary, Ezza Ngbo, for eight months. He found himself quite comfortable with the moral demands of Seminary life as a result of the way his parents brought him up. This adumbrates what the Holy Bible says, "Train up a child in the way he should follow ..."

Actually, the East Central State School Management Board had posted him to Ngwa High School, Aba immediately he completed his Higher School Certificate programme. But he soon got a letter from his former Principal from Mary Knoll persuading him to take up a teaching appointment at the Seminary. That was how he took up the appointment. Besides, he accepted to work at that time because he wanted to keep himself occupied pending the time his result would be out so that he could apply to universities for admission.

When he got his result (H.S.C.), he applied to most of the then existing Universities – Ibadan, Ife, Nsukka, Lagos and Amadu Bello and they all offered him admission. But he settled for University of Lagos where he studied Chemical Engineering, the course of his choice.

His choice of Chemical Engineering as an area worthy of his pursuit, whereas he was excellently qualified for any other prestigious course, was greatly influenced by his desire to study a course that could enable him seek a way of eventually making the work of those women in his area who toil to refine salt

manually lighter. He looked at education as a means of acquiring a potent instrument for the service of his people and mankind in general.

His course in Chemical Engineering at the University of Lagos lasted for three years (1973-1976) instead of the usual four years because of his Higher School Certificate which qualified him for a direct entry into the University with a one-year waiver. Here again, his academic brilliance shone as bright as a million stars despite the rigorous nature of the programme. He continued to lead his class and later rounded off the programme with a First Class Honours in Chemical Engineering.

It is important to point out, at this juncture, that Ogbonnaya's educational career was not all work and no play, he was no bookworm as some readers may be tempted to think. He also took time off his books to interact with others and relax himself. He usually exercised himself by playing football, running and, occasionally, attending some social programmes.

While at the University of Lagos, he was a student-activist. However, he never offered himself for any elective post in the Students' Union elections but he was at one time or the other one of the strategists of major political heavy-weights in the University of Lagos Students' Union (ULSU) elections. His active participation in the planning and execution of political strategies taught him enduring lessons which he later put to use in his own mature political life.

Also, while on his programme at the University of Lagos, he spent some time with the 7-Up Bottling Company and the Nigerian Breweries Limited during his industrial attachment period. His brief stay with them opened his eyes to the dire need for indigenous technological development in Nigeria. He observed that in those two companies, as with most others in the country, high level technical skill and equipment were all imported, (they are still being imported today). This situation agitated his mind. He believed that something could be done to indigenize industrial manpower and equipment .

By the time he obtained his degree, the Federal Government of Nigeria had introduced the one-year compulsory National Youth Service Corps Scheme which required University and high institution's graduates to serve their father-land as a gesture of patriotism. Consequently, he was posted to Kaduna to serve.

He regarded his one-year service as a blessing. For one thing, it afforded him an opportunity to live in the Northern part of Nigeria which he had never been to before. His stay in the North opened his eyes to the magnitude of abundant resources, human and material, with which, this country is blessed but which yearned (and still yearn) for development. That period also exposed him to the diverse people of the North – the Hausa, Fulani, Jukun, and so on. It enabled him to appreciate the cultural diversity of Nigeria which underscored the need for the various cultural groups to respect and tolerate one another for peace and progress.

While on his National Youth Service Programme, he applied to the University of California, Berkeley, for admission into the post-graduate programme during the following academic session. Given his excellent academic records, the University gladly offered him admission. Thus, immediately after his completion of the service, he proceeded to the University of California. He had also applied for scholarship awards from many notable scholarship boards, including the Commonwealth, and all of them granted his application. He accepted one of the awards and left the rest (including Commonwealth scholarship).

He left for his studies abroad in 1977. Neither he nor his parents could forget the sentiments shared at the time of his departure for overseas. His father had advised in the strongest terms possible; infact he had drummed it into his ears that he must not stay in the whiteman's land after completing his studies. He must return home to his people to give them the benefits of his learning. He further advised him not to bring home a white woman as a wife: he should be able to find a black woman, preferably an Igbo woman, who would be good enough to be his wife.

But when the moment for departure arrived, his mother could no longer control her tears. Even his strong-hearted father had a quiver of extreme emotional turmoil which he seriously battled to control. Ogbonnaya looked at his parents and relations who gathered to bid him farewell, he felt their emotional sense of loss at his leaving them especially his sobbing mother and tears surged to his eyes and threatened to roll down his cheeks but he quickly brought out a handkerchief and wiped it off. He then went to his mother and held her comfortingly and assured her that he would be back as soon as he completed his studies. He turned to the others and waved them good-bye and departed in a waiting car that was taking him to the airport.

University of California, Berkeley, United States of America was experiencing fine weather when he arrived. He enjoyed it a great deal. It did not take him long to adjust to his new environment and to settle down for his serious academic programme.

After examining his academic records, the University authorities asked him to do a direct Ph.D programme in Chemical Engineering. He was the only black student on the Ph.D programme in his department.

His direct admission into the Ph.D. programme presented an enormous challenge to him. Usually, the first programme into which one is admitted after the first degree is the Masters programme. But in Ogbonnaya's case, he did not have to do the Masters programme. His was a straight jab at the prized fight. He surmised the rigorous demands of such a straight course and braced himself up for the task.

Within two years and nine months, he was able to complete the programme in flying colours. In other words, by mid 1980 he had bagged his Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering.

While on the programme, he allowed the principle of utility and patriotism to inform his research efforts. He surveyed his area of study and identified the contemporary concerns of the world and his country which it can be employed to tackle. He found one of such concerns to be how to find alternative sources of energy. The problem was a daunting one but he decided to

exert himself towards finding solutions to it in such a way that his own country, Nigeria, and the world at large would benefit.

He chose to work on coal, which is in great abundance in Nigeria. His self-assigned task was to seek a way of developing coal as an alternative source of energy to petroleum and its associated products. His effort was geared towards finding the means of converting coal into liquid fuel under mild conditions. He was successful in this project; he was able to develop a means of converting coal into liquid fuel at cheaper means. He acknowledged that even though successful effort at this project had been made in South Africa, theirs was at a great cost because of the extreme conditions employed. Hence, there was a need to find mild conditions which will make the liquefaction of coal cheaper and more economical so that it could compete favourably with oil. This was exactly what he achieved in his research. His own was judged to be therefore, cheaper and better.

The significance of his research on how to develop coal as an alternative source of energy for Nigeria, in particular, did not lie on the cost it would save her on oil as was the case for many countries in the world, since she produces it in abundance, but on his development of appropriate technology to harness the abundant coal deposits in the country. Unfortunately, there has not been political will by the successive Nigerian governments to utilize this important contribution by a Nigerian in the field of science and technology to develop the coal industry and make it contribute reasonably to the national economy. Be that as it may, Ogbonnaya and his likes have done what they could in seeking solutions to national and global problems through research. And let hope that someday the results of their efforts would be applied to solve certain human problems.

Apart from his serious academic and research activities, Ogbonnaya still found time to engage in extra-curricula activities some of which he employed in the advancement of the Nigerian culture and the dignity of the black race. His activities in this vein marked him out as a patriot and nationalist who always sought to advance the cause of his nation and race.

A particular incident which clearly illustrates his patriotic and nationalistic disposition unfolded while he was staying at the International House in Berkeley where 50% of inmates were from outside the United States of America. Almost every weekend, there would be an opportunity to highlight the activities of a particular country. For instance, a night may be devoted to the life and culture in Mexico and such a night would be called Mexican Night, a night devoted to Canada would be called Canadian Night; Chinese Night, Japanese Night and so on, but to his greatest dismay, there was never a Nigerian Night or a Night devoted to any African country for that matter. This showed him that neither Nigeria, his country nor any other African country was reckoned with. This realization made him sad.

Consequently, when the Nigerian Association of Northern California Incorporated (NANCI), of which he was the president, met, he suggested to them that they had to organize one. They agreed in principle. But the problem was money. How could they raise money for that purpose? So Ogbonnaya, in his capacity as the President of the Association, had to approach the Director of the International House and told him that they needed to organize a Nigerian Night. He reminded the Director that Nigeria was the second largest supplier of crude oil to the United States after Saudi Arabia and that there were many African-Americans in the House such that it would be necessary to seek to promote Nigerian-American relationship by organizing the Nigerian Night. He told the Director that finance was their major handicap but went on to make a proposal which the Director found difficult to resist.

The proposal was that the Director should provide the money needed to organize the Night and do the purchases directly through his own staff and pay all the bills after NANCI had approved the budget and then directly collect all the gate-takings. The only concession he sought was that one of his members be positioned at the gate so as to identify some of his Association's members who had worked for the successful organization of the Night and who deserved to be allowed in free of charge. The

Director was very amazed because it was not usual for a student to make proposals of that nature which could remove him from control of funds at such an occasion. He quickly obliged the Association and the Nigerian Night was successfully held.

Ogbonnaya was not all that interested in the monetary aspect of the Night. His major interest was for Nigeria and, by extension, Africa to be properly represented at such a forum. When he achieved this goal, he was very happy.

The NANCI was made up of Nigerians in Northern California, both students and non-students most of whom had completed their education and were working. It was an umbrella under which students' problems and national welfare were discussed.

Apart from being the President of the NANCI, he was also elected the President of African Students' Union of the University. According to him, the entire University had a student population of 115,000, while the Berkely Campus had a student population of about 36,000.

His leadership role while abroad was not just exercised within the Nigerian and African groups alone, he was found to possess sterling leadership qualities even by the whites. To lend credence to this point, notwithstanding the fact that he was the only black student in the graduate programme in his department, he was unanimously elected as the Departmental Representative to the Graduate Assembly. This Assembly was the highest policy-making body for graduate students. He related very well with his colleagues and saw his election to represent them as a gesture of the oneness of man irrespective of race and colour and also as a gesture that raises hope for the future of mankind when mutual respect and love rather than race and colour would be the important features of human relationships.

Indeed, his interaction and association with peoples and places in the course of his fascinating educational career enriched his experiences and knowledge about life and man in general. This has broadened his vision and enlarged his heart to accommodate, tolerate and appreciate events, peoples and cultures at national, regional, continental and global levels. His

contact with Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. Perry whom he called his host family and who lived in the neighbourhood of his university further helped to sharpen that vision.

The Perrys, a middle class white family, received him happily without discrimination and treated him with great kindness. Mr. Perry was, himself, a practising Chemical Engineer and an association with him further inspired him in his chosen profession. He was usually invited to the family at every festival and during holidays. The way they usually made him feel at home with them made him see a practical demonstration of the oneness of mankind which he has grown up to defend and encourage.

His sojourn in the United States of America was eventful not only on account of his educational and social accomplishments, it was eventful also in another fundamental sense. For it was at Berkeley that he got married to the woman after his heart, former Miss Chinyere Okpara and now Her Excellency, Lady Chinyere Onu. That was in 1978. He had known her way back in Nigeria before they met again in U.S.A. and eventually became united as husband and wife. She studied Business Administration at Golden Gate University.

The array of people present at his wedding was highly revealing. Many of his American friends graced the occasion. His bestman on the occasion was a Yoruba. The train of bestmen included a Hausa friend, a Tanzanian and another friend from the present Abia State. This shows him as non-tribal, non-sectional and non-racial. This is the spirit he has brought to bear in his administration of Abia State which he strives to make a symbol of an ideal Nigeria, albeit its microcosm, where none should be discriminated against on account of birth, tribe, religion and political affiliation.

Their marriage has been fruitful. They have been blessed with three intelligent boys, all of whom (Obiora, Chijioke and Uzodima) were born in the United States of America. Their marriage has ever been a happy one. Ogbonnaya describes his wife as a loving, caring and understanding woman who has a will of her own. She usually shared in his visions and

contributed positively to their realization. She has ever remained a dutiful wife, a companion and confidant and a comforter at those trying moments many men often encounter.

After a brilliant academic exploit, Ogbonnaya worked as a Research Staff, Engineering Research Centre, Western Electric, Princeton, New Jersey, USA from 1980-1981.

But, alas, USA could no longer contain his restless mind. He was quite impressed by a number of things he saw in the USA: the level of development, the way the Americans were able to solve their basic problems, especially, being able to feed themselves and meet other basic needs. He was also impressed at the efficiency of their public corporations: there was regular water and electricity supply. In fact, life in the USA was sweet and hardwork was paying off fine. USA was, and still is, the opposite of Nigeria (his country) in most of these respects. When one has lived in the two contrasting countries, returning to Nigeria often represents a nightmare. This is one of the reasons why many Nigerians and other Africans acquire American citizenship, while others who could not, manage one way or the other to hang-on even under most dehumanizing conditions.

For Ogbonnaya, the level of development in America was quite admirable. America had many attractive things to offer. But he was wise to realize that even though he might settle there with his family, they would still be strangers in America and to the level of civilization that she has attained. He began to think deeper and deeper on how Nigeria, his country could be turned around to tread the path of development. He began to appraise the role he himself could play to develop Nigeria and Africa in general, and to free Nigeria from the throes of neo-colonialism. He was one of those Africans who, according to Kwame Nkrumah (1964:4),

animated by a lively national consciousness, sought knowledge as an instrument of national emancipation and integrity. This is not to say that these Africans over-looked the purely cultural value of their studies. But in order that their acquisition should be valuable, they need to be capable of appreciating it as free men.

Ogbonnaya refused to be charmed into staying permanently in the USA. Instead, the development and efficiency he found there rather emphasized their lack in Nigeria. He found the situation depressing. He had, at a personal level, competed with and often excelled his white counterparts. Why should his nation not compete favourably with other advanced nations of the world such as USA, Britain, Japan and Germany? He surveyed the American history and noted that the pioneers of American development made enormous sacrifices before America was ushered into the path of development.

He concluded that Nigeria should have men who would be willing to make sacrifices in order to develop the country. He believed that Nigeria could be transformed into a great and developed country by people who, like himself, were able to share in the experiences of the scientifically and technologically advanced countries of the world.

This conviction made him to decide to return to Nigeria in spite of his friends' dissuasion. His friends thought this decision to return home is unwise because they were quite sure that his profession would be better practised in economically and technologically advanced countries. They reasoned that if he stayed in an advanced country like USA to practicalize his study, he would earn a lot of money.

Despite the soundness of his friends' arguments for his stay in the USA, he still thought that his country needed him since his study would help develop the abundant raw materials of the country. He sees his determination to return and contribute his quota to the development of his country as a cherished sacrifice, especially with the brain drain syndrome when many experts in their fields were running away from Nigeria.

To concretise his arrangements to return home, he sent applications to some universities in Nigeria for lecturing appointment. He explained that his desire to teach was necessitated by the need to impart knowledge in the young ones, so as to develop the necessary intellectual foundation for the scientific and technological development of Nigeria.

Working Life And Experiences

Out of the many applications he sent to different establishments, the first positive response came from the University of Port Harcourt to which he had applied for lecturership position. That was in 1981. He accepted the offer for two main reasons. First, it afforded him the opportunity to return home, to Nigeria. Secondly, it put him in a position to impart what he had learned to the predominantly Nigerian students on whose shoulders the tasks of nation-building squarely rest. He was certain that the knowledge of Chemical Engineering was very vital for the overall economic and social transformation of any country, and particularly Nigeria which has abundant raw materials needing to be harnessed, processed and packaged through scientific and technological know-how. Besides being one of the pioneer students of Chemical Engineering at the University of Lagos (one of the first – generation Universities in Nigeria), he was quite aware of the fact that although the discipline was quite vital to the Nigerian economy, it was still at its infancy in the country. Therefore, he saw that his position as a lecturer would aid the development of the discipline in Nigeria's meaningful development.

His acceptance of a teaching appointment at the University of Port Harcourt was indeed a big sacrifice. This is because, apart from foregoing the high-level comfort he enjoyed in the USA in terms of infrastructural facilities and other necessities of life, his pay-package at the University of Port Harcourt was by far less than what he was earning while in America or what he would have earned in one of the chemical based industries in Nigeria. Nevertheless, these realities did not make him change his mind about returning home to Nigeria and accepting the offer to lecture.

Because of his convictions, he tried to settle down to duty as far as possible. But apart from the poor remuneration which teaching attracted (and still attracts) in Nigeria despite the high inflationary trend, he encountered certain occupational problems which often force perceptive minds to raise serious questions in the areas of leadership and national objectives. Such problems included inadequate or total lack of the requisite infrastructural facilities for teaching and research, lack of textbooks and journals as well as limited manpower. Although these problems were not peculiar to the University of Port Harcourt at that time, they were made more acute there by the facts that the University was one of the youngest in the country at that time and the department of Chemical Engineering was barely taking off at University of Port Harcourt. Some of the equipment necessary for the successful functioning of the department were not available. Thus, although there were problems of general facilities in the young University, those of Chemical Engineering Department were made more acute by the fact that the Department was one of the youngest in the School.

Such was the situation he returned home to meet not just as one of the lecturers in the Department but as a pioneer Head of Department. He braced himself up for the task of establishing the Department on a sound footing with the limited facilities available and by the time he left the Department in 1991 for politics, it was already favourably competing with the older ones in the country.

From December 1981, when he first joined the University of Port Harcourt Staff till January, 1991 when he left the Institution, he served in various capacities apart from being the Head of Department of Chemical Engineering. For instance, he served as acting Dean of Faculty of Engineering on many occasions (including 1984 and 1985), served on many boards within the University, including the Uniport Consult and the University Press; a member of the Senate for almost the number of years he stayed at Uniport as well as a member of the Governing Council of the University from 1986 – 1990.

Within the University system, Ogbonnaya continued to demonstrate the high academic stuff he was made of. He proved himself as an accomplished scholar and a tireless researcher. Evidence of this can be found in his two stimulating books, *Nigeria's Greatness: Technology the Missing Link* (1982) and *Technology and National Development: The Nigerian State* (1984), and numerous articles published in international and local journals. And by the time he left the University, his papers had successfully passed various stages of assessment for professorial position. The only thing that could debar him from appointment is the number of years he had served on his last position according to the universities' regulations. As for other criteria for professorial appointment, such as number of publications, services to the University community, he was found to be quite qualified.

His relationship with his colleagues and the students was most cordial. He was highly respected by all those who came into contact with him. He was a motivator and an inspirer to both staff and students alike. He was, in truth, a manager of both men and ideas. His amiable personality and benevolent disposition endeared him to most of the people who came into meaningful contact with him.

He was widely known as a champion of justice and defender of the poor. Many students, whose admission causes he championed adopted him as their father while some others regarded him as a "Big Brother." He was always there as the last hope of despondent students whom death or other calamities of life have robbed of their sponsors. When such students ran to him, he always rendered to them some financial assistance despite his meagre salary and numerous responsibilities.

There was the case of a student whose father and sponsor died while he (the student) was in the second year of his four-year programme at the University of Port Harcourt. The student who was not in any way related to him except that they hailed from the same local government area, albeit different clans, approached him with his problem. He kindly assisted him till he

graduated and later became the first vice-chairman of his local government area in the Third Republic.

It is little surprising that when he ventured into active politics, many students and graduates became his self-appointed campaigners. So many of them put all they had to see that this man, who has a christian mind of sacrifice for the benefits of others, sailed through. This fact has a very instructive lesson for all. First, it shows that good deeds may open the way more easily for somebody than money. For as a lecturer, he had no money to throw around like other aspirants. Yet he was overwhelmingly elected the Governor of Abia State. The second lesson is that, contrary to the Shakespearean assertion that the good that people do are often "intended with their bones," good deeds never die, they are usually remembered by the people at the appropriate time. This should encourage us to do the good we can to whoever we come across, being cognizant of the fact that every action expended, be it good or bad, is a seed sown which is bound to germinate and bear fruit after its kind.

Within the period he stayed at Uniport, he was occasionally called to national duty outside the University environment. One of such occasions was when he was appointed one of the directors of the Nigerian Cement Company (NIGERCEM), Nkalagu, in the present Enugu State. The NIGERCEM was the Premier Cement Company in Nigeria and was owned by the Federal and State governments and individual share-holders.

At the time he was appointed to serve, the Company was in disarray and at the brink of collapse because of the various squabbles that engulfed it. Thus, the Board on which he was selected to serve was given the onerous task of revamping the Company and restoring public confidence in it. This was a herculean task. For, at the time the members of the Board assumed duty, the viability of the Company as an enterprise designed to serve the public and at the same time make profits was in serious jeopardy. Workers' morale was very low and the management was crises-ridden with allegations of fraud, misappropriation of fund and conflicting loyalties and interests,

which cross-bred to give birth to the mess in which the Company found itself. The governments and the individual share-holders in the Company were greatly troubled by this anomaly.

It was indeed anomalous for a Company whose products were widely-sought after and whose raw materials (lime stone) is in great abundance in Nigeria. The evidence of this is seen in the fact that customers pay for the products well in advance. These facts should have made NIGERCEM a gold mine. But, alas, it was not to be owing to the management problems of the Company.

Managerial problems have always been the bane of many public corporations in Nigeria. These problems are so palpable that one can unequivocally assert that the problem with the Nigerian economy is managerial in nature. This is another way of putting what the literary guru, Chinua Achebe, asserted in his little, but loaded, book: *The Trouble With Nigeria*. Here, Achebe vehemently asserts that "The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership" (Achebe, 1985:1).

Nigeria is a country that has been lavishly endowed by God but yet is counted among the 13th poorest nations in the world according to the World Bank Report of 1991. Although Vice-President Augustus Aikhomu has asked Nigerians to discountenance such report without adducing statistics to strengthen his contention, and although the World Bank criteria of judgment are not known to the generality of the public, the fact still remains that if we judge the economic position of Nigeria by the standard of living of the majority of her citizens, as we ought to, we will conclude that Nigeria is actually one of the poorest nations of the world. This is despite her abundant human, material and mineral resources. Thus, we find the anomaly we observed in the case of NIGERCEM, that had all it takes to hit the top but could not even stand on its own, present at the national level. And both industries and the nation are still badly in need of competent managers to turn things around.

It was the search for competent managers that led the owners of NIGERCEM to Ogbonnaya Onu and his team. The

team immediately settled down for business. Members of the Board appraised their task and agreed that it was enormous. But they were resolved to tackle the problems head-long. And gradually, they began to make tremendous progress.

In no distant time, peace returned to the Company and production increased. Soon, many workers who were retrenched were recalled and the Company became quoted on the Stock Exchange once more. It was remarkable that within the period of five years in which Ogbonnaya Onu served as one of the directors of the Company, the trend of losses was reversed to that of profits. And for the first time in so many years, the Company declared dividends.

By the time he left the Company, he was about the longest-serving Director having served continuously for five years (1984-1989). Within that period, he distinguished himself as an astute manager of men and resources. He chaired many ad hoc committees within his tenure as Director. The most prominent of which were; the committee that looked into the collapsed roof top of the cement works; the committee that handled personnel matters and the Engineering Committee.

The work of the Personnel Committee was both sensitive and challenging. The Committee was to look into the cases of over 2,000 workers some of whom were either retired, retrenched or dismissed. As the Chairman of the Committee, he insisted on doing a thorough job. The Committee went through the files of those workers and interviewed many of them and based on their findings, recommended some of the retrenched or dismissed workers for reinstatement while others who were currently on the job but who were found wanting were recommended for either retirement or dismissal. At the end of the exercise, there was hardly any petition against the recommendations of the committee by the affected workers. Also, the committee undertook recruitment exercise as it was further assigned to do. Interviews were conducted and new blood injected into the Company. Their fellow Board members commended the Committee for a job well-done.

As the Chairman of the Engineering Committee, Ogbonnaya Onu spearheaded the pursuit of self-reliance not only in raw-material sourcing but also in terms of making spare-parts locally. This drive has greatly increased local sourcing of spare-parts and such items as glue which is used in packaging the product. These innovations greatly accounted for the impressive recovery of the Company.

When he left the Company, he was deeply moved by the gestures of endearment expressed by both the staff and the other directors who were his colleagues. He was given an elaborate send-off and presented with valuable gifts. Some of the workers were almost shedding tears that he was leaving them. They regretted that they were going to lose his devotion to duty, fair-play, benevolence, affability and open-mindedness. His single-minded devotion to duty was inspirational to many workers who knew him closely enough. He used to be up some times till 3.00 a.m., receiving visitors, most of whom were the Company workers. Most of the workers had marvelled at his open-door policy. Prior to their encounter with him, they could scarcely have thought it possible for a cordial relationship to exist between the management and the workers such as they enjoyed under him.

The workers were particularly impressed at his service-oriented posture and readiness to entertain their complaints even till the early hours of the following day. This posture was quite touching in view of the fact that there was a directive that workers should not carry their complaints direct to any of the Directors. Ogbonnaya himself appreciated the spirit behind that directive, it was primarily meant to safeguard the Directors from being inundated with unending complaints. But he thought that keeping his door open to workers would improve human relations within the Company as well as break the barrier between the management and the workers. It worked perfectly well and explains the great respect and admiration in which the workers and the management had for him and the high esteem in which they held him in. That was why many workers shed tears at the thought that he was leaving them.

The workers' gesture touched him very deeply. It showed him that people can still appreciate good services rendered to them. This once more kindled his desire to serve people in whatever capacity he finds himself.

Apart from his stint at the NIGERCEM, he was the pioneer, National President of Raw Material Society of Nigeria (1985). The principal aim of this organization was to spur interest in local sourcing of raw materials in Nigeria. This is well before the Federal Government of Nigeria saw the wisdom in establishing the Raw Material Research and Development Council (RMRDC) which gave official impetus to the aims of the Raw Material Society of Nigeria. The society was formed by those Nigerians who were deeply worried by the fact that Nigerian economy overly depends on external forces. It is sad that our economy was dependent on external forces for not only equipment and highly skilled man-power but also raw materials, many of which are very abundant in the country. As a way out of the situation, the society was formed so as to bring members to work in concert towards developing and expanding Nigeria's raw material base as a first step in the quest for economic self-determination.

Whether it was the activities of the Raw Material Society of Nigeria that informed the establishment of the Raw Materials Research and Development Council of Nigeria or whether it was just set up in immediate response to the National and global economic straits is not quite clear, especially as the government has never given credit to the Raw Material Society of Nigeria.

Whatever may be the case, as a tacit recognition of the noble role of the Raw Material Society of Nigeria, the Federal Government appointed its President, Ogbonnaya Onu, a member of the governing Council of the Raw Material Research and Development Council of Nigeria. In this capacity he worked very hard with his colleagues to engineer researches into local sourcing of raw materials for Nigerian industries, especially as the economic crunch had made it extremely difficult for industrialists to sustain a steady importation of their

raw materials. The harsh economic situation in Nigeria made many industries that depended on importation of their raw materials to fold up. Even those which did not fold up operated below capacity. It was this situation that gave birth to the formation of the Raw Material Society of Nigeria and later, the Raw Material Research and Development Council of Nigeria.

In the meantime, the efforts of these two bodies have started yielding beneficial results as many industries have been steadily increasing their local raw material imputes. Even many companies that had hitherto folded up bounced back into business as their proprietors became sensitized to availability of local raw materials for their needs.

Equally, Ogbonnaya Onu served the nation and humanity at large in various other capacities. For instance, he was one time National Chairman, Task Force on Textile Wearing Apparel and Leather Sector of the Economy. This was a befitting tribute to a man who has expended a lot of energy on cultural nationalism, especially as it pertains dressing. Even, while he was at the University of California, most of his public appearances were in traditional attires. And even as the Chief Executive of Abia State, he has always put on traditional wears. This is one of his ways of preserving what is good and valuable in Nigeria.

Also, he was a member of the National Universities Commission's Committee on the Review of non-salary conditions of service of University staff. In this capacity, he brought his wealth of experience to bear on helping to salvage the University system from collapsing.

Furthermore, he was a member, Editors Advisory Board for Nigerian Financial Review (1988), Member, the Academy of Political Science, New York (1981) Registered Engineer with the Council of Registered Engineers of Nigeria (COREN); member of Governing Council and Lifetime Deputy Governor, American Biographical Institute Research Association (U.S.A), 1987; member, Executive Council, Nigerian Society of Chemical Engineering 1985; Chairman, Rivers/Cross River/Akwa Ibom Chapter, Nigerian Society of Chemical

Engineers; Vice President, Rotary Club of Port Harcourt 1988-89; President, Rotary Club of Port Harcourt 1990-91; member, People's Club of Nigeria; member, Ugo Youths Club of Nigeria; and member of the Ancient and Noble Order of St. John (KSJ).

From the above record, it is evident that several brilliant colours decorated the cap of Ogbonnaya even though he remained in a relatively quiet environment (the University). His dynamic and leadership qualities could not be hidden both within and outside the University. The nature and composition of the various associations he led, the demands of local and national assignments to which he was constantly called and his ability to mobilize them towards achieving the desired goals eloquently testify for his charisma, affability, sagacity, intelligence, indefatigability and strict adherence to institutional and group ideas. With these qualities, he successfully pioneered and nurtured such organizations as the Izzi County Secondary School Old Boys' Association of which he is the National President; the Uburu 14 which brought young intellectuals in Uburu together for the purpose of community service and promoting education; Nigerian Society of Chemical Engineers in Rivers State, as well as resuscitating and rejuvenating the Old Afikpo Development Association which was virtually dead before he took up the gauntlet to establish it on a sound and firm footing. Everywhere, the organizational ingenuity of Ogbonnaya manifests itself with astonishing success – building up something almost out of nothing, introducing order and peace in pursuit of group, and ultimately human interests.

In those various capacities he has served the University, groups, institutions and the nation at large, Ogbonnaya Onu has successfully built up an image of a dynamic achiever who knows how to render honest and devoted service to the people. In those capacities, he unequivocally demonstrated a deep understanding of leadership as a position of service to the people and humanity at large, and that leadership demands some sacrifices from the leader(s). This conception has helped to distinguish him among his colleagues and he usually put it

into practice in the various institutions he had headed. It is therefore, not surprising that on being sworn-in as Governor, he chose to be addressed as "Chief Servant."

His sterling leadership qualities could not be ignored by the public both local, national and international. This is evidenced by the numerous honours and recognitions bestowed on him ever before he became the Chief Executive of Abia State. These include: a Medal of Honour whose listing appeared in the International Directory of Distinguished Leadership; inclusion in the 1980 who's who section of Defence and Foreign Affairs Handbook, inclusion in the Directory of International Biography as A Man Of Fame; winning the Distinguished Service Award of the Raw Materials Research and Development Council; nomination as The Man Of The Year (1990) by the American Biographical Institute. He is also a recipient of many traditional titles in recognition of his numerous public-oriented services. They include: the *Ozurumba* (Man of Fame) of Orlu (1989) and the *Odiukonamba* (Rarebreed) of Eziudo Mbaise (1990).

These traditional titles are instructive on the public perception of his roles in the society. And it is interesting that the above-mentioned titles were not bestowed on him by his community (Uburu) nor her neighbours. This fact underscores the veracity of such honours as not borne out of sentiments but out of a heart-felt appreciation of a man who dedicated his energy for the service of his people and mankind at large.

The title of *Ozurumba* bestowed on him by the people of Orlu confirms his impartiality and benevolence towards all. For the title *Ozurumba* is an Igbo word which means "present in every land." This shows that the activities of Ogbonnaya Onu were far-reaching and for good. This implies that he was not a sectionalist who would cling to his community and benefit his only his kinsmen but one who was impartial and helpful to as many as he could help irrespective of where the person comes from. He was like the sun that shines everywhere.

Also, the other title *Odiukonamba*, is insightful of people's perception of him. This title, *prima facie*, contradicts the earlier mentioned one. But a deeper analysis reveals their

compatibility. *Odiukonamba* means "something that is rare in other lands" or "something not easily found in other lands", whereas, *Ozurumba* means "present in every land." This apparent contradiction is resolved when we apply the *Ozurumba* to his benevolent activities and *Odiukonamba* to his personality. Interpreted in this way the two titles combine to underscore the fact that although his activities are felt in many lands, his kind of person is hard to find in other lands. Indeed, it is not very easy to find that combination of extreme intelligence, public – spiritedness, dynamism, humility and handsomeness thoroughly wrought in one person as God did in *Ogbonnaya Onu*

Onu's Philosophy Of Life

Many readers may wonder whether there is any connection between Onu and philosophy. After all, he was a chemical engineer and not a philosopher. Or is the writer merely foisting the name "philosopher" on him simply because he read philosophy? Are philosophers not those esoteric people who usually find problems where none exists and whose arguments have no beginning nor end? This and other misconceptions about philosophy and philosophers abound. However, what such people do not know is that we can employ the term "philosophy" in a broad sense as well as in a restrictive sense. In the latter sense, philosophy is the product of highly sophisticated thought often developed about technical problems. In this sense, philosophy is the product of a rational quest for truth, meaning and logical interconnectedness of our fundamental ideas (ideas that are cardinal in the determination of the truth or falsity of other ideas). In this sense, the term philosophy is usually associated with such great thinkers as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Hobbes, Machiavelli, Nkrumah, Awolowo and Azikiwe.

In the broad sense of the term, philosophy can mean the product of any consciously-held belief(s) or idea(s). In this broad sense, we correctly say that "we begin to have a philosophy just as soon as we begin to get the idea that there is a world of real things and begin to distinguish between those real things and imaginary things" (Thompson 1961:31). In this sense, a child's early awareness of the difference between a fairy story and a story of something that "really happened" is a part of his introduction to philosophy.

To put the matter more plainly, when we say that somebody has a philosophy of life, we mean that such a person has a set of

certain personal beliefs and convictions which inform his or her policies and actions. Those beliefs are said to be personal only to the extent that a person appreciates them or has formulated them and held them seriously as his general **framework** for action. From this explanation, following the broad sense definition of philosophy, anybody may be said to have a philosophy that has any knowledge or beliefs in which he has any consistent personal interest.

So what we shall be discussing as Onu's philosophy of life are those basic principles of life which he has formulated from reflecting on the nature of things to serve as a general compass for personal and interpersonal actions. Although those principles are not cast in the mould of a wholistic philosophy characteristic of philosophical system-builders, they span over areas of considerable interest to give us reasonable insight into the working of Onu's mind in diverse spheres of life. We can now begin our analysis of principles that generally guide Onu's policies and actions by first considering his conception of reality.

Onu's Conception of Reality

In philosophy, any talk about the nature of reality properly belongs to the branch called metaphysics. Metaphysics as a branch of philosophy is often simply defined as the theory of reality and it principally deals with the nature and character of reality. It is customary for anybody to have a metaphysics or theory (or at least some ideas) of what can be called real or what actually exists or does not exist. It does not matter whether one's view on reality is consciously held or not.

In general terms, metaphysical positions can be broadly categorized into three, namely: monists, dualists and pluralists. The monists are those thinkers who maintain that there is only one fundamental reality: matter or mind for the materialists and idealists respectively. In other words, all theories that identify reality with material things fall under materialism. Within this group we find such early Greek philosophers as Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes, Domicritus and such modern

philosophers as Ludwig Feuerbach, Karl Marx and other Marxists. On the other hand, any doctrine which affirms that mind, or the spiritual and ideal, is basic to reality and denies that the non-mental or non-ideal has any real existence in its own right is known as idealism. Plato and Hegel are among the greatest exponents of idealism.

Dualists are those thinkers who maintain that there are two separate existents, mind and matters, which may be related but neither of which is a property, phase or aspect of the other. Rene Descartes is one of the greatest exponents of dualism. Finally, Pluralists maintain that there are many existents or realities. Prominent among members of this group is a German philosopher called Leibnitz who holds that reality is a galaxy of infinite number of substances which he called monads.

Given these metaphysical positions, we discover that Onu falls within the dualist group. This is because, like the traditional African metaphysical position, he affirms the reality of both spirit and matter. He does not reduce mental or spiritual activities into brain/material processes as some materialists like J.J.C. Smart and U.T.C. Place have done; nor regard the material world as a mere shadow of the spiritual or ideal world as Plato did. He rather affirms, in the true spirit of dualism, the independent existence of spirit and matter. This position notwithstanding, Onu maintains that when the question of superiority arises, spirit is superior to matter in the sense in which God, the Supreme Spirit is said to be the Creator of all things both material and spiritual. But this fact does not make material things spiritual or unreal. For the reality of material things is conferred on them by God who created all things.

Indeed, Onu strongly affirms his belief in the Christian God and the story of creation as contained in the Holy Bible. In this regard he declares "God Himself is known to be God of creativity who creates something out of nothing" (Onu April 21, 1992:10). As a matter of fact, Onu himself and his family are practicing Christians of the Roman Catholic Church denomination and are thoroughly influenced by Christian virtues and humanism.

From his theistic position, Onu draws a great inspiration from the Holy Bible in the onerous task of nation-building. He also usually seeks to inspire his subjects to greater heights:

The greatness and anointment of the good people of Abia State have severally been foretold in God's Holy Book, the Holy Bible. In Matthew 1:7, we are a third generation descendants of Solomon, the wise. Also in Luke 1:5, we are told that Zacharias, the husband of Elizabeth who begot John the Baptist, was of the stock of Abia.

From the foregoing, it is crystal clear that we are God's own people. The implications of this fact are quite obvious. It places a special and higher responsibilities on us as a people. We, as God's own people, are expected to demonstrate *True* and *Practical Love* towards our fellow human beings. We are also expected to be apostles of *Peace* and *Goodwill*.

Thus, my people, it becomes clear that our Government's policy of peace and love within and outside Abia is not incidental. It is a conscious policy persistently and relentlessly being pursued by the Government of Abia State because our Father is the God of *Peace* and *Love* (Onu April 26, 1992:1).

Onu strongly believes in peace and love as the principles that should guide human relationships. This is because "there is reward in loving. Love brings peace. Peace brings prosperity. Peace within our borders, peace with our neighbours, breeds prosperity" (Onu April 26, 1992:2). Hence, the principle of peace and love is cardinal in influencing the official policies of his Administration.

It is in pursuance of the principle of peace, love and co-operation within Abia State and the entire nation that made him to champion the Conference of the 30 Governors in Nigeria. The need for such a conference, Onu maintains, arose from the very first day they, the Governors, were sworn-in. This is because they shared common problems and prospects. The Governors found that since they are to relate to the Federal Government, Local Governments, the State Assemblies and the Judiciary, there are bound to be areas of friction and areas that need smoothening. These are shared problems that would require exchange of ideas in order to maintain peaceful relations that would enable the states to pursue their

developmental projects for the benefits of their people and the nation at large. For this reason, many Governors met and mandated the Kwara State Governor to summon a meeting of all the Governors. This first meeting was Chaired by the host, the Kwara State Governor. It was decided that the second meeting was to be Chaired by the Abia State Governor, Dr. Ogbonnaya Onu, who has also Chaired some other subsequent meetings.

The Governors agreed to meet on a fairly regular basis to discuss matters of common interest to the States in particular and the nation at large. This development is auspicious. A situation whereby the 16 NRC Governors and the 14 SDP Governors meet together on a regular basis to discuss State and national problems augurs well for the Third Republic and raises hope of its survival. This unprecedented sign of maturity that forebears parochial cleavages along party lines in the face of serious national issues was totally absent in the Second Republic when Governors in different parties found it difficult to meet in any cordial atmosphere. Besides, in the previous Republics, Governors that were not in the same party with the incumbent President often tended to frustrate the President's visit to their States. Indeed, Onu firmly believes that the Conference of the 30 Governors should continue so as to help the Third Republic to be stable and survive.

It was in recognition of his enormous contributions to the development of traditional institutions, peace, co-operation and progress in the States and Nigeria at large that prompted the Eastern States' Chiefs from Abia, Akwa Ibom, Rivers, Cross River and Anambra States to confer on him the title of "Dike – Neme Udo of Eastern Nigeria" during one of their meetings at the Palace of Eze Benard Enweremadu in Ngwa-Ukwu on 17th May, 1993. Actually, Onu is a man of peace. He believes that peace helps to build a person, a group, a State, a Nation and the world at large, while violent conflicts and wars destroy. And since his overriding objective in life is to build and not to destroy, he adopts peace, encourages it and preaches it wherever he goes. This noble disposition has greatly promoted

peace and co-operation in Abia State where, through consultations, he tries to cement the various segments of the society into an understanding and co-operative whole.

The Nature of Man and Man's Relationship with his Fellow Human Beings

The metaphysics of man has continued to be a matter of interminable controversy to man. For, while the metaphysical monists vehemently maintain that man is essentially spiritual or material according to whether one is a spiritual/idealist or a materialist respectively; the dualists maintain that man is a dual being: spirit and body. Onu shares the dualistic view of man.

Since he accepts the dual nature of man, he believes that the proper development of man is that which takes care of this dual nature: that caters for his spirit and body. This belief makes him to encourage activities and institutions that promote the spiritual well-being of the people such as the development and application of science and technology for society's development.

Onu is convinced that without the spiritual development of man in a truly godly way, his physical development will hardly profit the society much since an ungodly man is a bestial man. It is the spiritual man that builds the society while the physical man, who has lost the restraining and admonishing voice of the spirit of God resident in one, tears society apart. It is, therefore, important to balance physicality with spirituality in the fear and respect of God. This explains why Onu does not fail to worship God on a regular basis.

Consequently, Onu has allowed the ideals of Christian humanism to shape his vision of life and inter-personal relationship. He strongly believes that human life here on earth is temporal and that eternity awaits man beyond the grave either with God or with the Devil, depending on one's desert. For this reason, man should not live his life as if everything ends here on earth. He should remember that God will demand an account of his life on earth as the Christians have been preaching. Therefore, a successful life here on earth is one that guarantees

peace with God and man, and that is led in the love and service of God and man. For man is God's image and all men came from God who is a Father to all. Thus, man has a universal fatherhood in God.

Because of the universal brotherhood of man, Onu maintains that no real (spiritually sound) human being should feel happy while others are in bondage. This is because if one is truly human, the sufferings of others should affect one. How can one feel happy when one is enjoying and others who also work hard suffer? Onu maintains that one should feel bound when others are in bondage and must take it upon oneself to fight for their freedom. It was this thinking that essentially motivated him to venture into active politics. He felt bound by the bondage under which poverty and frustration held Nigerians and he decided to step out of the secure and serene Ivory Tower to the turbulent battlefield of party-politics in order to fight for the freedom of the people.

In the true light of a Christian humanist, Onu emphasizes that "The totality of human actions should be to bring happiness to all" and strongly admonished that "we should never work to bring anguish on people."

His Political Beliefs

Onu strongly believes that politics, contrary to the wide-spread view that it is a dirty game, is a noble vocation because it involves conscious attempts to efficiently mobilize and organize people towards obtaining the mandate of the people to exercise power on their behalf in pursuit of common goals under democracy. Onu conceives leadership as essentially service to the people. This is why he has chosen to be addressed as the "Chief Servant" of Abia State. He believes that a leader who actually understands the business of governance will see himself as a servant and humble himself in the service of the people.

Such a leader who is interested in serving his people can organize them well so that the different segments of the society can have the opportunity of contributing their best to the over

all well-being of the people. Therefore, such an important vocation as politics should not be left for those who neither understand it nor mean well for the society. Hence, Onu declares:

I got into politics not only to do my best to improve the lives and living standards of our people but also to demonstrate to our Youths that politics can be clean and respectable; that government can be honest and caring; and the rulers can be humble and obedient to the will of the people in a democracy (Onu January 17, 1992:1).

He recommends that the electorate should actively monitor the performances of their chosen servants/leaders so as to make leadership responsible, accountable and open to public inspection.

Onu is convinced that if the practice of monitoring the performances of leaders is encouraged, people will take more interest in their leaders and can do better to elect more qualified candidates. The people should be free to decide what they want and who can get them what they want. If the people want a progressive society, improved standard of living, they should elect the suitable people who can achieve these things. It is really the electorate that must work in concert to ensure that the right people occupy the right positions. This will help to remove the stigma on politics which makes people to see it as a dirty game. He argues that since politics is a means of organizing society and societal resources for the benefits of all, how can it be called a dirty game if it is properly done?

Onu strongly believes in democracy as the best system of government. This is principally because the system confers on the people the right to chose their leaders and monitor their activities at all times. No other system is as good as this. No other system of government than democracy allows the people, in whom ultimate power rightly reposes, to determine who wields political power on their behalf.

He is fully aware of the fact that the democratic system has some flaws such as the vulnerability of the electorate to the deceitfulness of some self-seeking politicians; the fact that "people too often put the interests of a political party above

those of the nation and those of the nation above the interests of mankind as a whole"; and the fact that sometimes, considerable pressure is "exerted on politicians to make them follow the party line, even when that line goes against their own consciences" (Toynbee and Ikeda 1989: 237). However, he agrees with Arnold Toynbee that despite these defects, "democracy is the least bad of the political systems that man has yet hit upon" (Toynbee and Ikeda 1989: 237).

Onu strongly abhors political violence which he believes has never achieved, nor will ever achieve, the desired political end. Violence of any form and in whatever guise has never solved any problem but usually worsens it. This lesson was rudely driven home to Onu whose family fell victim to the political violence which swept across the nation in the wake of the 1964 general election in Nigeria. There was violent destruction of life and property across the country, especially in the Western Region where it was large-scale.

He was in his first year as a student of Mary Knoll College, Okuku Ogoja, during that general election. But back home in the Old Ohaozara constituency, political tension filled the air. The battle line for the parliamentary representation of the people was drawn between Onyiba Aja Nwachukwu of the N.C.N.C. (National Council of Nigeria Citizens) and Engineer Aja Eze of the A.G. (Action Group). Onyiba Aja Nwachukwu hailed from neighbouring Okposi Community while late Engineer Aja Eze hailed from Uburu, Onu's clan. Incidentally, Eze David Aba, Onu's father, belonged to the N.C.N.C. which was a different party from that of his kinsman, Engineer Aja Eze. This put Eze David Aba in a dilemma: should he support his kinsman at the expense of his party or should he remain loyal to his party at the expense of his kinsman? The dilemma was indeed palpable!

During the turbulent campaign, the supporters of late Engineer Aja Eze thought that Eze David Aba did not give enough support to Aja Eze. Consequently, they attacked the family of Eze Aba, wrought some destruction and the family went into exile in Okposi for some length of time. However,

not all members of the family fled to Okposi: some remained at Uburu and this caused a physical separation of members of the family. The hardship, agony and anxiety of those in exile and those that remained at home was profound. This taught him that violence should not be encouraged as a means of resolving conflicts. Rather, the best and efficacious option is to seek peaceful resolution of conflicts. He therefore concludes that the best one can be is to be a man of peace: seeking peace at all times.

For this reason, Onu believes that one of the best ways to ensure peace is regular consultations which will enable the parties concerned engage in meaningful dialogue that could resolve whatever differences that exist amicably. For this reason, the Onu Administration has always maintained an open door policy to enable citizens of the State have easy access to their 'Chief Servant' in order to raise questions and obtain explanations on any Government policies which are of interest to them. And to minimize protocol and easy access to the Government, Onu has introduced two public fora to ensure regular consultation with the people. These are "Public Forum" and "Accountability Forum".

The "Public Forum" holds every Friday during which members of the public are permitted to meet with their Governor and discuss their problems without any previous appointment. Here, more than a hundred people meet the Governor and receive answers to their questions during each meeting.

The "Accountability Forum" is a programme instituted by the Onu Administration as a means whereby the State Chief Executive and members of his cabinet could meet with people in the rural areas to explain the policies and prospects of the Government as well as give answers to their questions. For the first time in the life of the people of Abia State, they have a Governor who truly regards himself as a servant who owes his master explanations on certain actions. This stresses the fact that Onu does not just call himself the Chief Servant in a deceitful manner: he acts as one.

By the various avenues of consultations which the Onu Administration has instituted, Onu has fully appreciated the fact that his Government is of the people, by the people and for the people. He has given practical demonstrations to his belief that democracy begins with the people and ends with the people. This cardinal principle of democracy which many governments which purport to be democratic usually ignore, is receiving full realization in Onu's Administration to the admiration of keen observers.

Onu's refinement as a democrat and one who truly wants to practicalize the ideals of democracy is evident in his vehement rejection of the perception of political contest as a war and political opponents as enemies. He believes that those who have these negative perceptions of democracy are either ignorant of the meaning and practice of the concept or are blinded by selfish inclinations to under-cut and disrupt the democratic process. Onu believes that in a true democracy, politicians are like beggars: begging the people in whom power resides to give them the mandate to exercise that collective power on their behalf. On this account, he who is able to obtain from the people is the person who can persuade and convince the people that he would exercise this power in their collective interest. Therefore, politicians who genuinely seek the interest of the people and understand the workings of democracy will appreciate the fact that the mandate is for the people to give and it usually will be used for them and not against them. From this observation, it is obviously foolish for politicians to regard opponents as enemies and often visit them with violence. This is because, as contestants, political opponents are co-beggars from the people who are the master of the political power. Therefore, it is for the master to decide whom to give and whom not to give. And after the decision of the master, what sense is there in the loser declaring war on the winner instead of fraternizing with him and congratulating him for being favoured by the master?

Onu strongly believes that it is the conception of political contest as a war and political opponents as enemies that is at the

root of political violence in any democratic process. Thus to demonstrate his rejection of this view, he openly called on members of the other political party to join hands with him to realize the Abia Dream because what matters most is how to realize the well-being of the people and not what political party one belongs to. For whether one belongs to the NRC or the SDP, the brute fact is that one is an Abian: One is an Abian first before one is a member of either the NRC or the SDP. This shows the need to put party differences aside and join hands in the process of state and nation-building.

Onu on Racial Equality

Onu strongly believes that no race is inferior or superior to another and that the issue of racial superiority is a matter of propoganda by the imperialist nations against the colonized people of the world. He believes in the creative intelligence of man irrespective of race or colour and maintains that with determination, hardwork and dedication any person or group of persons can achieve success. His brilliant academic exploits at home and in the USA practically proved this belief. For though he was black, he was still able to compete favourably with his white colleagues in academic work through determination and hardwork. This fact convinces him that Nigeria, and any other currently technologically backward nation that cares, can develop and advance in the field of science and technology far beyond the level currently attained by the technologically advanced countries of the world, if she cultivates, encourages and rewards hardwork, intelligence and creativity.

We have so far examined Onu's philosophy of life which generally shape his thinking and policies in various areas of life. We can see that his philosophy of life permeates the various policies of his Administration. It has essentially given us a glimpse of the inner workings of Onu's mind which may not usually be accessible to public eyes but which run through the whole gamut of his official actions and pronouncements. Our understanding of his philosophy of life will help us to understand the man more and appreciate his vision and mission better, and perhaps elicit our co-operation in the task of realizing the Abia Dream.

Towards The Development Of Indigenous Technological Base For Nigeria

This chapter discusses the birth of Ogbonnaya Onu's vision for Nigeria in particular, and Africa and other under-developed nations in general. His was a vision borne out of intellectual struggle: it was a struggle to understand, explain and prescribe solutions for the general state of under-development in Nigeria despite her abundant human and material resources. As a patriot who has the vision of his country becoming a global power in no distant future, he is deeply agonized at the way things are going which continually make Nigeria to drift away from achieving greatness. He therefore undertook a critical analysis of the Nigerian situation and identified technology as the missing link between Nigeria and greatness.

His analysis reveals Nigeria's need for greatness, Nigeria's potentials for greatness and what can be done to actualize Nigeria's greatness - development of science and technology. It is necessary to discuss these issues under sub-headings in order to better achieve clarity in our exposition.

Nigeria's Need for Greatness

It is important to point out here that the term "greatness" as employed in this context means "outstanding ability." Thus when we say that a nation has achieved greatness, we mean that she has demonstrated outstanding ability in such vital areas as economy, politics and culture at the national and international levels. We mean that such a nation is sufficiently strong to defend herself militarily against any external aggression; economically strong and vibrant to determine her own destiny, feed her population, ensure a very high standard of living for her citizenry as well as be able to influence the destinies of other

nations of the world. Such a nation is also politically strong and stable, with the appropriate leadership to pursue and secure her interest in a highly competitive world, and earn and command the respect of other nations of the world.

From the above characterization of a great nation, it can be discerned that such a nation is strong, influential and highly respected in the comity of nations. But there are more fundamental reasons why Onu urges Nigeria (and, indeed, any other nation) to seek greatness. One of them is for the purpose of protecting national sovereignty . This is because, from the perspective of history,

the need for nations to aspire to greatness has become stronger with the passage of time. The protection of national sovereignty has become a major factor in the search for greatness. Indeed, genuine national independence becomes feasible when nations strive to be great in all its ramifications (Onu 1984:41-42).

Indeed, the survival of any nation hinges on her greatness which enables her to either determine the direction of change, or adequately adapt to the consequences of change.

In fact, history shows that

Even political entities which are not strong enough to defend themselves easily fall prey to external invasion and obliteration from history (Onu 1984:39).

He cited many instances to illustrate this point. They include the case of American Indians whose natural resources attracted settlers from all over Europe who took over the land and its resources and eventually marginalized the American Indians who were the owners of the land and original inhabitants of the areas. Equally, the rich agricultural and mineral resources of Australia attracted the early Dutch settlers and later the British who carried out brutal expeditions that nearly exterminated the Australian natives. In fact, the population of the original inhabitants was so decimated that today, "the Australian natives, the aborigines, number less than the half million which is estimated at less than one percent of the (original) population" (Onu 1984:39).

The need for nations to aspire to greatness, Onu argues, is borne out of the fact that;

All through history, those nations which were not sufficiently strong, and hence neither determined and controlled the direction of change, nor adequately accommodated their effects, either lost their sovereignty or were excluded from playing any meaningful role in world history. (Onu 1984:39).

This was exactly the fate which African countries and other colonized peoples of the world suffered. Their inability to determine and control the direction of change, and their inability to accommodate their effects caused them their sovereignty as well as their resources. The fate of those colonized peoples of the world has eloquently illustrated Kenneth Waltz's view on the cause of imperialism to the effect that;

Where gross imbalances of power exist, and where the means of transportation permit the export of goods and the instrument of rule, the more capable people ordinarily exert a considerable influence over those less able to produce surpluses (Waltz 1979:26).

This explains, to a great extent, why African societies were conquered and colonized by the more powerful nations of Europe.

Onu contends that the partition and subsequent colonization and humiliation of Africa "that cast a spell of darkness on the continent for nearly a century, could not have taken place if Africa was strong enough to follow the tide of change of those days" (Onu 1984:39-40). The change being spoken of here consists of change in the means of production, distribution and exchange as well as change in the social and political organisations. But such countries like Russia and Japan that revolutionized their economic and political modes of life were able to resist colonization and have, today, developed into great nations - with Russia being recognized as one of the global powers.

Furthermore, Nigeria should aspire to be great because throughout modern history, weak nations or kingdoms have always been manipulated by the strong, with neither their independence nor wishes respected. Indeed, they rarely have the strong voice needed in shaping man's history either within or outside their countries (Onu 1984:40). These points are

abundantly supported by history. Onu cites the cases of Don Afonso I of the ancient kingdom of the Congo, the Oba of Benin who reigned till 1897, King Jaja of Opobo and the Nana of Warri, the sovereignty and wishes of whose kingdoms were spoliated by the stronger imperialist powers.

King Don Afonso I of Congo had by 1526 decided to stop the degrading and humiliating slave trade in his kingdom being perpetuated by Portuguese merchants. King Afonso I, himself a practicing christian, therefore decided to complain to King John III of Portugal that Portuguese merchants daily seized his subjects both noblemen and servants and caused them to be sold into slavery. So devastating were their activities that his country was "being utterly depopulated" (Onu 1984:40). Therefore, he told John III that his country only needed teachers and priests from Portugal and not traders who would continue in the inhuman slave trade. His complaint was ignored and slave trade continued to thrive in his kingdom.

In the ancient kingdom of Benin which is part of the present-day Nigeria, the institutions, traditions and wishes of the people suffered severe blow in the hands of the British imperialists. In 1897, the British Vice-Consul, J.R. Philips, sent a message to the Oba of Benin requesting to visit him. The Oba turned down this request because he was performing an important ceremony known as the "Igue" which makes him sacred and divine. Disregarding the refusal of the Oba, J.R. Philips went ahead to visit the Oba. But unknown to the Oba, two of his chiefs had organized an ambush and "killed nearly all members of the expedition." This resulted in a punitive expedition organized by the British against the kingdom of Benin. Benin was ravaged by the British forces, the Oba deposed and later exiled, while all cultural artifacts which adorned the palace of the Oba were forcefully removed to British Museum and are now scattered all over Europe. This is why today, Nigeria, the home of those marvellous Benin arts, holds only the third largest collection of Benin arts (after those in the British Museum and Berlin) (Onu 1984:41).

The fate which befell king Jaja of Opobo for daring to be independent in thought and action is as pathetic as it is instructive. As a king of Opobo in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria and a recipient of Britain's Sword of honour from Queen Victoria for sending troops to fight with the British in their war against the Ashanti, Jaja ran into trouble as soon as he tried to curb the British ambition to control the hinterland trade which was the source of his power and prosperity. Unequivocally, he told the British that:

My first and last words are that the country belongs to me and I do not want white traders ... there. Anyone who wants to trade ... with me, ... could do so at the port of Opobo (K.D. Dike, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta* p. 43, quoted by Onu 1984:41).

This "affrontry" obviously angered the British Consul who invited him to "hear from the British Government". That was how King Jaja of Opobo was taken into exile in St. Vincent in the British West Indies. Similar fate befell the Nana of Warri who was exiled to Accra in 1894 for not being a good instrument to serve British interest.

All the cases cited above clearly spell the fate that awaits weak nations in their international relations. This fact can also be abundantly illustrated in contemporary times. For, despite the existence of such global organisations as the United Nations Organisation (UNO) with its various organs for ensuring international co-operation and world peace, the strong nations still oppress and prey on the militarily weak nations with impunity. In fact, Onu sums up the attitude of the strong nations towards the weak ones in our world most brilliantly as follows:

When dealing with the militarily weak nations of the world, they (strong nations) act as if they have the obligation to shape the world according to their own image. Within their spheres of influence, when their national interests are perceived to be even slightly threatened, they act in total disregard for established principles of international law and relations, completely disrespecting world opinion and in most cases even desecrate the concept of national sovereignty. This global power structure has further exposed the vulnerability of the weaker nations (Onu 1984:42)

The point to be taken very serious here is that whether in the past or in today's world, the weaker nations have little prospects of asserting and obtaining any rights whatsoever where such rights conflict with the interests of the stronger nations. Worst of all, there is no where the aggrieved weaker nations can go to effectively seek redress as the stronger nations seem to be at liberty in choosing which international law and obligations that they wish to obey or disobey, even United Nations Organisation's resolutions. Thus wherever they have interests they go all out to secure them irrespective of what it would cost other weaker nations so long as they are satisfied that it would not lead to the super-powers facing themselves in military warfare.

It is therefore expedient for Nigeria to aspire to greatness in all its ramifications because, despite all pretensions, the stronger nations still act on the principle that "might is right." However, the urge that Nigeria and other nations should strive to achieve greatness is not motivated by the desire to see Nigeria behaving like many great nations of today's world who aggressively pursue their self-interests in utter disregard of other nations' interests (especially, weaker ones) and world opinion. But the desirability of Nigeria achieving greatness is hinged on the fact that:

Nigeria with a large endowment of natural resources including crude oil and natural gas, has strong need to be self reliant in order to protect her territorial integrity (Onu 1984:46).

This point is very important because Nigeria's endowment with enormous natural resources still attracts much outside attention to her and one should not under-estimate the power of greed in the stronger nations of the world today. Such greed can push certain stronger nations into some adventure which might threaten the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Nigeria as a nation. The fear is that if Nigeria should continue in her present state of weakness despite her abundant human and material resources, stronger powers might wake up one day and attempt to re-colonize her. We should recall that it was the weakness of Africa despite her enormous resources that resulted in her partition and

subsequent colonization and humiliation. So if Nigeria must continue to survive as an independent nation, she must strive to achieve greatness in the shortest possible time. This point is underscored by the fact that in the present global power structure, weaker nations "must continuously search for greatness in order to even guarantee their own survival" (Onu 1984:44)

In fact, the vulnerability of weaker nations in the present global power structure can be easily illustrated with recent happenings. Onu cites such appropriate examples as the American invasion of Grenada in October 1983 and the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979.

On October 19, 1983, a military coup occurred in the Carribean Island of Grenada. Under the pretext of an invitation from Grenada's Governor General to protect the American citizens living on the Island, and advancing the course of democracy, America invaded Grenada and despite world-wide condemnation which the American action received, America remained adamant. This invasion has ominous implications. For it shows that America would not hesitate to use force when she deems it fit to achieve her national interests. And if we recall that America has representation in almost every country in the world, then we would appreciate the level of threat which this American approach to international issues poses to world peace.

Also, in 1968, the Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia and in December 1979 she shocked the world by invading Afghanistan which was a non-aligned nation sharing her northern border with the Soviet Union. This invasion was primarily undertaken in order to crush the insurrection of native moslems seeking provincial autonomy. The Soviet forces had to forestall this so that the moslem minority in Soviet Union would not follow their example and thereby create internal problems for her. It is lamentable that despite the world-wide condemnation which the Soviet action evoked, the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan lasted for more than five years. This invasion is "a classical example of how powerful nations

interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign, but weak, nations" (Onu 1984:43).

Furthermore, Nigeria needs to achieve greatness because the strong nations of the world dictate and exploit multilateral and bilateral relationships to their advantage and to the disadvantage of weak and poor nations. Thus,

The disparity in distribution of economic, military and political power between nations has never been wider and no hope of improvement is in sight. The situation has become so bad such that less than six percent of the world's population resident in the United States of America consume nearly forty percent of world's resources.(Onu 1984:44).

This is a pointer to the fact that the nations that currently benefit most from the prevailing economic and political situation are the industrialized and powerful ones. These powerful nations exploit world resources wherever they may be found to the utmost advantage of their people who, for this very reason, continue to enjoy higher standard of living at the expense of other peoples of the world who are in the majority. Hence, any attempt by the weak nations of the world, through a concerted effort, to reverse the situation such that the standard of living of those powerful nations will be reduced significantly will meet stiff resistance by those nations. "This leaves many of the less industrialized, developing nations, particularly those that are resource rich, exceedingly vulnerable" (Onu 1984:44).

The preparedness of the powerful nations to fully resist any attempt to redress the economic and political equation in such a way that it will favour the weak nations and cause the standard of living of their citizens to drop was amply demonstrated when the oil embargo in 1973/74 by some oil-producing countries which fell within the bracket of the less developed nations of the world threatened the standard of living of the industrialized world by causing the prices of oil to quadruple. America's reaction was swift and drastic: then Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger threatened military action against any attempt to strangle the industrialized world. In his words,

"I am not saying that there is no circumstances where we would not use force. But it is one thing to use it in the case of dispute over prices, it's another where there's some actual strangulations of the Industrial world" (Quoted by Onu 1984:44)

Kissinger's statement was soon given official blessing by the then president of the United States of America, Gerald Ford. This shows the extent to which the powerful nations can go in pursuing the interest and well-being of their people.

Ironically, the industrialized nations have no qualms in paying the underdeveloped nations of the world ridiculously low prices for their raw materials which they the industrialized nations process and export to those countries at exorbitant prices. Besides, American Government pays their farmers to limit their production, and hence increases prices of food "to levels where hunger and starvation have been recognized as a major problem of the developing world." Thus "if the developing world had been militarily strong, could they not have accused the United States of America of strangulating them"? (Onu 1984:45).

Onu further argues that Nigeria should strive to achieve greatness if she hoped to defend her interests and attract respect from other nations of the world. He stresses that if Nigeria remains in her present state of under-development and weakness, her national aspirations and interests can easily be spoliated by the stronger nations with impunity and she can hardly get redress anywhere, not even at the United Nations Organisation (U.N.O.).

He rightly argues that the structural and procedural defects of the U.N.O. makes it impossible for the body that is supposed to be the last hope of the weaker nations of the world in any conflict involving them and the stronger ones to perform her role efficiently. The U.N.O. which was primarily founded in 1945 to ensure world peace and maintain a semblance of balance of power was first of all weakened structurally by making the major victor powers (China, France, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the U.S.S.R.) permanent members of the Security Council with veto power. The defect inherent in the

structure of the U.N.O. is evident in the fact that although its General Assembly is open to all independent nations of the world, and although the General Assembly could discuss and recommend on a wide range of issues, and take decisions based on two third majority of members present and voting, the primacy of the Security Council (made up of fifteen members) is established in the important Article 12(1) which states that:

While the Security Council is exercising in respect of any dispute or situation the functions assigned to it in the present charter, the General Assembly shall not make any recommendation with regard to that dispute or situation, unless the Security Council so requests (Onu 1984:47).

Apart from the above fact the full implication of the power of Veto in the five powerful permanent members is that any one of them is capable of preventing a decision from being taken even if that member is in the minority of one. Onu draws the conclusion that:

It is therefore evident that in exercising their power of Veto, the permanent members have the ability to prevent Security Council action in disputes in which they are involved even if international peace and security are threatened (Onu 1984:47).

This has led to the practice of "Governments, where their own interests are involved, to go their way getting as much as they can, often times acting with little respect for the U.N. Charter and sometimes becoming involved in futile and costly conflicts' (Onu 1984:47). Thus in any conflict in which one of the major powers is involved, if she is convinced that the other major powers will not intervene, she will impose her will on the weaker power(s) and in such cases, the U.N. usually proved incapable of resolving such disputes. As a matter of fact, it is mostly

In cases where the great powers have been involved and have recognized that their interest in the restoration of peace transcends other considerations, that the United Nations and especially the Security Council has had important successes in global crisis management (Onu 1984:47).

To illustrate this point, the U.N. was successful in resolving the 1962 Cuban Missile crises and the 1973 Middle East War both of which involved the United States of America and the U.S.S.R. Hence, whenever there are conflicts which show signs of leading to confrontation between the major powers, the machineries of the U.N. and the Security Council are usually employed very effectively. But whenever "there is a disagreement among the big powers, the United Nations has suffered some form of paralysis" (Onu 1984:48). For example, the South African imbroglio occasioned by the apartheid policies of the South African white minority Government. The economic interests of such big powers as the United States of America and Britain made them to use their enormous influence in the world to paralyse the U.N. decisions on the South African issue which still remains with us till today, to the shame of the world.

The manipulation of bilateral and multilateral relationships by the big powers in furtherance of their own interests shows that nothing else matters to the big powers except how their interests can be best served no matter whose ox is gored. This underscores the urgent need for Nigeria to achieve greatness. For,

any attempt by the weaker nations to rely on the stronger ones to protect their interests, in many cases can be highly misplaced, except where those nations subordinate their foreign policy prerogatives, which in practical terms may amount to loss of sovereignty (Onu 1984:57).

Indeed, this is the fate of most underdeveloped nations of the world, especially the African nations. This has caused most of those poor nations of the world to be mere appendages to the rich ones: they hold no independent opinion on international issues except those held by the big powers on whom they depend.

Onu stresses the need for nations, especially Nigeria, to achieve greatness and to realize that there is no international organization that can provide effective refuge for weak nations in conflicts involving them and the more powerful ones. This situation is discomfoting because even:

The United Nations, based on its present structure and mode of operation, can play an active role in the pursuit and preservation of peace only at the convenience of the big powers, such that the political interests of such nations closely approximate those of the big power, such a weak nation in the event of a conflict may not receive adequate and effective protection from the Organization due to the exigencies of politics (Onu 1984:53).

Therefore, any nation which is not strong enough to defend herself and her interests will always remain a prey to the stronger nations.

Furthermore, Onu urges Nigeria and other notable nations in the Southern hemisphere where power vacuum easily attracts the struggle for sphere of influence by the stronger powers from the Northern hemisphere to strive to attain greatness. It is this constant struggle for global influence by the big powers of the North that usually creates tension and constitutes the greatest danger to world peace. But if strong powers can emerge in the South, they can help to introduce stability in international relations. Onu articulates this more laconically thus:

The emergence of strong powers particularly in the Southern hemisphere, which at least command regional influence will reduce the areas of competition between the superpowers and consequently minimize world tension. This will obviously aid world peace if countries like India in South Asia, Nigeria in West Africa, and Brazil in South America can grow into truly powerful nations, they can develop amongst themselves a new triangular power structure that will introduce stability in global relations (Onu 1984:62)

He contends that the power vacuum is more pathetic in Africa than any other region of the world. He points out that the intolerable high degree of foreign interference can be measured by the number of military presence in the continent. He reveals that by 1984, the mainland hosts 33 bases and facilities while the surrounding islands have sixteen (Onu 1984:62). These are besides the network of very sensitive communication facilities all over the coast of West Africa. "The intelligence gathering capabilities of these stations clearly endanger African States' territorial integrity and sovereignty" (Onu 1984:62). Hence,

foreign soldiers stationed all over Africa are often used to install and sustain governments perceived to serve and protect the interests of these foreign powers.

He further notes with dismay that the Organization of African Unity (O.A.U.) which one would have expected to play a major role in protecting Africa's interests "has shown itself to be structurally and constitutionally fragile to effectively champion the cause of continental rebirth" (Onu 1984:62). To further compound the problems of the Organization, the levels of poverty and weakness of member nations are so severe that they hardly meet their financial obligations to the Organization and "many of them have lost a strong voice in many issues that involve power politics" (Onu 1984:63). He notes that the powerlessness of the O.A.U. is a direct result of the over-dependence of member countries on the industrialized world and predicts that this powerlessness of the Organization in vital issues of global nature will persist until member countries are "strengthened economically to enable them stand on their feet" (Onu 1984:63).

The powerlessness of the O.A.U. in pursuing and protecting Africa's interests is evident in the fact that:

any time an issue becomes a contest of control of Africa's policy-making between independent African and extra-continental influence, the organization has been found wanting. This is basically due to the absence of a strong power with global influence within the membership of the organization (Onu 1984:63).

This situation makes it imperative for African nations to aspire to achieve greatness and Nigeria should be in the fore-front in this regard in view of her enormous human and material resources. For,

Nigeria's attainment of greatness will help fill the political vacuum which currently exists (on the African continent), and assist in eliminating the tension which the present situation breeds. This will no doubt contribute in the search for global peace (Onu 1984:65).

So far, we have examined some of the reasons why Nigeria should aspire to be great and truly strive for greatness. They include the need to preserve territorial integrity and national

sovereignty: the need to defend and pursue her interests in this highly competitive world; the need to earn and/or command respect from other nations of the world as well as the need to fill the power vacuum which currently exists in African continent. Now, having discussed these important issues which emphasize Nigeria's need for greatness, it is pertinent to examine some important conditions for achieving greatness in order to know what Nigeria (and other weak nations) have and what they lack among those conditions.

Factors Influencing the Greatness of any Nation

Onu's discussion of this issue led him into two broad categorization of factors influencing the greatness of a nation: they are the objectively immeasurable and the objectively measurable factors. He placed greater emphasis on the latter. Among the objectively immeasurable factors which influence the power and greatness of any nation are religion and a common language. These have often played integrative roles in the greatness of nations. For instance religion plays an integrative role in Isreal even though it is not homogenous. Also the possession of a common language is a strong unifying factor in the United States of America. However, we are not suggesting that the absence of common religious beliefs and common language would hinder a country from becoming great if some of the objective factors are present. For instance, the defunct U.S.S.R. achieved greatness in spite of the absence of a common language and common religion.

The objectively measurable factors in the power and greatness of any nation according to Onu are:

- (a) the possession of natural resources,
- (b) large population,
- (c) geographical location and
- (d) possession and application of technological knowledge.

These are the most significant measurable factors even though such factors as the psychological and relational aspects of power should not be ignored. All these factors combine at various

levels and degrees to make nations great. Let us discuss them one after the other.

Possession of Natural Resources (Raw materials)

There is little doubt that the possession of natural resources can play a very important role in a nation's greatness. However, the mere availability of abundant natural resources is not enough to make a nation great, it is the ability of that nation to successfully harness such resources and be able to convert it into a stock or remunerative capital such as industries, working skill, ports and so on, which promises continuous future flow of wealth that makes a nation powerful. As Onu puts it;

It is this enduring wealth that generates power, when a nation is capable of transforming the transitory streams of income from non-renewable natural resources into capital goods at home, with a yield for the future (Onu 1984:71).

To illustrate the fact that it is not so much the availability of natural resources that matters but the use a nation is able to make of those resources, Onu cites the cases of the Middle East countries and Spain which possessed abundant natural resources but are not considered to be powerful nations because of their inability to use their earnings to develop assets that promise a future stream of income. Considering the Middle East countries such as Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia where large oil deposits abound, "the presence of this resource has made these nations rich, but they cannot by virtue of this be considered powerful" (Onu 1984:71). Equally, Spain had enormous natural resources from her Latin American colonies some hundred of years ago, especially silver from the mines of Potosi, but failed to create wealth which could generate continuous flow of income and eventually fell back to her poor state.

On the other hand, a country like Japan, which is poor in natural resources still manages to become one of the most economically powerful nations of the world because of her highly developed industry and advanced technological base. As a matter of fact,

Japan has virtually no petroleum, iron ore, coal, or other mineral resources, and is dependent on imports for almost 85 per cent of its energy resources. She is one of the most densely populated nations, with only one-sixth of her land arable; yet with this near barrenness of physical resources can support over one hundred million people at a standard of living that is enviable to many (Onu 1984:71).

The case of Japan shows that a country can still achieve economic greatness even if she is poor in natural resources. The big lesson that Japan's attainment of greatness holds for all nations of the world is that:

Sophisticated technological development can convert nations poor in the possessions of strategic natural resources into positions of greatness. (However) when this capability is combined with the possession of strategic natural resources, their greatness becomes reinforced and such nations command immense powers (Onu 1984:74).

Large Population: Large population is another identifiable factor in the greatness of a nation. Onu maintains that while the presence of a large population does not necessarily confer greatness to a nation, except in the case of China which was granted a great-power status by the United Nations after the Second World War, "it has been very difficult for nations without large populations to be very powerful" (Onu 1984:75). The greatness of the United States of America, Russia, Germany, and to a great extent France was largely contributed to by large populations. Thus although nations with large populations may still be weak, there is no doubt that large population has a great potential for making a nation great. This is because given a large population and a well-developed manpower development policy with appropriate emphasis on science and technology, a large population can be converted into a "huge knowledge resource . . . that builds the industrial and military capabilities of nations and ultimately determine the level of greatness attainable by them" (Onu 1984:75). Besides a country with a highly knowledgeable and skilled population can earn enormous incomes through the employment of her citizens by nations whose citizens lack them.

The above point is underscored by the current situation in most African countries, especially Nigeria, whose natural resources rely on foreign experts and technical know-how for their exploitation. Because of this, the incomes which accrue to those highly-skilled foreign workers are usually remitted to their home-countries. Such remittances help cushion the local economies and make them grow. This is particularly the case with Britain and some other European nations.

However, the role of large population in the greatness of nations is largely dependent on the level of science and technology which those nations possess. This is because technology "has been shown to determine to what degree a large population can be a factor in the greatness and power of nations" (Onu 1984:78). For in the absence of a well-developed technological base, large population remains only a potential to the greatness of a nation. This is the case with Nigeria and India which have large population but still remain weak nations.

Geography: This is another recognizable factor in the greatness of nations. The extent to which geography is a factor in the greatness of nations can easily be illustrated with such nations as the former Soviet Union, the United States of America, Britain and Japan. The role that the enormous land mass of the former Soviet Union played in securing her against successive foreign invasions is historic. It was this land mass and difficult terrain that weighed down Napoleon Bonaparte's grand army in 1812 and spelt disaster for his entire "Moscow Campaign". It also greatly helped to prevent the invasion of Russia in the two World Wars.

The case of the United States of America is no less illustrative of how geography contributes to the greatness of nations. America was located between two large bodies of water measuring three and six thousand miles wide to the east and to the west respectively. This fact is a strong security factor to her because it minimized 'the number of neighbouring countries whose unfriendliness can threaten national security' (Onu 1984:78). As for Britain and Japan, their locations in the sea helped them to develop naval forces that inspired awe in other

nations. Indeed, Great Britain was able to survive the invasion bid by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1807 because her geography as an island that can only be gained access to by the sea made her to develop the best naval defence at the time and with that navy, defeated Napoleon's naval forces at the battle of Trafalga even though the French navy had 23 warships against Britain's 18. Yet, Napoleon had known that to engage Britain in battle at sea was an expensive gamble but he had no other choice in his strong bid to bring that intransigent nation to her knees than through the available means, the sea. And, were it not for the sea, there was little doubt that France would have invaded Britain given the strength of the Napoleon's army. It was also the British advance in the technology of sea transportation and warfare that enabled Britain, at the height of her global influence, to colonize almost half of the world. It is instructive that:

island-nations conscious of their relative isolation have generally been conscious of the need to strengthen their security and develop an effective transportation and communication net-work. This inclination has contributed in motivating significant technological innovations (Onu 1984:79).

This fact greatly accounts for their naval prowess.

While the nations mentioned above are strengthened by their geographical positions, some nations are somehow weakened by their locations. For instance, land-locked nations that have no direct access to the sea readily adumbrate this point. Such nations have to rely on the goodwill of their neighbours to gain access to the sea. Such goodwill is often cultivated at the expense of dynamic foreign policies of the geographically disadvantaged nations. This greatly inhibits the attainment of greatness by such nations. A typical illustration here is Zambia, a land-locked East African country. According to Onu, Zambia has to rely heavily on South Africa, a country she vehemently detests because of her (South Africa's) apartheid policies, for access to the sea. This situation invariably incapacitates Zambia and prevents her from pursuing strong foreign policies that might likely be opposed to the interest of the South African Government.

Onu notes that the recent advances in technology have tended to diminish the significance of geography as a factor in the greatness of nations, especially militarily. This is because:

The presence of land-based inter-continental ballistic missile, airborne, and submarine-launched nuclear missiles, means that all corners of the globe no matter the extent of their land mass can be destroyed from a military command, located several hundreds of miles away (Onu 1984:79-80).

For all the three objectively measurable factors discussed above, a critical element in their optimum utilization for the greatness of nations is technology: "Without technology, these factors that may have been decisive in the past, now have very limited impact" (Onu 1984:80). In fact, to underscore the critical role of science and technology in the greatness of modern nations, it can be unequivocally asserted that any of the above-mentioned traditional factors of great nations can be combined with technology by any nation to achieve greatness. Science and technology have almost undisputably been called the key to greatness. Thus there is hardly any great nation today which does not have advanced science and technology. It is this reason that we need to devote some time to consider technology as the pivot in the greatness of modern nations.

Technology: Technology as the determining factor in the greatness of modern nations can easily be appreciated when we consider what makes the generally recognized great nations of the modern world great. There is little doubt that when we talk of great nations today - economically, politically and militarily - the indices of greatness are usually the fruits of advanced science and technology. The super-power status conferred on America and Russia was not conferred by natural resources, large population nor geography (even though they might have played some role) but by advanced science and technology.

Modern science which began primarily as a primitive venture of individual questing minds without official interest, and technology which followed in the wake of science and was, apart from defence, predominantly the preserve of closely

guarded commercial secrecy inside private industry, has now acquired such preponderant importance that:

there is no modern government which does not pride itself on its interest in scientific and technological matters (Hailsham 1963:11).

In fact, huge governmental spending and the development of political interest in the scientific and technological has

rested upon the clear demonstration that a nation's power to prosper in peace, survive in war, and command the respect of its neighbours depends very largely on its degree of scientific and technological advance. All nations, therefore, slave and free, developed and undeveloped, do their best to achieve a high level of scientific and technological investment within their borders. With many statesmen, perhaps with most, it is a simple question of survival of their national societies and the growth of their national wealth that they should do so (Hailsham 1963:11-12).

This quotation has succinctly captured the pervasive importance of science and technology in modern times.

It is necessary to point out that modern technology can hardly be separated from science. This is why it is appropriate to talk about science and technology. To make the matter clearer, it will be pertinent to seek to define the two terms and find out their relationship. Let us begin with the concept "science".

The term science can be defined in several ways. According to V.F. Lenzen, "the term science denotes a critical activity of discovery as well as the systematic knowledge founded thereon" (Runes 1962:94). In another breath, Lenzen asserts that "science is critically controlled and ordered knowledge". Also, J. Ladriere defined science as:

a type of activity of which the proper and immediate aim is to provide more extensive, precise and trustworthy knowledge (Ladriere 1977:20).

Furthermore, J. Bronowski defines science as "the organization of our knowledge in such a way that it commands more of hidden potential of nature"(Dow n.d.:5).

Whatever the differences in the conception of science may be, most scientists would very well agree that science is a theoretical discipline which employs the methods of observation,

induction, deduction and empirical verification in its inquiry into natural phenomena; and that

The primary aim of science is the discovery of the nature and laws of things and events so that we may understand and explain them (Wolf 1962:498).

Equally, when we ask the question, "What is technology?" we are also presented with several definitions. For the purpose of convenience, let us take a few of such definitions. According to I.I. Ibrahim, technology is "the application of science and knowledge to the needs of man and society" (Nader and Zahtan 1969:42). In a similar vein, J. Ladriere maintains that:

The concrete, material mediation between science and daily life is provided by technology, which thus represents, as it were, the visible face of the phenomenon 'science' (Ladriere 1977:10-11).

This position largely agrees with Onu's view that in comprehensive terms, technology "involves the social and economic atmosphere within which the systematic application of scientific knowledge to practical tasks can take place" (Onu 1984:89).

The above definitions seem to agree with one of the most popular, but by no means generally accepted, conception of technology as "an applied science". This conception implies a complementary relationship between science and technology and tends to suggest that science comes first and technology follows. But Wolf does not think that this way of depicting the relationship between science and technology is totally correct. While he would concede that science and technology are intimately connected and even hardly separable, especially in modern times, he still believes that:

their relationship is often misunderstood and historically misrepresented ... Technology is frequently described as merely "applied science". This identification rather suggests that one begins with the scientific knowledge of certain phenomena and then proceeds to apply it for some practical end. This kind of thing does happen sometimes, but not often, certainly not always. In the history of civilization advances in practical invention undoubtedly preceded progress in theoretical knowledge of the phenomena concerned. And even in the earlier centuries of the modern

period, though scientific progress has sometimes prompted practical applications, yet more often pre-existing technical methods have supplied the data for scientific discoveries, and perhaps most frequently technical inventions and improvements were made without the help from pure science (Wolf 1962: 498-499).

Wolf has been quoted at length because his views are pertinent and show that it is not easy to precisely delineate the relationship between science and technology. Perhaps, a better and more satisfactory way to express this relationship may be to assert that at certain times and in certain circumstances in the history of science and technology, the latter had often influenced and determined the former, while at other times and cases, science had influenced and determined technology. However, for the greater part of the history of modern science, which is said to have begun in the 18th century, the view that technology is an "applied science" is largely true.

In any event, whatever may be the meaning, nature and relationship between science and technology it is hardly disputable that science in conjunction with technology have produced tangible effects which dazzle and charm mankind today. The Scientific Revolution which occurred barely two centuries ago, with its accompanying technology, has attained such preponderous heights that one can hardly contemplate it without profound wonder. In the fields of transport and communications, national security, demystifying the universe, "increase and stabilization of food supply through application of machinery and power, fertilizers and pesticides, hybridization and processing techniques" (Onu 1987:7), as well as in education, capacity of improving man's material existence and life span, and exploring and explaining nature, the great hands of science and technology tower to the high heavens. Indeed, Onu observes that technology "has gained such an ascendancy over the lives of men due to its capacity to control man's environment and gradually solve his problems" (Onu 1984:96). There is hardly any aspect of life where the impact and effects of science and technology are not seriously felt. This ubiquity of the effects

of science - inspired technology is forcefully captured by Wilensky and Lebeaux and quoted by Onu thus:

Technology is that segment of culture which represents the application of knowledge of nature to empirical ends, to ends which can be attained in this world... in the economic, military, artistic, political, kinship and religious spheres (or role systems) (Onu 1984:96).

Given our discussion on Onu's analysis of the objective factors of national greatness it is pertinent to examine the status of Nigeria at this juncture vis-a-vis those factors in order to seek some explanation(s) to her present position of weakness. Onu's analysis reveals that Nigeria possesses most of the requirements for greatness by any nation. According to him,

In terms of natural resources, there are not several countries better endowed than Nigeria. There are only a handful of known naturally-occurring minerals that have not been found in Nigeria, yet no comprehensive national geological survey has been conducted (Onu 1984:80).

Apart from crude oil which has been found in abundance in Nigeria, Nigeria can boast of great reserves of natural gas and reasonable quantities of other sundry minerals such as coal, uranium, iron ore, lime stone and marble, columbite, gold, molybdenum, phosphate, wolf ramite, Barytes aluminium copper, chromium, clays, columbite, cryolite, diatomite, felspar, flourspar, glass sand, gypsum, kaolin, kyanite, lead, limestone, mercury, nickel, pyrochlore, quartz, salt, serpentinite, shale, silver tin, vanadium, zinc and zircon (Onu 1984:80, 82, 87). The actual reserves of these minerals will be fairly ascertained as the geological survey of Nigeria continues more vigorously and there are great indications that more mineral deposits will be discovered. In terms of population, Nigeria is the most populous nation in black Africa and certainly among the first fifteen most populous nations in the world. The population count conducted by the National Population Commission in October 1990 shows that Nigeria's population is over 80 million. This figure shows a **great** increase from the 1963 figure which was put at 55 million. Nigeria's high population figure ensures that the country has

enough manpower for defence, production and overall development of the country.

Also, from the point of view of geography, Nigeria is favourably located at the West Coast of Africa and has a "coastline of over 800 kilometers washed by the Atlantic Ocean and an area of nearly one million square kilometers..." (Onu 1984:83). Nigeria has a rich and varied vegetation which stretched from the rain forest zone in the south, through the semi-savannah belt of the Middle Belt region to the savannah zone of the North. This has proved to be a great blessing to the country as her rich arable land guarantees the production of various agricultural crops to support the large and increasing population. Such agricultural crops that are grown in abundance include yam, cassava, maize, rice, cocoa-yam, millet, soya-beans, beans, cow-pea, melon, vegetable, palm oil and fruits, pineapple, oranges, mangoes and so on. Besides, the savannah grassland provides adequate grazing grounds for cattle, sheep, goats and other rodents which are found in abundance in Nigeria. These animals greatly provide animal protein to support the teeming population.

Besides, Nigeria's nearness to the equator guarantees abundant sunshine with considerable potentials for solar energy applications "as certain areas of the country receive as high as eleven hours of sunshine daily"(Onu 1984:83). In addition, the two major rivers in Nigeria: Niger and Benue provides a lot of water resources potentials that are yet to be fully exploited.

Given the foregone observations and given the above highlighted measurable factors of national greatness, it is evident that Nigeria has many factors of national greatness in her favour. But the big question is, why does Nigeria's greatness only remain a potentiality instead of actuality? Or put in a slightly differently way, why is Nigeria a great country in potency? The answer to this question is unequivocally given by Onu who sees technology as the missing link in Nigeria's effort to achieve greatness. According to him, the

absence of a strong indigenous technological base has contributed in large measure, in the past, (and in the present) to the poor and

inefficient exploitation and utilization of Nigeria's abundant natural resources (Onu 1984:83-84).

Indeed, Onu laboured, to a very successful extent, to show that:

Nigeria possess the resources to make her a nation with global influence...(but) technology remains the major missing link in her effort to satisfy at the moment, the basic needs of her citizens (Onu 1984:98).

Onu clearly recognizes the important roles that nationalism, ideology and leadership play in the greatness of any nation but insists that without technology, none of them can be effective. Technology helps to foster nationalism by providing the means for effective national defence, adventure and the satisfaction of basic needs of the citizens, all of which engender national pride and patriotism. For, "Citizens tend to be more nationalistic when the state either provides or is seen to make the necessary efforts of providing the basic needs including security" (Onu 1984:94). On the other hand, in a culture of scarcity, engendered by low technological development, nationalism and patriotism suffer severe set-backs. For, as Onu laconically puts it,

The culture of scarcity, whereby the scarcity of basic human needs breeds poverty; the scarcity of security breeds crime; and the scarcity of justice breeds corruption, cannot provide the suitable environment to produce in large numbers ... true nationalists (Onu 1984:94).

Indeed, intolerable levels of scarcity brings to the fore the worst aspects of man in all areas of life. It nourishes such anti-social vices as greed, selfishness, corruption, violent crimes, tribalism, nepotism and sectionalism. All these have a full reign in a culture of scarcity. Onu's analysis of this situation is very instructive and convincing:

In the face of scarce resources attempts are made to exclude some, from the benefits of prosperity. Generally, the more privileged group perpetuated this exclusion and it is normally easier if those to be excluded can be readily distinguished. If they came from another section of the country, or better if they speak a different language, have another religion etc., they can be classified without difficulty. This breeds tribalism, nepotism, and the other associated social ills (Onu 1984:94).

Onu's view on the cause of tribalism and other social vices largely agrees with that of Nnamdi Azikiwe. Azikiwe agrees that a culture of scarcity is at the root of tribalism, especially the feeling by individuals that they can only attain the highest material and social benefits under the auspices of their tribes in their competition with other tribes to control the economy and leadership of the nation. Azikiwe explains tribalism as

the tendency to regard one's mother tongue as the only magic wand which can provide the beings with an environment where, by intermingling in their closed circle, they can obtain spiritual and material prosperity under the protective umbrella of the tribal leviathan (Azikiwe 1964:13).

However, Azikiwe argued, and Onu would agree with him no less, that tribalism can be greatly minimised and even turned into a positive instrument for national unity if the nation can guarantee the basic needs of her citizens by eliminating scarcity through technologically improved means of production and distribution.

It is the conviction of Onu that tribalism, nepotism, selfishness and numerous social vices are the direct consequence of,

the inability of the state to provide the basic needs for its citizens and the perception of the citizens that adequate arrangements are not being made by the state to guarantee a bright future (Onu 1984:95).

But scarcely can any nation really provide the basic needs of its citizens without a well-developed technological base.

Onu reasons that the culture of scarcity which afflicts Nigeria, like other countries with low level of technology, makes the development of true nationalism very difficult. This situation is worsened, in the case of Nigeria, by the fact that most Nigerians seem to prefer "to speak in foreign languages; neglect their native laws and customs, prefer to dress in foreign fashions, etc." (Onu 1984:95). Indeed, nationalism is at a very low ebb in Nigeria. What seems to be strongest in the country is cleavages: on the bases of tribe, religion, section, gild, and other sundry anti-nationalist proclivities. Onu suggests that unless, and until, we develop the appropriate technology which can

enable Nigeria provide the basic needs of her citizens as well as earn and command the respect of other nations, the current situation will persist.

Also, technology is a *sine-qua-non* in the realization of national aspirations through the envisioned system-means commonly called ideology. Ideology, seen as "a systematic body of concepts, especially about human life or culture... (and which) includes a way of life and thinking characteristics of an individual or a group of social relations" (Azikiwe 1980:3) needs well-developed technology to be effective. National ideology can be driven by patriotism to seek global expression by way of influencing or inducing other peoples and nations to adopt certain ideas and ways of doing things. This point can be easily illustrated with the two dominant ideologies in the world, namely, Communism and Liberalism championed by the defunct USSR (and presently China) and the United States of America respectively. By the middle of the twentieth century, the consumating passion of those countries was, for each to make her national ideology the generally-held ideology in the world. To achieve this objective, indigenous technological edifices and devices were built by the then two super-powers - the USSR and U.S.A. It was their highly developed and sophisticated technology that ensured their global influence and still confers on America the leadership position in the world today.

In the contemporary world, ideology and technology have become so complementary in the realization of the interests of a nation that Onu observes as follows:

Technology has become the vehicle which nations use to achieve their aspirations of regional, continental, or global leadership. As a major instrument of foreign policy, technology is allowed to be "transferred" to those nations that are friendly, while unfriendly nations are denied access (Onu 1984:107).

Thus, countries which have attained high technological development tend to hold those whose technological base is low to ransom by withholding the much-needed technological assistance to them until they (poor nations) bend to their bidding. - This is evident in the fact that great countries like America are

favourably disposed to giving limited technological and financial assistances only to countries which adopt the ideology they propagate. In fact America has made it abundantly clear to the whole world that she could only give any form of assistance to countries which practice liberal democracy or are at the verge of practicing it. America even goes to the extent of employing her massive technological build-up to overtly or covertly threaten those nations that are not favourably disposed to her ideology. In fact, it has been American technology that has been protecting her ideology as well as ensuring its exportation to other nations of the world. America has used her ideology as a weapon for raising national morale because she has developed the appropriate technology which has helped her to provide the most basic needs for her citizens. It is on the above consideration that Onu opines that;

Nations, irrespective of their ideologies, which neglect technological development where appropriate, and continued technological development, will definitely find themselves in a situation where satisfying the basic needs of their citizens becomes an extremely difficult task (Onu 1984:108).

This fact convinces Onu that, contrary to the widely held belief that Nigeria's weakness in the social, economic and political spheres is attributable "to either the absence of, or the lack of an appropriate ideology" (Onu 1984:101), technology rather than ideology holds the greatest promise for national development and greatness. For, in the contemporary world, ideology heavily relies on technology to be effective. This is why "any ideology that cannot satisfy man's basic needs cannot be said to have a bright future" (Onu 1984:108). This is what those who, convinced that Nigeria's economic and political problems stem from ideological confusion, advocates a return to Africa's indigenous (what Azikiwe call "prestine") ideology based on the extended family - system fail to appreciate in the words of Onu that,

All those who advocate for a return to the old order of a subsistence agricultural and craftsmanship economy, easily forget that such an

economy can no longer support the current global population even if modern standards of living were to be sacrificed (Onu 1984:108).

This view is similarly expressed in my first book in relation to the inadequacy of the identified pristine ideology which Azikiwe calls "proto-welfarism" when it is argued that:

the drastic changes in the socio-economic relations within African societies as consequences of the European colonization, have rendered proto-welfarism inadequate for meeting the challenges of modern state and business (Igwe 1992:191).

In the great debate on the question of ideology for Nigeria Onu's position is simple: the question of ideology is not as important and urgent as the question of developing appropriate technology for Nigeria. This is why he declares that his analysis;

does not intend to show preference for any of the two dominant ideologies of our time or discuss which one has a brighter future for Nigeria. The analysis pursued so far clearly shows that what Nigeria needs at this time is to properly articulate her national goals particularly with respect to the exercise of power as it affects other nations. When this is done, an appropriate ideology will evolve to satisfy those aspirations (Onu 1984:105).

At this juncture, some critical comments are necessary. One would no doubt agree with Onu that the development of appropriate technology is necessary for the realization of ideological objectives, the impression which he gives to the effect that what a nation ought to be concerned with, in all earnesty, is technology rather than ideology, and that once a nation is able to articulate her national goals, the appropriate ideology will evolve, does not seem to be quite correct. For one thing, national goals are quite within the ambit of national ideology and not independent of it as Onu seems to suggest. Besides, ideologies do not just evolve, they are usually consciously articulated and consciously held. The belief that ideologies simply evolve seem to suggest blind occurrence whereas ideologies are conscious creations. Finally, we need to observe that every ideology suggests the technology appropriate to it. For it is the over-all national aspirations which are encapsulated in an ideology that usually give birth to the

necessary technology for their achievements. If we accept that national aspirations and means of achieving them are usually expressed in the form of an ideology, it logically follows that every technology, especially in modern times, is a creation of a certain ideology. Again, if we agree with Plato that "ideas rule the world", and see ideology as a set of ideas expressing national goals and means of attaining them, then it follows that to a very great extent, ideology determines modern technology and not the other way round. This is because technologies are usually developed in response to certain perceived needs that usually find expression within an ideological framework.

Let us leave that at that and consider next the impact of technology on leadership as analysed by Onu. He convincingly argues that technology is necessary for effective leadership. His reasoning is simple and impeccable. He reasons that the "effectiveness of any leadership can simply be measured on its ability to satisfy many of these basic needs" (Onu 1984:98), to wit, food, shelter, clothing, security, inspiration of national pride and so on. Fortunately, technology helps man to satisfy these value systems. For, in the final analysis, physical and mental health, provision of essential goods and services, acquisition of skills, and education are directly influenced by technology" (Onu 1984:98). In other words, the effectiveness of any leadership is judged by the extent to which it provides the basic needs of the citizens and this depends on the level of technology available in the country. It is this that determines the level of support which the leadership may enjoy from the followership.

Given the above considerations and given the pervasive importance of technology in all facets of national greatness, it will be pertinent to examine the reasons for lack of appreciable level of development in the areas of science and technology in Nigeria with a view to proffering solutions to them.

Reasons for Low Technological Development in Nigeria

The sad reality which stares Nigerians in the face today is that Nigeria is a highly dependent nation: she depends almost solely

on Mother Nature for her foreign-exchange earnings because over 85% of it comes from crude oil which exists courtesy of Mother Nature; she depends on Europe and America in meeting her food requirement despite the fact that she is endowed with a great expanse of arable land and rich agricultural climate; she depends on Europe and America for ideas to run her economic, social, political and educational institutions. All these result from the most debilitating of her dependence, namely, technological over-dependence. Indeed, Nigeria is vulnerably dependent on other nations for her technological needs. And because every facet of the modern society requires the magic touch of technology, Nigeria has often had to pay a very humiliating price to get the barest advantage of foreign technology which trickle in with numerous economic and political strings.

Nigeria's over-weakening dependence on foreign technology can be best appreciated if we realize the effective uses to which the technologically advanced nations put technology in our contemporary world. They have not just employed it advantageously for the provision of basic needs of their citizens by using it to dominate nature, they have very effectively employed it as a great instrument of foreign policy whose overriding aim is to dominate other nations. In fact, our present age is one of techno-politics as those nations that have attained high levels of technology have frequently wielded it against "unfriendly," but needy, nations with political dexterity. Only "friendly" nations which are amenable to the foreign policy goals of the technologically advanced nations can receive even the crumbs of technology which fall from the masters' tables. And, because no purportedly independent but weak nations can dance to the tunes of those technological benefactor-nations consistently and all the time, technologically dependent countries like Nigeria always run the risk of not attracting sufficient foreign technology for meaningful economic development. This state of affairs usually express itself in the forms of a poor and fragile economy, weak social and political institutions as well as heavy debt-burden which often unleash in their wake such social

vices as crimes, bribery and corruption, smuggling, drug trafficking, violence and so on.

The over-dependence on foreign technology by Nigeria, to the neglect of local technological development, has had adverse effects on many areas of importance in Nigeria. In fact, Onu enumerated many areas which have been adversely affected by the neglect and consequent low input of local technology. Those areas include agriculture, industry, adaptation of foreign technological know-how.

In the field of agriculture, neglect of local technology has frustrated every effort at mechanization of this all-important sector of the economy because of lack of the appropriate and suitable equipment. Because such equipment cannot be produced locally, attempts are made to import them within the framework of the constraints imposed by scarce foreign exchange resources. This makes it impossible to procure adequate and suitable machinery to meet the needs of agricultural mechanization. Besides, a few agricultural equipment that are imported often lie idle when they break-down and the spare-parts needed to put them back in working conditions could not be imported due to non-availability of fund. Yet, at least, a country with local technological base should have been able to manufacture spare-parts to service imported machinery. But, because Nigeria imports both finished machinery and their spare-parts, Onu laments that:

Many of the heavy agricultural equipment imported for use on the farms are found most often abandoned or in the workshops. In most cases, the design of these equipment has not taken into consideration the needs of our farms and the farm-habits of our people (Onu 1984:114).

The same malady also afflicts the industrial sector. Industrial machinery and their spare-parts are all imported with little or no local input. The result is, like in the field of agriculture, that the necessary machinery needed for sound industrial development cannot be procured in any appreciable quantity, and even those that are procured can hardly be maintained due to the non-availability of spare-parts. But many of "those spare-parts

should normally be produced locally but instead, they are imported" Onu 1984:114). Even those equipment imported often do not serve their purpose at all or do so only for a short time because low level of technology does not permit Nigerians to give serious consideration to the difference in Nigeria's environmental conditions and how they affect the equipment. But worst of all for the industrial sector,

most of our industries (as a result of low indigenous technological capacity) embark on either part-assembly or mixing processes where the "raw materials" needed are oftentimes finished products awaiting packaging and labelling. How else can one explain that our steel complex at Ajaokuta which needs billets for its mills, specified a different dimension from those produced at the Delta Steel Complex, Aladja. Whether the intention is that we should continue to import billets from abroad even when they can be produced locally, remains a source of concern to many. (Onu 1984:115).

This is a typical example of what can happen to any nation which trusts her technological destiny in the hands of foreigners. Nigeria and other technologically backward nations have been paying, and will continue to pay this kind of humiliating price as long as they continue to ignore or refuse to appreciate the full import of technological dependence as a first step in seeking and developing their local technologies.

In fact, it is the near-absence of local technological input in our industrial and agricultural sectors that has given rise to the sad situation whereby Nigeria invests "heavily in these sectors without either obtaining the intended service or acquiring knowledge" (Onu 1984:115). This is the tragedy of a country that has spent so much and yet achieved so little in the area of industrialization.

It is as a result of the sorry state of technological backwardness which Nigeria and some other weak nations find themselves, in an age which can be appropriately described as the technological age, that elicit inquiry into how they come to find themselves in this state.

According to Onu, one of the main reasons for Nigeria's palpable low level of technological development is the obvious

inadequate and inefficient supply of basic infrastructure needed for technological take-off. In this vein, he pinpoints lack of reliable and adequate power supply, dependable and sufficient water supply and adequate and efficient communication network as major constraints.

It is a common knowledge that the "supply of portable water in both urban and rural areas in the country is one of inadequacy" (Onu 1982:22). Onu laments that in the rural areas, where majority of Nigerians live, only a very small fraction of the population have access to pipe-borne water. The greater majority, Onu sadly observes, "still have no choice but to drink polluted water and risk a number of deadly diseases: typhoid, cholera and dysentery, among them" (Onu 1982:22). Even towns which are supposed to have pipe-borne water often have dry taps for several weeks or even months. This sad situation obtains despite the abundant water resources of the country. Nigeria is blessed with abundant rainfall and such big rivers as Niger, Benue, Cross River, in addition to its being bordered by the Atlantic Ocean.

In the area of power supply, a glaring inadequacy and inefficiency can be seen. Only a small section of the entire country has electricity supply while the rest rely on the moon and lanterns to give them light at nights. Even though the Babangida administration has been doing something substantial to bring electricity to the rural areas through the Directorate for Food, Road, Rural Development and Infrastructure (DFRRI), the bogey of inefficiency on the part of the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) still frustrates the realization of the dream to supply Nigerians with uninterrupted power. Onu laments that;

Nigeria's inability to solve these basic infrastructural problems of water and power supply, in addition to its adverse economic impact, has considerable adverse effect on the psychology of the nation, continuously eroding our self confidence (Onu 1982:25)

This situation is detrimental to technological development in Nigeria because the general self-doubt and apathy which result from the inefficiency of such public corporations as NEPA and

Water Boards badly erodes the confidence and commitment which technological development demands.

Furthermore, Onu blames the present situation of technological backwardness of Nigeria on obvious lack of skilled manpower and suitable technological knowledge. Here, he has in mind the lack of suitably qualified personnel and appropriate technological knowledge that are needed to meet the challenges of modern times. It is a sad fact that Nigeria suffers from severe shortage of indigenous scientists and technologists and as a result is forced to rely on the unwilling foreign experts to meet her technological needs which has turned out to be an unfulfilled dream. Even the available local scientists and technicians have not yet acquired the appropriate technological knowledge necessary for the industrial take-off of the country.

But the most fundamental explanation of the low technological development of Nigeria and other erstwhile colonies was the destructive effect of slavery and colonization. The numerous ways through which slave trade aborted African development is abundantly attested to by history. The inhuman traffic in man perpetrated by the Europeans against the Africans, particularly Nigerians, adversely affected their population and economy even though revisionists like A.F.C. Ryder maintains that:

It cannot be affirmed with any certainty that large-scale emigration, even when involuntary, is an economic handicap unless it can be shown that depopulation and shortage of labour result ... this does not seem to have happened in the areas of Nigeria most affected by the Atlantic slave trade (Ryder 1980:245).

However, Ryder admitted, that from "the technological point of view, the slave trade did nothing to advance the Nigerians involved in it" (Ryder 1980:246). It is, at least, evident here that Ryder implicitly admitted that the slave trade retarded the technological development of Nigeria by robbing the areas that presently constitute Nigeria of "many thousands of their men and women taken away in their prime" (Ryder 1980:245). It was such men and women in their prime that were carrying the torch

of scientific and technological development in the present-day advanced countries of the world.

The arrested development of the areas now known as Nigeria and their other African counterparts by the notorious slave trade was compounded by their outright colonization by the European powers. This is succinctly captured by Onu when he observes that:

Nigeria's contact with Europe up to her independence from Great Britain in 1960 occurred at the time the present-day industrialized countries, starting from Britain to (the defunct) USSR and Japan went through the stages of industrialization and economic growth. As these countries developed and enjoyed higher standards of living, Nigeria went through very bitter and agonizing experiences of the holocaust of slave trade, the deep trauma of invasion and conquest, and the inevitable humiliation of colonization. She emerged from this experience with the same hoe that she had entered it (Onu 1984:23).

The implication here is evident: that Nigeria's development in the vital areas of science and technology was aborted by European imperialists.

Indeed, the maiming consequences of colonization on those colonized societies pervade all areas of societal life and they have been discussed more extensively in my earlier work (cf. Igwe 1991: 93-96). Suffice it to mention here that in the area of race-relations, European colonization of Africa encouraged racial discrimination by the colonizers against the colonized people and encouraged a feeling of European superiority over the African. Educationally, the colonizers adroitly designed such educational policies for the colonies that would perpetually make those subjects sub-servient to them. Thus they only reduced education of the colonial subjects, to the barest minimum, possibly the Four Rs, namely, Reading, 'Riting, 'Rithmetic and Religion. This obnoxious educational policy kept the development of science and technology in the colonial territories in abeyance. This constitutes the greatest singular factor in the technological backwardness of the erstwhile colonial societies. Economically, the European imperialists ruined the local economies by their aggressive pursuit of an all-round exploitation policy. This was

so much so that the colonies were reduced to mere suppliers of industrial raw materials as well as markets for finished goods of the imperialists nations. The destructive economic policies of the colonialists on their colonies is aptly illustrated by the speech of Jules Meline, then French Minister of Agriculture to the annual meeting of the Association of Industry and Agriculture on March, 1899 who stated that their policy was:

to discourage in advance any signs of industrial development in our colonies, to oblige our overseas possessions to look exclusively to the mother country for manufactured products, and to fulfil, by force if necessary, their natural function, that of a market reserved by right to the mother country's industry (quoted by Onu 1984:24).

This policy was pursued by the colonial masters to the letter. In fact, they did everything to kill local industries and at the same time ensure the abundant production of raw materials through the cheap labour provided by the colonial subjects who are also often forced to supply their labour. Besides, it is the imperialists that fix the prices at which they sell their manufactured goods and that at which they buy the raw materials supplied by the colonies. In so doing, they created and perpetuated an unjust economic relationship which still manifest itself in the crushing debt-burden and technological backwardness which the erstwhile colonial societies are currently noted for.

Another contributory factor to Nigeria's low level of scientific and technological development is the political instability which has bedevilled the country since independence. As a result, there has not been well-articulated and consistently pursued policy for the development of science and technology in Nigeria. This is without prejudice to the current efforts of the Babangida administration in this regard. However, we wish to remark that those efforts by the government still leave much to be desired because of the haphazard manner in which the national science and technology policy is being implemented. This is further compounded by political instability which militates against the successful implementation of existing science and technology policy. Also, there is the related handicap of poverty of leadership in such erstwhile colonies as Nigeria. Poor and

uninspiring leadership have tended to rob Nigeria of the vital element in the development of modern science and technology. This is because, official interest and support in the conduct of science and technology in the contemporary world has become so vital that without them, the pace and direction of scientific and technological development will be sluggish and largely undetermined. The official interest and support mentioned usually find expression in setting some target for scientific and technological achievement as well as provision of the much needed capital without which little or no development can occur in this area.

At this juncture, it is necessary to consider what should be done so that Nigeria and other nations in similar condition can overcome it. What are the recipes for the development of science and technology in Nigeria and any other country lacking in them? This is what we can now focus on.

Conditions for the Development of Science and Technology in Nigeria

Before we discuss this topic proper, it is important to examine the question as to whether the areas now known as Nigeria have always been scientifically and technologically backward and dependent vis-a-vis other areas of the world. And we can stretch this inquiry as further back as the period when African contact with the outside world was minimal. This is because the "past of nations have in most cases, helped explain their present successes and future potential" (Onu 1984:1). On this understanding, Onu probed the past of such great nations as the United States of America, the defunct Soviet Union, Japan and Britain to show that their present successes reflect their past triumphs and future expectations. In the same token, he probed into Africa's past in general and Nigeria's past in particular and came up with the verdict of history that Nigeria and other African countries were not scientifically and technologically *tabularasa* before the European colonization of Africa. History has shown beyond any reasonable doubt that:

within the frontiers of Nigeria were great kingdoms like: the kingdoms of Ife and Benin, whose arts are of such quality that they rank with the greatest art ever created by mankind; the kingdom of Kanem-Borno which had a known history of over a thousand years; the largely politically decentralized Igbo-speaking people of the East, who displayed great ingenuity and skill in the production of the famous Igbo-Ukwu bronzes and terracottas; and the Empire of Oyo whose power and influence stretched from the Western part of Nigeria as far as the present-day Republic of Togo. These empires and kingdoms had developed highly sophisticated political instruments of control comparable with those available elsewhere (Onu 1984:3-4).

The kingdoms mentioned above had evidences of scientific and technological ingenuity and inventiveness as revealed in their material culture. For, even as far back as the Stone Age, archaeological research which has been limited in scope and volume, and many findings due mainly to the excavation by tinminers, reveal how the "early man in Nigeria responded to his changing needs by devising and producing stone tools that grew in sophistication with time" (Onu 1984:5). There was the stone "handaxes" probably used for digging and cutting discovered in the Jos Plateau and River Gongola all in Nigeria. Archaeological discoveries showed steady improvements in the fashioning of stone tools and later iron tools during the Iron Age, and up to the period of increasing European contact with Africa.

In the area of culture, "Nigeria's contribution to world's heritage of great and beautiful creations have been acknowledged" (Onu 1984:9). The elaborate metal castings at Igbo-Ukwu, the famous Benin masks, the famous Ife arts with copper castings and the terracotta heads produced by the Nok culture are all world famous and show the quality of thinking and imagination of ancient Africans.

In the area of agriculture, the inhabitants of the areas now known as Nigeria were skilful in farming and animal husbandry. They demonstrated good knowledge of the weather as their farming habit greatly reveal.

In the area of science and technology, the

Nok people were highly advanced in the technology of iron smelting. Slag from their furnaces have been found. They were equally advanced in

material science since they knew how to select the right kind of clay, mix it with other necessary materials in the right kind of proportion and fire the object with the consistency and skill that allowed them survive for more than two thousand years. In addition, their ability to transform both their ideas and the images they saw in nature into solid forms of enormous power and beauty is an irrefutable evidence of their ingenuity and creativity (Onu 1984: 10-11).

Everywhere in Africa, evidences of the people's knowledge of science and technology abound. They applied this knowledge in their dealing with their environment by "devising appropriate techniques to deal with the peculiarities of their various environment" (Onu 1984:15). In Egypt, there were such technological feats as seen in their pyramids and the preservation of their dead.

In sub-Saharan Africa, "the excavations in Nok showed that our ancestors had knowledge of, and produced iron from ores using blast furnaces most probably centuries before the birth of Christ" (Onu 1984:17). This technological feat can be better appreciated if we recall that it took modern Nigeria up to the 1980's to construct and operate a modern blast furnace for iron production.

In the area of manufacture, Onu notes that our ancestors were able to make the surpluses for export. He cites the superior brand of red leather known as "Moroccan leather," but which was actually tanned and dyed in Northern Nigeria, as an example of manufactured goods which ancestors of modern Nigeria exported. Also, in the area of

textile science and technology, starting from cotton fibre, ginning, spinning and weaving to dye formulation and production and the subsequent dying of the woven cloth, the Yorubas of Western Nigeria have exhibited exceptional skills much of which have survived to date (Onu 1984: 18).

Our ancestors were also experts in soap-making and the famous "black-soap" still maintains its high quality and is still widely used by Africans despite the availability of foreign soap.

The ancestors of modern Nigeria also displayed good understanding of "both chemical science and practice as shown

in salt-making involving three major unit operations of filtration, evaporation and crystallization" (Onu 1984:18). This is evidenced in the salt-making skills of the Uburu and Okposi communities in the present Ohaozara Local Government Area of Abia State. These two communities have salt lakes dating back to antiquity. Hence, their major occupation was the production of salt, an occupation to which many are still engaged till today. Onu describes the elaborate salt-making process of the Uburu people through local technology as follows:

'Salt-Water', from the lake which normally has low salinity, is fed to filtration beds containing mud laden with salt whose porosity is maintained through a fresh supply of mud to the bed on daily basis, and originally obtained from the salt lake. The filtrate devoid of debris and any extraneous matter with a higher salt concentration, is then transferred to an evaporation vessel open to the atmosphere. The salt is concentrated to near saturation by the application of thermal energy using fire-wood. Crystallization of the concentrate now takes place in a hemispheric clay vessel that has been properly treated to fall apart at the end of crystallization in order to release a hemispheric shaped cake of salt (Onu 1984:18).

The process of salt-making described here show the high level of scientific and technological knowledge which our ancestors had attained before they came into much contact with Western civilization.

In the area of medicine and pharmacy, ancestors of modern Nigeria made considerable contributions to human civilization. "They had a good understanding of the medicinal efficacy of roots, and leaves of plants" (Onu 1984:19). In fact, Onu observes that:

Our ancestors' understanding of pharmaceutical medicine is made manifest in the cure of leprosy and other deadly diseases by the use of plants. In the medical fields of orthopaedics and psychiatry, the advancement and sophistication of our ancestors can be clearly demonstrated by the ability of our present-day traditional medicine men and women who, irrespective of decay due to absence of research, can still compete with those trained in Western medical techniques (Onu 1984:19).

In fact, if Nigeria had paid attention to this area of human need and development, the country would have at least, attained self-sufficiency in certain drugs by merely cultivating drug farms of plants, harvest the potent parts, process and sell them in the pharmacy departments of our hospitals as the Republic of China is currently doing.

The above observations confirm that "starting from man's first days on earth, the Nigerian has not lacked the ingenuity and inventiveness to survive. He was able to produce the necessary tools to satisfy the needs of food and defence" (Onu 1984:9). From then, the history of Africa showed steady development of ideas and techniques of dealing with the environment and satisfying man's basic needs. As time went on, the ancestors of Nigeria responded by forming nation-states which would have, most probably, resulted into more homogeneous nations as we find in Europe and elsewhere had the natural process of evolution not been interrupted by the European institution of slavery and colonization against the Africans.

Although the manufacturing and technological activities discussed above were labour-intensive and employed simple technology the fact still remains that Nigeria's ancestors "were able to develop our societies from the Stone Age simplicity to Iron Age complexity, passing from one stage to another of technological achievement" (Onu 1984:19). This is why we must see our present plight in the proper perspective: that our indigenous scientific and technological drive and initiatives were fatally wounded by the imperialists who devised every available means to destroy and disorientate the African mind through devious educational systems, bare-faced propaganda, brute force and guile.

At least, history shows that by the time

Europeans came to Nigeria in the sixteenth century, many parts of the country were in the process of transforming themselves from the strictly traditional society to creating the preconditions necessary for industrial take-off. Up to independence in 1960, nearly four centuries of contact with Europe, Nigeria remained at the stage of creating the preconditions necessary for take-off (Onu 1984:23).

Preconditions necessary for industrial take-off is the second stage of the five stages which W.W. Rostow vehemently argued that the present-day economically developed nations went through. The first stage was that of a traditional society. The second stage was the preconditions for a take-off. The third stage was the take-off. The fourth stage was the drive to maturity, while the fifth and final stage is that of mass consumption. Rostow saw the take-off stage "as the most decisive and similar to an airplane, when once airborne can easily climb to higher attitudes" (Onu 1984:22).

The take-off period, Onu points out, is normally limited to one or two sectors of the economy but gradually extends to other sector or industries during the drive to maturity. For instance, in the case of Great Britain, the sectors were cotton textile and iron from where industrialization spread to other sectors of the economy.

The preconditions to be fulfilled before the take-off stage include

- (a) the provision of adequate infrastructure to improve communication,
- (b) increase in the mobilization of capital, and
- (c) provision of the necessary political climate for a more effective state (Onu 1984:22).

According to Onu, Rostow, the economic historian who studied the economic growth of twenty countries, maintained that Great Britain was the first country to embrace the Industrial Revolution with a take-off period spanning 1783-1830, while the United States of America and Germany took off between 1840-1870. Japan and the then USSR were late-comers taking off between 1885-1905 and 1890-1905 respectively. However, the last stage, that of high mass consumption, when the society produces a wide range of abundant goods, especially automobiles, was first attained by America in 1910 while Great Britain, France, Germany and Sweden attained this stage in 1920. But the fourth stage, that of drive to maturity was embraced by the United States of America, France and Germany around 1870 (Onu 1984:22).

The above facts show that by the time the Europeans came into contact with Africa, European nations were at various stages of industrialization, and that African nation-states were also at various stages along the industrialization ladder. This re-inforces the view that had the Europeans not interrupted the developmental efforts of Africans, they would have attained the final stage of mass consumption in due course, even if it is not at the same period as the European nations attained that stage.

But now that political independence has been achieved and we cannot close our eyes to the technological developments already attained by the other countries nor isolate our nations and allow evolution to take its slow but inevitable course, conscious efforts are required to understand and create the scientific and technological dynamics for the industrial take-off of our nation. Accordingly, and given our present circumstances, we proceed to offer some recipe for the development of science and technology in Nigeria.

Our discussions so far has shown that no culture is bereft of the capacity to develop science and technology, even though some people may be faster than the others as a result of certain peculiar circumstances and needs. This understanding seems to have informed T.H. Huxley's declaration that "we are all scientists" (Huxley (n.d.):16). This is the conception of science in its widest sense. In this sense, an intellectual inquiry about the physical universe may be called "science". This is a very primitive notion of science which makes it co-terminous with reasoning. On the same score, technology would mean any device employed by man for the attainment of some practical ends. In these trivial conceptions of science and technology, it could be argued that every culture, every race has its own science and technology. But the science and technology which we seek to develop in Nigeria is not science and technology in those infantile conceptions but the sophisticated modern science and technology in their highly conceptualized, theorized, practicalized and complicatedly associated forms through which science and technology have become the developmental elixir of our time. However, we do not deny that the sophisticated grew

from the primitive by evolutionary process but we maintain that countries like Nigeria can no longer go back to the level of science and technology they had attained before their developmental process was disrupted and suspended. The only way forward is to seek ways of developing certain indigenous technology that is still viable and adopt and adapt contemporary science and technology for the satisfaction of the numerous basic needs of man. This brings us to one of the important steps Nigeria should take in order to achieve the desired level of development in science and technology that can meet the needs of Nigerians and Africans at large. This step, according to Onu is the adoption of appropriate strategy for technological development.

The appropriate strategy for technological development, from Onu's analysis, is for Nigeria to identify her areas of need and seek to develop or adopt and adapt the requisite technology that can meet those needs. He observes that the needs of any nation, big or small, developed or underdeveloped are constantly changing but points out that "Today, providing food, shelter and clothing is far more urgent in Nigeria. Tomorrow, urgency may shift to national security needs (Onu 1982: 14). The proper approach is to formulate the technological programme that guarantees our preparedness to respond to these changing needs and demands. Onu recommends that;

As a developing country, technological development must directly and positively influence economic growth and development. This requires organizing our science and technology so as to create an impact on economic growth, which means working in the areas of need. Our underlying philosophy should be working in those areas relevant to the needs of the country, with a potential to yield material benefits to a large number of people within a reasonable time scale (Onu 1982: 14).

In furtherance of these objectives Nigeria should develop an efficient science-based agriculture. And the strategy in this vein would be to

call on science and technology to help us in conducting a comprehensive soil survey that will enable us identify the nutritional requirements of the various soils in different areas of the country; design

and mass-produce appropriate farm tools and machinery taking into consideration our farm habits, level of technological awareness of the farmers and the state of many of our rural roads; and devising adequate mechanism to successfully transfer this technology to farmers (Onu 1982: 14-15).

In the area of industry, the strategy Onu recommends is that Nigeria should pursue the establishment and development of those industries with high export potential, high added value with high exploitation of our resources. This will earn Nigeria foreign exchange and reduce her over dependence on crude oil for her foreign exchange earnings.

The second step to the development of science and technology is to cultivate self-confidence and initiative with the realization that the ancestors of modern Nigeria, before contact with Europeans, were able to satisfy their technological needs. This proves that there is nothing pathologically unscientific in the African or Nigerian. But that when occasions demand and opportunity is created, the Nigerian can perform some feat in the area of science and technology. Thus, the Nigerian is not intellectually supine that he cannot develop, adopt and adapt technology to meet his needs.

With the development of self-confidence in our ability as demonstrated by our great past, Nigerians will now seek to develop their indigenous science and technology as a strong base on which advanced science and technology can be built. This calls for a review of Nigeria's current approach to technological development. For at the moment,

We seem to believe that we have to start from the top in order to catch up with the rest of the world. We have sadly learnt that with a weak base, our current approach only leads to an ever-increasing technological gap complicated by the near complete destruction of the meager technological base, and culminating in a state of confusion such that people do not understand what is happening (Onu 1984: ix-x).

Thus, if Nigeria is to develop scientific and technological capabilities that would usher her onto the path of progress and earn her respect in the comity of nations, she has to abandon her present bogus and unfruitful approach to scientific and

technological development which seems to start from the top instead of the proper procedure of starting from the base and building to the top.

Onu advises that the way forward for Nigeria in her quest to develop science and technology is to

re-orient our thinking and see the wisdom in starting with the existing levels of technology that we have, no matter how crude and ancient they may appear. We shall gradually refine and modernize them but in all cases with a view to suit our needs. By this approach, we shall be establishing a solid and broad technological base. Once the base is wide, to move from there up will be faster than the way we seem to be going now. After all, a house is as strong as its foundation (Onu 1984: x).

This is the road which such technologically advanced countries like Japan have trodden. The Japanese developed their own broad technological base and adopted and adapted the technological knowledge they lacked to suit their needs. Initially, especially after the World War II, it was particularly difficult for Japan to build from the ruins of the war and crushing propaganda mounted against her by the victor powers. But with greater determination, and carefully choosing the appropriate areas of focus, she has now emerged as one of the highly industrialized nations of the world.

It is instructive that Japan did not wait nor plead for technology to be transferred to her as Nigeria is currently doing: she employed the initiatives and ingenuity of her people to provide her needs first before exporting the surpluses. She was successful not because other nations of the world helped her to achieve success but because she had a will to succeed and she applied it. This underscores the fact that Nigeria's hope for a transfer of technology to her is nothing more than day-dream. This is because the technologically advanced countries of the world are usually very reluctant to allow the technologically backward nations to embrace meaningful development through the acquisition of technology for fear that such a situation may result in lowering their standard of living. For the development of science and technology in those backward states will no doubt reduce their dependence on those industrialized ones for

manufactured goods and technical assistance. This will invariably affect the economies of those industrialized nations. This partly explains the fact that:

Historically, starting from the colonial period, the metropolitan countries have vehemently opposed any development within the colonies that can lead to indigenous technological development. The colonies were assigned the responsibility of producing raw materials needed in the metropolitan countries (as well as serving as markets reserved for their mother countries) (Onu 1984: 136).

In the area of technology transfer, Onu notes that the developing countries seeking technology from the industrialized countries face two major problems. One problem is how to maintain friendly relations with these technologically advanced countries and at the same pursue their national interests which may be at variance with those of the advanced nations. The second problem is how to strive to develop the ability to master the technologies of interest that could meet their needs.

Often times, the underdeveloped nations that seek technology transfer are not clear about the meaning and content of technology transfer and as such have the illusion that the technologically advanced countries will willingly impart to them the secrets of technological development on a platter of gold. This has never happened. Onu observes that technology transfer "can occur if either there is transfer from more basic scientific knowledge into technology, or adaptation of existing technology to a new use" (Onu 1984: 134). Sometimes, countries seeking the acquisition of technology from those advanced countries do not realize that "technology transfer differs from ordinary scientific information transfer in the fact that to be really transferred, it must be embodied in an actual operation of some kind" (Onu 1984: 134). Thus, technology transfer must be the outcome of a deliberate and systematically planned programme.

Also, many countries seeking to receive technology transfer do not usually distinguish between two concepts of technology transfer, namely, "the transfer of industrial production capacities and the transfer of capabilities to master, adapt and further develop imported technology" (Onu 1984: 134). Onu observes

that these two sorts of transfer do not necessarily occur at the same time, or at the same rate. The first kind of technological transfer merely gives its recipient the ability to use such knowledge so acquired to operate certain machinery imported from abroad. On the other hand, the second kind of technological transfer confers on its recipient "the ability to master a complete process from design and development to production and marketing" (Onu 1984; 134). The latter capacity seems to be what the technologically backward nations actually want since it characterizes a more complete technological acquisition and mastery. However, it seems that what those nations actually get is the first kind of technology transfer.

The technologically advanced countries are willing to transfer technology which only confers on its recipient the ability to use certain machinery because that serves their interest better. This is because this kind of technological transfer would not in any significant way adversely affect the economies of those industrialized nations since the receiving nations will still continue to serve as ready markets for their productive technology. But when it comes to transferring technology which would confer on its recipients technologically advanced status, the industrialized nations are most reluctant and protectionistic. Onu explains that the –

reluctance of the industrialized countries to transfer technological mastery is of great importance to their economy. By making it difficult for the technologically backward countries to develop the ability to master the technologies they receive the industrialized countries not only benefit from unduly prolonging the technological monopoly which they have, but also achieve the objective of strengthening their economies through selective and limited transfer (Onu 1984: 135).

This is why most countries expecting technology to be transferred to them are increasingly getting frustrated as they wait in vain for the transfer which will confer on them the ability to master technology. There is no doubt that the possessors of technology know very well the advantage which it confers on them over those who do not have that ability. The technologically advanced nations also know too well the

effectiveness of technology as an instrument in economic competition as well as in their realization of their foreign policy objectives. Consequently,

as an instrument of strategy, technology development is usually planned with a view to ensuring the maximum flow of income in the long run and supply the maximum number of markets. Technological transfer can only be allowed to take place when the interests of the enterprise permit. The transfer of technology therefore occurs with maximum precaution, so that the technological monopoly is affected as little as possible (Onu 1984: 133).

All this shows that any country desirous to develop in the area of science and technology should do something herself and not to wait for technological manna which can never fall from the heaven of the industrialized nations. This is why it is expedient for the countries seeking industrialization through the development of science and technology to start with the simple and familiar indigenous technology as a base for further development and adaptation of more sophisticated foreign technology in the way that it suits their cultures and satisfies their needs.

Another important factor in the development of science and technology by any nation is the provision of basic infrastructure. Here we have in mind the provision of such facilities as efficient and adequate pipe-borne water and power supply for both domestic and industrial uses as well as adequate and efficient communication network. All these are in limited supply in Nigeria and where they are available at all, they are hardly efficient. Without these basic facilities, all the talks about industrialization become mere rhetorics.

Also, a sound educational system that is capable of producing qualified technological manpower, whether technical or managerial, remains a critical factor in the development of science and technology. Onu stresses that the –

rapidly changing nature of technology requires a flexible and far-sighted manpower policy to prepare for future technological development. Education remains the sole instrument for the production of this highly necessary infrastructural requirement (Onu 1982:27).

The unique role of education as the torch-bearer of any civilization is very well known. According to Onu, its

importance can best be summarized by the speech made by Winston Churchill in his broadcast of 1943 when he remarked that "the future of the world is to the highly educated races, who alone can handle the scientific apparatus necessary for pre-eminence in peace and survival in war." Today the national development plans of Israel is based on the predictions of Charles P. Steinmetz (1865-1923) that "there will come an age of independent nations whose front line of defence will be knowledge" (Onu 1982: 27).

We fervently wish that the Nigerian Government, both federal and state, can hear the words of Churchill and Steinmetz and embark on building an efficient, virile and progressive modern educational system which will enable Nigeria to develop her potential scientific and technological capabilities. The present chaotic educational system, the low regard for education and educators in Nigeria, even by the government despite pretensions to the contrary, will continue to constitute a great hindrance to the country's genuine desire to industrialize through the beneficence of science and technology.

There is no denying the fact that successive Nigerian Governments have sought to re-organize and revitalize education in one way or the other so as to enable it play its all-important role in national development but such efforts have been largely half-hearted and haphazard. The net effect is that no appreciable result has been achieved so far. **This is in spite of some** apparently far-reaching policies in this regard. Such policies include the creation of Ministry of Science and Technology, procurement and distribution of science equipment worth millions of naira for use in various secondary schools in Nigeria, the formulation of a new educational policy which emphasizes the teaching and pursuit of science at the secondary and tertiary levels to the extent that sixty percent of the total student intake in our institutions of higher learning are reserved for the sciences while only forty percent goes to the arts. But the pertinent questions that can be raised are: can government's sloganeering on the need to develop science and technology make a nation

develop them? Does the singular act of creating a Ministry of Science and Technology necessarily make a nation to develop scientific and technological capability? Or can the procurement of multi-million naira worth of equipment for use in the secondary schools necessarily make a nation to produce the best scientists and technicians? The answer to each of these questions is an emphatic "No"!

There are more fundamental issues involved in the development of science and technology than the Nigerian government seem to be aware of. These issues include personal discipline, prospects of personal benefits, patriotism, economic and political stability as well as desire, respect, pursuit, application and reward for knowledge. These are real bases upon which science and technology develop, grow and mature in any country. A country that seriously wishes to develop science and technology must respect, promote and reward knowledge. She should have a social system which promises the highest reward and incentive to the possessor of knowledge. But since educational institutions are the repositories of knowledge and the teachers the custodians of the accumulated knowledge of mankind, it implies that for any country to pursue, acquire and apply knowledge, teachers and workers of her educational institutions must be adequately rewarded and motivated in such a way that they will be able to secure highly rewarding employment so that people will be attracted to education. This is the case in most of the industrialized nations of the world. Britain, America, Japan, Germany are examples of developed countries that place high premium on knowledge and the transmitters of knowledge (teachers). In these countries teachers are not the object of mockery, nor do they live in squalor, abject poverty, low self-esteem and public and government scorn as is the lot of their Nigerian counterparts. Instead, teachers and students in the educational institutions of those countries are highly respected, motivated, rewarded, and highly patronized and even pampered by their governments.

Unfortunately, the social system in Nigeria seem to encourage and reward idleness, crooks and swindlers. It tends to

confer honour and prestige on whoever has money no matter the source. Thus those who have the ideal of gaining self-advancement and public recognition are often frustrated and some of them that have weak consciences soon abandon the path of honour and device the most crooked and fraudulent means to amass wealth with the full confidence that even if the means to such affluence was murder or drug trafficking, the society would turn a blind eye and confer local and national recognition on them. Since this seems to be the unofficial ethics in Nigeria, why should anybody, except the eccentric few who hate the "grab and quench" mentality of the majority because of personal principles anchored on morality or in God, like to pass through the tortuous and rigorous path of acquiring knowledge in the search of personal fulfillment and social recognition which often times prove unattainable through these honest means. The discipline and sacrifice which the acquisition and application of science and technology demand are not easily attainable in a country of ease, corruption and sundry bases for discrimination as happen to be the case in Nigeria. A country where the "get-rich-quick" mentality approximates a national ethos and where dubious means of making money are readily available, attractive and accessible, only a rare few people would respect school or attend school or respect teachers. In a country where the most lucrative business is to buy and sell local and foreign currencies in the streets by anybody who cares, there can hardly be great and committed scientists and technologists in any appreciable number. In a country where all these vices abound; where the school system is changed by every new Minister of Education; where military governments bring militarism into the school system and intimidate real and imagined enemies; where advancement in educational positions is by ethnic and religious quota rather than by merit; where the qualification for leadership does not depend on the soundness of ideas or social programmes but on tribe, religion, wealth or brute force; where the government of the day trusts and depends on foreign experts and pour contempt on the local ones, that country's desire to develop

science and technology will always remain but a wishful thinking.

The above observations make it imperative that any country seriously desirous to develop science and technology should formulate the appropriate educational system with adequate reward and incentive system; and a general social system which encourages and rewards hardwork, and makes laziness and fraudulent practices unattractive and unrewarding by applying appropriate sanctions. In this way teachers and students would be encouraged to make the necessary sacrifices which the acquisition and application of knowledge for national development demand. Hence, Nigeria's path to scientific and technological development lies in the reorganization of her educational system to produce highly skilled technical and managerial manpower by emphasizing the study and application of science and the allied disciplines. In furtherance of this, well-trained and dedicated science and technology teachers should handle the teaching of these subjects within the appropriate environment of well-equipped laboratories.

Furthermore, Nigeria can develop science and technology by sponsoring research, commercializing research discoveries, strengthening the universities as well as co-ordinating scientific and technological development. The various ways these factors influence the development of science are elaborately illustrated by Onu (1982:34-60) and need not be over-flogged. Suffice it to say that any serious-minded nation that wishes to be industrialized has to demonstrate her seriousness by sponsoring research, implementing research findings and commercializing them, strengthening universities and research institutions as the bed-rock for research and development as well as consciously articulating official policy for co-ordinating technological development.

We can also add that, equally critical to the development of science and technology in Nigeria is the cultivation of "Science culture." By this we mean the encouragement and development of appropriate attitudinal dispositions that have been known to be the bases for the emergence and growth of modern science and

technology. A very essential element in a "science culture" is the "spirit of science" or the scientific attitude which Professor Iya Abubakar says is

Characterized by the desire to understand, the dispassionate appraisal of evidence, the search for data and for meaningful relations among data, the high premium on objectivity, and the application of logic and rational conclusions (Abubakar 1969: 194).

Thus, the development of rational and critical attitude towards knowledge and its object(s) is a basic condition for the development of science and technology in Nigeria. The spirit of science is borne out of curiosity which is the hallmark of man's discoveries and advancement and it relies on reason rather than authority.

However, the spirit of science seems to be generally suppressed in Nigeria, and most underdeveloped countries of the world, by the prevalent religious attitude of the people. Thus instead of cultivating the "spirit of science," Nigerians and other technologically backward people have tended to cultivate the "spirit of religion" (this is the tendency to seek supernatural, rather than scientific, explanations for natural phenomena). This is a fundamental cause for the scientific and technological backwardness of Nigeria and other underdeveloped countries of the world. The prevalence of religious attitude usually proves to be a very inhibiting factor in the development of science and technology in any country where it is not properly managed. Indeed, the material and institutional backwardness of any country can be partly explained by unscientific thinking which makes room for the tremendous power exerted by tradition and religion. Hence, it has been strongly contended that:

Wherever religion prevails, stagnation follows; whereas science generates open-mindedness and leads to progress and advancement. This ... can be seen in history. In the past reason prevailed in ancient Greek and Rome and consequently, great civilizations were created. The decline began with the advent of Christianity, which suppressed learned laymen and restricted learning to the sphere of religion, that is to say, to metaphysical problems of another world. Once a culture places more

importance on the claims of the next world than on the reality of this human world, it is bound to decline (Ibrahim 1969: 44).

It is true that Ibrahim's position seems to have been borne out of history but we wish to observe that religion is not necessarily opposed to science. In fact, at certain period of man's history, science and technology have been developed to serve religious ends. As Thompson observes,

Myth and technology, however, were not entirely separate activities, for in practice they came together in religion and magic ... In so far as he depended on religious ceremonies to make his technology successful the ritual itself tended to become the more important part of the technique (Thompson 1961: 107).

This was before the emergence of philosophy.

Our view is that religion and science, when properly understood and balanced, are not necessarily antagonistic to each other except when one tries to usurp the position of the other. We rather see a complementary relationship between them. For both religion and science aspire to serve man, and if we accept that man has a dual nature (spirit and body), then we can appreciate the complementary roles of religion and science when we understand them to serve the spirit and body of man respectively. In other words, the spiritual well-being of man can only be effectively catered for by religion while man's material (bodily) needs are for science to effectively cater for. Thus, when religion concentrates on the sphere of the spiritual and science concentrates on the sphere of the material, they both serve man in a complementary way and can even promote each other. But when one tries to go beyond its proper domain to the sphere where it does not have exclusive competence it would have a deleterious effect on the other. Hence, when religion leaves the domain of the spirit which is proper to it and pontificates in the realm of the physical, it often results in superstition. On the other hand, when science leaves the realm of observable phenomena where it has jurisdiction and dabbles into the spiritual realm to sit on judgment, it often results in atheism.

Another important ingredient of a "science culture," and one without which science and technology cannot grow, is freedom

of thought and expression. This means that individuals should be free to think about anything (nothing being held as a taboo and abominable to think about), hold any opinion about anything and express such opinion without hindrance. This is because

Historically, science is born of two highly respectable parents, the belief in the uniformity of nature ... and the freedom of expression and thought ... (Hailsham 1963: 14).

Regrettably, freedom of thought and expression is highly limited in Nigeria. Freedom of thought and expression is culturally dependent as traditions and social mores tend to determine thought and expression. There are degrees of permissiveness of what is expressed from one culture to another. But a people's view of the nature and destiny of man is bound to affect their thought and expression. And, because the conception of human nature and destiny may differ from one culture to another, the degree of freedom of thought and expression may also differ. This is to say that cultural attitudes greatly affect the development of science and technology. For instance, the major European view of man and his destiny in terms of freedom and the realization of freedom helped to radicalize a few individual thinkers whose views spurred on the development of science and technology.

A culture in which the predominant feature is individualistic tends to produce radicals in various fields and also promote iconoclasm which science and technology have been known for. This is, perhaps, the reason why modern science in its mathematical sophistication developed first in Europe and not in Africa. For, in Africa, the predominant culture of communality constitutes a major obstruction to radical individual thinking and so tends to limit the development of science and technology.

Another factor in the development of science and technology in Nigeria, which we wish to add here, is mass-education. By mass-education we mean a process by which every Nigerian is able to read and write or, at least, be receptive to modern ideas. Although the Federal Government of Nigeria has recognized this factor in national development and have currently instituted free primary education and established adult education centres, the

former is yet to achieve full result while the latter has not yet been effectively implemented. Consequently, the majority of Nigerians are still illiterate. However, family background is a very important factor in the character-formation and thought-orientation of children and this has a great implication for the development of science and technology anywhere in the world.

There is little doubt that children of literate parents are more likely to develop interest in science and technology than children of illiterate parents for the obvious fact that curiosity, which is the necessary scientific attitude, tends to be stifled in children born of illiterate parents. It is a known fact that in the Nigerian traditional setting which is characterized by illiteracy, certain questions put forward by children out of natural curiosity are often frowned at and considered to be mischievous by the elders who often, in addition to not answering such questions, rebuke the children and thereby abort their natural curiosity to learn. On the contrary, literate parents usually endeavoured to minister to the curiosity of their children and may even provide them with curiosity-inducing apparatus such as toys of different kinds.

There is even an empirical research which links eminent scientists to fairly educated parents. According to Anne Roe's research into the back-ground of sixty-four eminent scientists, "the fathers of the scientists (and it is true of the mothers of my group) had had a better education than that of the populace at large" (Roe 1973: 69). For this reason, effective methods of educating the Nigerian populace should be devised if Nigeria wishes to make appreciable advance in the development of science and technology. To this effect, the policy of mass-education must be vigorously pursued despite the enormous problems this entails in a predominantly illiterate culture. Nigeria can step up anti-illiteracy campaign at all levels. This campaign should be two-pronged: one directed at the youth and the other at illiterate adults. In respect of the youth, the Government has done well by instituting free and compulsory primary education in Nigeria. What remains for the Government to do is to properly and effectively ensure its implementation. But in the area of educating illiterate Nigerians who have passed the

primary school age, the policy and efforts of the Government still leaves much to be desired. It is true that adult literacy centres are established throughout the country, but the number of such centres and their manpower needs are grossly inadequate. Thus, the result so far attained by the current programme of mass-literacy is highly negligible. However, to make mass-education effective in Nigeria, the Federal Government should, through its Ministry of Education, mandate all state governments to liaise with their respective local governments to establish at least one adult education centre in every village in Nigeria. Each local government authority would solve the problem of staffing by using the existing primary school teachers. All that is required in this regard would be to increase the earning of the teachers by paying them an agreeable amount per day or month of their teaching in the centres. The learning periods would be made to fall on some selected evenings or nights in order not to interfere with the teachers' principal duties. The number of times that the lesson will hold per week would be conveniently worked out to suit both the teachers and the villagers; while the construction of the structures needed for the lessons should be carried out through the communal efforts of the people. The curriculum would be carefully worked out by the Federal Ministry of Education to ensure uniformity and maximum result.

Mass-education is very essential for the realization of the dream to develop science and technology. This fact is recognized by Hailsham when he asserts that:

By far the most important desideratum is the creation of a good general school education. You cannot make scientists of the first or indeed any class out of an uneducated populace (Hailsham 1963: 19).

This is why Nigeria should not spare any effort to attain mass-literacy within the minimum possible time.

Closely related to the need for mass-education is the need to organize science and technology education in such an effective manner that scientific attitude and thinking should permeate all levels of our national life. This means that the scientific and technological approach must start from the homes (which form the base for character-formation in children), through primary,

secondary and tertiary institutions. In other words, "science and the scientific approach must be all-pervasive at every level, and cannot be imposed from the outside" (Hailsham 1963: 19). Therefore, the starting point in the organization of science is the individual, and specifically the child. And, according to Hailsham;

the clue to the correct organization of science is an adequate pattern of education. I would almost go so far to say that if we could get this right, we should, in the long run, get everything right. What is certain is that so long as we get it wrong, we shall get nothing right even in the short run (Hailsham 1963: 19).

The latter case in the above quotation is the tragedy of Nigeria in her attempt to organize scientific and technological education: Nigeria got it wrong from the outset. This is because the scientific attitude which ought to be inculcated in the children both at home and in elementary school is totally lacking. What the few Nigerian Governments which, apart from rhetorics, open their eyes momentarily to the importance of developing science and technology on a national basis wrongly do is to concentrate attention on higher institutions. This hardly yields any fruitful results since the foundation for scientific and technological development is not yet solidly laid.

Equally important for the development of science and technology in Nigeria is the availability of fund and science equipment for purposes of teaching and research. The training of scientists and technicians has grown so complex and so expensive that government funding of scientific education has become inevitable. Indeed,

so costly are the equipment and apparatus needed for research, especially for much of the indispensable fundamental work, that only national – indeed, in certain cases, an international or even supra-national-budget can supply it on an adequate scale (Hailsham 1963: 11).

Unfortunately, the provision of funds and scientific equipment for the training of medium and high-level scientists and technicians in Nigeria has been grossly inadequate. Besides, Government's efforts in this regard has, at best, been sporadic and ineffective.

On this thorny issue of funding scientific and technological education and implementation of research finding it can be suggested that the various industrialists operating in Nigeria should be made to become important partners in progress with the Government in the quest for scientific and technological development by jointly providing funds for research and implementation of research-findings. However, it is a fact that almost every industrialist is very reluctant, and often resists any attempt to make him, to invest in an area which does not promise him immediate maximum profit as is the case with research-funding, especially when he has an alternative and easier means of making fantastic profits. Often times, such profits are made through dubious means in Nigeria. Consequently, the industrialists need some form of coercion before they can effectively contribute to research and development. This can be done by banning the importation of some of the so-called raw materials that are often times not really "raw". This would pose a big challenge to the survival of most industries in Nigeria. But it is common knowledge that the history of the development of science and technology is replete with enormous challenges that one can rightly say that where there are no challenges, there can be no scientific and technological break-through.

Again, to demonstrate Government's seriousness in tackling the problem of funding research and implementation of research findings, a National Research and Implementation Fund (NRIF) should be established as a matter of urgency. Once established, all industrial concerns in Nigeria should be mandated to contribute at least fifteen percent of their annual profits to the Fund. This Fund would supplement purposeful and substantial Government budget for research and development. But the major burden of funding and implementing research findings should not be shirked by the Government. The importance of Government in funding research for development can be attested to by the over-increasing budget of the United States of America in the area of scientific research and development. This is illustrated by Bernard Dixon who shows that

In the United States, for example, government funding for science grew from 2.8 billion dollars to 12.6 billion dollars per annum in the twelve years up to 1965 (Dixon 1974: 11).

And by 1985, the United States annual budget for scientific research and development had shot up to over 29 billion dollars, and there are still signs of steady increases.

Closely connected with the above is the need to co-ordinate research efforts. Since scientific research should serve mankind, certain areas of human needs must be identified and made the objects of research efforts. For this reason, efforts should be made to implement research findings as this will encourage scientists to increase their research efforts. This will also ensure that research plays the expected roles in national development.

All we have discussed so far point to the fact that the Nigerian Government has a vital role to play in the cultivation of a science culture and in bringing about the other necessary conditions for the development of science and technology. This requires a strong and purposeful political leadership which will, through appropriate educational and budgetary policies, firmly lay a good foundation for the development of science and technology. The political will to pull Nigeria out of scientific and technological backwardness has been lacking until of late. Even now that Government appears to be showing serious concerns in this regard, wrong remedies seem to have been applied as a result of improper understanding of the factors that gave birth to the present state of affairs. For instance, the Nigerian Government thought that the best way to promote interest in the study of science is to limit admissions in the liberal arts disciplines in our institutions of higher learning. This move is faulty because without building a solid science base at the primary and secondary school levels, the hope of having adequate number of students studying science at the tertiary level can hardly be meaningfully realized. Besides, it is equally wrongly assumed that the possession of a high degree in science necessarily makes one a great scientist. However, this is not so, and we have endeavoured to show that science and technology can hardly develop without the appropriate science culture which

must pervade all areas of our national life as well as other conditions outlined above, particularly a strong political leadership.

Because of the supreme importance of political leadership in the over-all development of any nation, it is pertinent to focus on the question of leadership in Nigeria. In our discussion, we will examine Dr. Onu's characterization of a good leadership.

Dr. Onu's Treatment of the Question of Leadership

There is hardly any thinker of note in contemporary Africa and other poor nations of the world who does not recognize, and focus on, the problem of leadership as a cardinal hindrance to national development and greatness. Chinua Achebe in his examination of the state of underdevelopment in Nigeria and other African countries declares categorically that "The trouble with Nigeria, is simply and squarely a failure of leadership" (Achebe 1985:1). Also, Jide Osuntokun expresses a similar view when he declares that "If we Nigerians can solve the leadership problem, Nigeria would find herself on the threshold of greatness" (Osuntokun 1987:14). Ogbonnaya Onu's position is not radically different from those of Achebe and Osuntokun since he places a great emphasis on the role of leadership in the greatness of any nation. But before examining Onu's views on leadership, we wish to first examine the terms "leader" and "leadership" in order to fully understand and appreciate the problem of leadership in Africa or anywhere in the world.

The term "leader" can be defined in different ways but the definition relevant to our discussion is that given by *Chambers (Everyday) Dictionary*, according to which a leader is "one who leads or goes first ..." The same dictionary defines leadership as "office of leader or conductor; the quality of a leader, ability to lead." From these definitions, it follows that a leader goes first while those he leads follow; that a leader should possess certain qualities which are called leadership qualities. These qualities include ability and initiative, knowledge, foresight, personality, honesty, altruism, vision and other sundry qualities that make a man to exercise benevolent control over his fellow men and mobilize them for a collective cause. A leader should know

where he is leading his followers to and how to effectively lead them to that destination.

Let us illustrate this concept of leadership simply with the commander of a battalion of soldiers during war time. This commander is the leader of the battalion. He is presumed to be fairly knowledgeable in warfare. He knows when to command his men to attack an enemy base and when to ask them to withdraw. He is supposed to understand the psychology of warfare and to inspire confidence in his followers by demonstrating that he is a master of his art. He weighs the implications of every step he takes forward or backward. Hence he is always calculating and weighing his decisions. He calculates the enemy's position and decides on how effectively to attack it. He is in full realization that many lives are under his care and therefore, he cannot afford to be reckless, indolent or full of personal considerations.

A leader, therefore, serves as an example for his followers. He not only directs them to do something, or to refrain from certain things, or to behave in certain ways, his personal example serves as an invitation to his followers to act appropriately. On the other hand, his followers, because of a sacred trust, follow their leader wherever he leads them to in the belief that he always acts in their best interest. The leader, in turn, endeavours to put the interests of his followers above selfish considerations in view of the sacred trust reposed on him. Indeed a leader is like a lantern, directing the feet of men through a dark path: where the lantern leads, the feet of men follow.

The question then is, given the above description of a leader and leadership qualities, can we really say that African countries in contemporary time have leaders? Opinions are bound to differ on this question. However, it is evident that the African nationalists displayed sparkling leadership qualities during their fight for the emancipation of the continent from colonial rule. But the leadership situation in most post-colonial African countries has been so bad that it is almost a misnomer to employ the term "leadership" when talking about those who occupy leadership positions in Africa. Perhaps, it is more appropriate, in

many cases, to talk of a tiny band of fortune-seekers who impose themselves on the people either with the aid of the gun or bare-faced deceit with the sole purpose of exploiting the people of Africa and amassing millions or billions of whatever foreign money that appeals to their fancy.

It is the case that the socio-political conditions of any people, anywhere in the world, is to a large extent a manifestation of the types of leaders they have and have had. History testifies to the fact that a country may not be richly endowed with material resources but can acquire material riches through effective leadership which might decide to develop the citizens intellectually. Such citizens can then employ their skills to attract material wealth. This is how many European countries have come to enjoy higher standard of living today. Conversely, a country or continent may be richly endowed with human and material resources but may actually be poor on account of poor leadership. In this regard, Onu points out that "the ability of any nation to attain greatness will depend on how its leadership uses the resources available, both human and material" (Onu 1984:97).

He maintains that there are leadership types and that the type that emerges depends on environment. But he emphasizes that:

leadership must have the capacity to perceive the needs of followers in relation to their own, to help followers move towards fuller self-realization and self-actualization along with the leaders themselves. Indeed leadership is nothing if not linked to collective purpose; and its effectiveness judged by actual social change measured by intent and by the satisfaction of human needs and expectations (Onu 1984:97).

Thus, it is essential to any leadership that it must be perceptive of the needs of its followers and demonstrate ability to help them realize those needs and such basic values as well-being, wealth, skill, enlightenment, power, and respect. Onu maintains that the "effectiveness of any leadership can simply be measured on its ability to satisfy most of these basic needs" (Onu 1984:98). But when these needs are neglected and people find themselves in the throes of hunger and starvation, they can hardly organize

themselves into a successful pattern and this limits their participation in society. This brings tension and insecurity.

It is on the leadership that the task of harnessing and mobilizing natural resources to achieve national greatness rests. Onu illustrates this point with the example of the United States of America which he says possessed virtually every single attribute of a powerful nation before the Second World War, but which played a relatively minor role in international relations because her leadership adopted a policy of isolation. Thus, the American leadership failed to put the advantages of geography, natural resources, industrial and military potential, and large population to maximum use. But at the end of the war, an opportunity for global leadership presented itself and America did not fail to grab it with two hands. Onu notes that:

Ever since, the goal of the United States has been world leadership and the type of leadership to guarantee this has always been selected, bearing in mind that provincialism has become an obstacle to the intelligent conduct of foreign affairs (Onu 1984:99).

Onu suggests that the articulation of Nigeria's national objectives will, as it happened in the case of the United States of America, help to produce the appropriate kind of leadership. In his view;

once the goal and mechanism for attaining significant global influence are identified, then efforts will be made to select the right type of leadership to achieve the national objective ... Once Nigeria accepts and believes in the goal of attaining global influence, and regards technology as the suitable means of achieving that objective, the leadership that emerges will be one most suitable to achieve the national objectives (Onu 1984:99).

What Onu is saying here is that once national objectives are set, then Nigerians can look for the right kind of leader. But he did not make it clear how the selection can be done: is the selection evolutionary or democratically? By evolutionary way of selecting a leader, we mean a situation whereby a leader emerges naturally through predominance over others. If this is what he has in mind, it therefore means that the emergence of the right kind of leadership depends on chance. On the other hand, if the selection process is to be democratic, there is the danger that:

it is not unusual for a man to rise to political position as a result of popular election merely because he is a skilful manipulator of public opinion. On the other hand, the populace sometimes ignores diligent and earnest leaders who are poor at advertising themselves (Gage 1989:234).

Thus, either through the evolutionary process or the democratic process of selection there remains the possibility of not selecting the appropriate leadership to achieve national objectives.

However, it seems that the selection process which Onu has in mind is the democratic one. In this case, the above danger can be greatly minimized by properly educating the populace on what constitute national objectives and how their individual aspirations synchronize with national goals. Thus through a purposeful mass-education, the populace can be properly enlightened to make the appropriate choice of leadership.

Onu underscores the urgent need of producing the right kind of leadership if Nigeria wants to achieve greatness when he asserts that "no segment of the economy or institution, can perform better than the limits set for it by the political leadership of the country" (Onu 1984:100). His ideal type of leadership for Nigeria is the type of leadership that "will have the political will to do everything that is necessary to make Nigerians achievers, producers and inventors" (Onu 1984:100). He further stresses that:

Any leadership, that can successfully mobilize Nigerians in a way that we start looking more inwards such that we can build faith in our abilities, relying on ourselves to find solutions to our problems while cultivating an unshakeable hope on the future, will lay the solid foundation for a greater Nigeria. (Onu 1984:101).

He sums the crucial nature of leadership in any nation when he asserts that "leadership may build and save nations, as well as destroy them ..." (Onu 1984:99).

So far, this chapter has focussed on the critical role of technology in national development and how indigenous technology can be developed. Our analysis of his ideas on a myriad of socio-political issues show him as an avowed patriot who is deeply agonized by the sad state of underdevelopment

and backwardness of his dear country contrary to his wish to see her attain greatness. This patriotic zeal led him into inquiring about the conditions that make a nation great. His incisive analysis reveals that geography, large population, natural resources, leadership and technology are the crucial factors in the development and greatness of any nation. But of all these factors, he convincingly argues that technology is the most decisive factor in the quest of any nation to attain greatness. He then examined the Nigerian situation and concluded that Nigeria has got most of what it takes for a nation to be great except for lack of technological development. Thus he described the absence of well-developed technology as the missing link between Nigeria and greatness.

He went ahead to suggest remedies for Nigeria's present predicament with the fervent hope that when the proper remedies are applied, the Nigeria of his dream will emerge. The depth of his analysis and the numerous insights he displayed easily demonstrates his intellectual fecundity. Also, his characterization of the type of leadership that Nigeria requires in order to be great and developed easily betray his leadership qualities. For it takes a good leader to pontificate on the qualities of a good leader. In fact, Onu's penetrating treatment of many issues shows that he is mentally alert, socially and politically sensitive, patriotically concerned, humanely and sympathetically disposed to finding both the intellectual and practical solutions to the numerous problems of his country, his continent and his world. In this disposition, Onu joins many of his contemporaries in seeking the manumission of his people from social, political, economic and technological backwardness. It is this disposition that would carry him beyond the realm of theories, beyond the serene university environment, to the tumultuous world of practice and partisan politics where his ability to balance and marry theory with practice will be seen and judged.

Chapter Six

From The Class-Room To Government House

The great only appears great to us because we are on our knees - let us arise - (says a certain maxim).

Philosophers have only interpreted the world, but the question is to change it - Karl Marx.

Onu must have reasoned in similar lines as the above sayings. His analysis of the social, economic, political and cultural situation of Nigeria, Africa and the world at large, and his recipe for solving developmental problems are borne out of strong convictions that he felt compelled to do something in order to put those ideas into practice.

His first approach in trying to get his convictions on how to solve the developmental problems of Nigeria and the entire third world heard and adopted as a strategy was to present those views during seminars and symposia. So articulate and impressive were his ideas and presentations that his audience usually applauded and commended him wherever he went. However, in spite of this, Onu was agonized and disturbed that the Government does not seem to properly grasp the causes of the nation's developmental problem, not to talk of finding appropriate solutions to them.

Social and political thinkers the world over often suffer great mental agony when they intellectually respond to the problems of their time and are able to articulate solutions to them but find their goals inhibited by the myopia or inertia of the government. Such agony may lead a thinker to resign to fate or it may propel him into a direct attempt at personally getting to the position where he can practicalize his ideas for the benefits of his people. It was the latter approach that Onu took.

He began to seek a way of putting his ideas into practice with the full realization that "practice without thought is blind; thought

without practice is empty" (Nkrumah 1964:78). He knew that no matter how appropriate his proffered solutions to the contemporary problems of his nation and the world are, they remain only but a mental exercise if they are not employed to practical ends for the benefit of the people. This is what many socio-political theorists have known all along and for which reason they have in various degrees sought, through positive action, to realize their ideas in practice.

For instance, Plato (real name, Aristocles), one of the greatest socio-political philosophers known in recorded history and one whose ideas of an ideal state and social order have been generally described as utopian, was so convinced that;

the human race will not see better days until either the stock of those who are rightly and genuinely following philosophy acquire political authority, or else the class who have political control be led by some dispensation of providence to become real philosophers (Plato, quoted by Nisbet 1982:5)

Because of this he went to Syracuse to try to teach Dionysus II, King of Syracuse how to become a philosopher - king. Although the project failed mainly because of the instigation of the King's advisers, the lesson remained indelible. This lesson is that no matter how abstruse and idealistic a system of thought may be, its author may be so much convinced of its practicality that he might be willing to stake his life in order to realize it.

We can also see theory leading to action in the philosophy of Karl Marx. Marx had always insisted that his brand of socialism which was a stage in the transition of the society from capitalism to communism is scientific socialism in contradistinction to utopian or idealistic socialism. Marx and his followers affirm that the communist ideology is a practical guide to action and based on the observable truths of the dynamics of economic and social organizations. Hence, everywhere in the world, Marxists sought to realize the communist principles by getting directly or indirectly involved in actions that promise to lead to that end.

Apart from the above instances, history shows that many social reformers and political visioners are not just starry-eyed men but men of indomitable energy and purpose whose over-

riding ambition is to see their ideas applied for practical purposes for the desired or predicted result(s) to follow. In this regard, the African continent can boast of such men as Kwame Nkrumah, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo to mention only but three of the great African nationalists whose ideas influenced their actions and the lives of millions of people in the society. These men who relentlessly fought to bring the ideal into the actual and to make the actual answer to the call of the ideal are usually men of sufficient conviction whose commitment to social progress amounts to a crusade. These are men who firmly believe that knowledge must serve humanity if it is not a mere useless mental exercise.

It was Onu's vision of a better social and economic order, his conviction that the present set-up in Nigeria is not the best possible arrangement given Nigeria's abundant human and material resources, his patriotic devotion in tasking his intellect for solutions to his country's problems, his strong conviction that a better social order will emerge if his ideas and other progressive ones are implemented, and his deep-rooted compassion for the unmerited suffering and helplessness of the Nigerian people that made him to leave his relatively secure world of exclusive academics to the insecure, uncertain and perilous world of politics and practical affairs. His driving force was compassion and commitment. It was compassion that led him to think on how to meet the basic needs of Nigerians. But he realized that pity without the ability to help is useless. Thus compassion gave birth to commitment and this gave rise to action.

Thus, when the Babangida Administration lifted ban on partisan politics and the two political parties, the National Republican Convention (NRC) and the Social Democratic party (SDP), were created, Onu allied himself with the N.R.C. His choice of the NRC, despite the apparent similarities in the programmes and constitutions of the two political parties, was greatly influenced by the Free Enterprise programme of the party which he finds to be in consonance with the economic philosophy and practice of the people. He prefers the free

enterprise economic system because it rewards and encourages personal initiative and ingenuity which characterize the Igbo economic life. Also as time went on he found his party, the N.R.C., to be very cohesive, peaceful and orderly, and was very delighted about it.

The decision to resign his appointment at the University of Port Harcourt so as to contest the governorship election, first in the then Imo State and later in the newly created Abia State, was one of the most serious decisions he had ever faced. This is because, as a Senior Lecturer and Dean of the Faculty of Engineering whose papers have gone for assessment for professorial chair, he was near the apex of his profession. The desire to become a professor is the consummating passion of every true academic and to leave the academic line when one is a few steps away from its highest and glorious point is a tough choice to make, especially if the decision entails leaving academics for a very precarious field as partisan politics. Onu was mindful of all this but he had reached that point in thought that only practical action towards the betterment of the society could satisfy. He decided not to count the personal risks involved in the event of not achieving his goal during the elections, drawing inspiration from the fact that achievers the world over are those who have acted in the direction of their strongest ideas with their eyes only set on success.

To many of his colleagues and students who admired his intellectual acumen and steady rise to the pinnacle of his academic profession, it was almost tantamount to foolhardiness for him to abandon such a brilliant career that promised so much personal satisfaction and peaceful life as academics had for him. They all agreed that their worry for Onu's venture into politics was not because he was not capable or qualified for leadership even at national and continental levels, indeed he had proved his mettle as an administrative guru in the various capacities he had served the academic community and the nation at large. Their fear for him was on how such a refined, humane, gentleman and a lover of perfection would fare in the murky terrain of Nigerian politics. Would he be accorded a fair chance in the political

contest, especially as he had not amassed material wealth but intellectual wealth to distribute? They knew only too well the marked difference between Onu and the other competitors for political power. They knew that Onu, from all available records, has intellectual wealth which if given the chance to be employed in the service of the people would create abundant material wealth, whereas what most of his opponents had was material wealth. But members of the academic community know only too well that as Plato, the philosopher for all ages, rightly pointed out "ideas rule the world."

Onu himself had often thought about the realities of Nigeria's political situation: how the prevalent ignorance and the divide-and-rule tactics of some members of the political elite have tended to stultify good political contest. But his belief that he has a mission for the state and the country at large which should not yield to personal considerations, money-politics, sectionalism and other sundry divides made him all the more resolute to embark on his political venture. He must have thought, like John Dewey, that "while saints ruminates bully sinners rule the world" to their advantage. He was convinced that the only way to arrest the dangerous drift of the state ship is for men of vision and mission to come forward to serve their fatherland and humanity at large.

Onu belongs to the rare breed of men who think as men of vision and act as men of action. In this rank we also find such men as Mahathma Gandhi, Chairman Mao, Stalin, Woodrow Wilson, Otto Von Bismark, Azikiwe, Nkrumah, Awolowo, to mention but a few. Hence, he did not count what the personal costs would be, but rather thought of what the people stood to lose should he not try to practicalize his ideas.

After resigning his appointment with the University of Port Harcourt, the first hurdle he had to pass was the party's primaries for the political post he was gunning for - gubernatorial position. It was the first avenue to test his popularity and acceptability even among his party members. The competition for the party ticket was stiff despite the ban on old politicians at that time. However, Onu emerged the winner of the

intra-party election and became the gubernatorial candidate for the NRC. He, therefore had to stand for election against his SDP counterpart for the governorship seat in Abia State.

After a most gruelling campaign, he was overwhelmingly elected over his SDP counterpart, Sam Eke and was sworn-in as the first Executive Governor of Abia State on January 2nd, 1992. But that was the beginning of the most trying moment in Onu's political career. This is because his defeated opponent went to the Election Tribunal to challenge the election of Onu, alleging that there were some riggings in favour of Onu. Then by some inexplicable logic, the Tribunal sitting at Umuahia nullified the election result. This was because the areas of alleged irregularities were all Onu's strongholds including his own local Government area.

The opprobrium that greeted the tribunal's annulment of the election result was spontaneous. Everywhere in the State, people quickly gathered for a serious showdown over what they considered as a rape on the collective will of the people by the Tribunal's judgement. But Onu quickly intervened with timely broadcast which appealed to the people to remain calm and avoid giving anyone some excuse to destroy what the hard-working people of Abia State had built over the years and expressed the hope that justice would still be done. He was calm, confident and apparently unruffled throughout the broadcast. The composure reassured the people and a violent riot was averted.

Onu later appealed against the judgement of the Tribunal and the Appeal Court sitting at Port Harcourt quashed the judgement of the Tribunal and upheld Onu's election. The spontaneous jubilation which greeted the Court of Appeal judgement reaffirmed the unflinching support which the entire Abia people gave Onu during the polls. Onu was also very happy that his confidence in the rule of law, and the recourse to law rather than violence to seek redress was not misplaced but vindicated.

Throughout the turbulent post-election period Onu maintained his calm and showed himself as a man of guts. Having been sworn-in as first Executive Governor of the young state, Onu carried on the conduct of state affairs with

equanimity. This showed his maturity and cool-headedness in managing crises. These are personal assets that he would later call to use with maximum results.

In fact, Onu first showed his gusty nature when he came out to contest for his party's ticket for the governorship election, first in Imo State and later in Abia State. When he eventually won this party's nomination, many members of the political elite scoffed at his ambition to become the governor of Abia State because they thought that the geo-political equation did not favour him. They drew this conclusion from the fact that even though he was a better candidate than his opponent, the place he came from constituted a "chip" on his excellent credentials for the exalted position. By this they meant that he came from Ohaozara, a local government, which was generally regarded as one of the most backward areas in former Imo State and present Abia State. On this account, people doubted the possibility of someone coming from such a remote area to capture the best prize in the entire state while the "township people" and money-men who regarded such a position as almost a birth-right would sit and watch.

Indeed, former Ohaozara Local Government Area, which now comprizes Ohaozara and Onicha Local Government Areas, was the most neglected area in the then Imo State. This neglect was Government neglect. For whatever reasons, the Government appeared to have literally turned her back on the people of those areas. The roads were in unmotorable condition, health facilities were virtually non-existent as there was only one mission hospital, the Presbyterian Joint Hospital, Uburu, built in 1913, to serve the entire Ohaozara people and its environs - a population which is over 500,000. Portable water supply was a paradisaal dream as the only available sources of water supply, until very recent, were muddy ponds and streams. Because of this, water-borne diseases afflicted the people a great deal. Also, electricity supply was non-existent and even today, all that has been done towards electrifying the areas were through self-help efforts augmented by the present State Government. All these amenities that make life worth living in any place are obviously

the responsibilities of Government because the costs of putting them in place are so high that rural communities could ill-afford them. Thus, the extent of lack of those basic amenities show the level of neglect and non-performance by Government of its primary responsibilities to the citizens.

However, the non-availability of social amenities was not peculiar to Ohaozara and Onicha local Government Areas. Almost eighty per cent of the entire local government areas in Nigeria, and particularly Imo and Abia States, suffer grave lack of social amenities to date. It is symptomatic of the general neglect which the citizens of this potentially great country have suffered in the hands of successive governments till the Babangida Administration sought to redress matters through the agency known as the Directorate for Food, Roads, Rural Development and Infrastructure (DFRRI). Even though the execution of the mandate of the DFRRI has suffered some severe set-backs, it is still credit-worthy that the Babangida Administration sought to do the important things which successive administrations in Nigeria, since independence, have failed to recognize or attempt to do - provision of feeder roads, water, electricity and encouragement of cottage industries in the rural areas. In fact it is efforts in these directions that the Babangida Administration would be positively remembered by history.

Although we have observed that the absence or inadequate provision of social amenities is not peculiar to Ohaozara and its environs, we hasten to add that what appeared peculiar was the official and unofficial acts and omissions that usually trumpeted Ohaozara's backwardness from the roof-tops. Ironically, the villages of most of those propagandists fared worse than Ohaozara in terms of social amenities and personal and cultural accomplishments. But for whatever reason that propaganda was mounted against the people of Ohaozara, the net effect was unmistakable: many people from Ohaozara were weakened psychologically and were often barred officially from many competitions in which they would have won the first position. Thus for any Ohaozara man to compete favourably with his

counterparts from other parts of the state or the country, he has to first of all win the psychological war against him before going on to the actual competition. And once this important war is won, the individual is very likely going to win the laurel. This psychological war is very important because without winning it, one would not be able to come forward for any competition at the local, national or international level. Hence, such individuals as Onyiba Aja Nwachukwu, Nigeria's first Federal Commissioner for Education for several years, Dr. Agom Eze, the first Commissioner for Works and Housing, one time Commissioner for Education and Chairman, Civil Service Commission in the former Imo State, and currently Chairman, Civil Service Commission in Abia state; Professor John Ogbu, a professor of anthropology, University of California, USA; late Barrister Nnagozie, Nwite a former Commissioner in the Civil service commission, in the former Imo State, late Engineer Aja Eze, one of the best engineering minds that Nigeria has ever produced; Dr. Chigozie Ogbu, former Imo Commissioner for Health and now Special Adviser to Abia State Governor; and Honourable Agwu Nwogo Agwu, a Second Republic member of the National Assembly, are in the long list of the Ohaozara (and Onicha) People who have won the psychological battle first and went ahead to win wider recognition in their various fields of endeavour.

Given the above discussion, one can better appreciate the great battle which Onu had to fight and win before he eventually won the governorship election in Abia State. For when he openly declared his intention to contest for the governorship position, many people scoffed at the idea of an Ohaozara man coming to rule as the governor of the state above all others as the Jews derided the idea of a messiah coming from Nazareth. The Jewish sentiment against Nazareth was expressed by Nathanael (who later became a disciple of Jesus) in a conversation with Philip as recorded in the gospel of John chapter one, verses 45 and 46 as follows:

Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, we have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son Joseph.

And Nathanael said unto him, can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, come and see (K.J.).

Eventually, it turned out that the Messiah came out of Nazareth as it equally turned out that the first Executive Governor of Abia State came from Ohaozara.

Yet, Ohaozara was not as poor as Nazareth. For the propagandists against Ohaozara would always trumpet what the area lacks without even mentioning what they have. They would never mention the industry of the people, their superb hospitality which express their recognition of the oneness of man, their peaceful disposition, their aversion towards crimes and criminals, the abundant food of various kinds (yams, cassava, rice, vegetable and fruits, groundnut and so on) which bring lorries of different sizes, from many parts of eastern Nigeria to the Ohaozara markets.

Some workers in Ohaozara who were from other places have confessed that when they were transferred to the area they and their bosses thought it was a form of punitive measure against them. Some of them even thought of resigning their appointment but they found all the ugly stories told about Ohaozara to be a fairy tale in most essential parts. They rather found the place habitable and enjoyable as food and other things are abundant. Thus, they found that Ohaozara was suffering from the kind of propaganda which ex-colonies suffered from their imperialist masters. This discovery of the true state of affairs in Ohaozara by the non-indigenes and the exploits achieved "abroad" by the indigenes are steadily changing the mentality of people about Ohaozara and the people of the area.

The issues discussed above made Onu's victory at the gubernatorial election quite an eventful one. It was a triumph which shows the political maturity of Nigerians and indicate that the time is fast passing when place of origin and other extraneous factors, rather than ideas and programmes, would determine election results.

The fundamental principle which propelled Onu from the classroom to the Government House was his idea of a better order for Nigeria in general and Abia State in particular and his conviction that he had active role to play in this regard. The ideal fueled his gut and his gut galvanized him into purposeful action. Onu was worried by the fact that most of the things that bother us as Nigerians, in terms of basic necessities - food, clothing, shelter, water, electricity, good roads, affordable transport system - are almost complete in advanced countries of the world. In fact, these basic necessities are almost taken for granted because their societies are better organized and disciplined to achieve optimum result.

Therefore, Onu decided to come out to serve in an executive capacity in order to put in place those things that are basic to national development and improved standard of living. He was greatly encouraged by the various people who had worked with him in many assignments who usually observed his sterling leadership qualities and noted that his conception of leadership as service to the people is what Nigerian leaders needed to imbibe in order to develop the country in the various areas of national life. And when he finally embarked on his active political life, he found his campaign tours quite encouraging as he was warmly received wherever he went. It was with such warmth that the people of Abia State overwhelmingly ushered him into the Government House at Umuahia where he is to spend the next four years, all thing being equal, in his tenure in office as the first Executive Governor of Abia State.

Onu's Vision And Mission

This chapter focuses on Governor Onu as a man of vision and mission which span through Abia State, Nigeria, Africa and the world at large. However, in practical terms, his mission began in Abia State. Hence, it is pertinent to begin our discussion here by examining Onu's vision and mission in Abia State.

Gov. Onu's Vision and Mission in Abia State

From our discussion of the intellectual foundation of Onu's venture into politics in the previous chapter, it is evident that he did not just dabble into politics for the fun of it or in order to seek a way of boosting his business empire as he is neither frivolous nor a business magnate. Also, he did not engage in politics in anticipation of the ego-fanning practice of being heralded by sirens and other vulgar sentimentalities that have ironically motivated many people to seek the exalted office of governor of a State. He came into active politics because he was convinced that the general lack of appreciable development in his society is an anomaly which serious-minded and deep-thinking members of the society must exert themselves mentally and physically to rectify. He came into politics with the full-blown vision of how a state and, indeed, a nation can be optimally organized for the benefits of the entire citizenry. Thus, he came into politics with a sense of mission. His mission in Abia State will become clearer after we must have fully understood his vision for the State.

His Vision for Abia State

Onu's vision for Abia State is one of being first in achievements as it is alphabetically among the thirty states of the federation and Abuja; a state whose citizenry is highly enterprising and social mobility unparalleled in such a way that people could rise from

the status of house-boys to that of managing directors; a state where career is open to talent; a state which can provide a technological model for Nigeria and the underdeveloped countries of Africa and the world at large; a state in which the abundant human and material resources are harnessed for the provision of abundant food and basic infrastructural facilities for the benefit of all; a state where peace reigns supreme and where everybody would have a sense of belonging and would be cared for whether rich or poor, young or old, irrespective of whether one is an indigene or not; a state where illiteracy can be fought and won, and where every home can boast of people who can read and write; a state where everybody can be looked after and made to work for honest living in order to pave the way for a strong, united and prosperous Abia State that can be in the forefront in building a strong, united and prosperous Nigeria (Onu 1992: Interview).

Given Onu's vision of an ideal Abia State, some skeptics may be tempted to dismiss it as a mere dream which cannot be realized in practical life. They may contend that such a state cannot be found anywhere in the world and therefore cannot comprehend how Onu is going to make the Abia State of his dream come true. But the important point which such skeptics miss is that "if one cannot say how society should be organized in an ideal world, how can one know what changes should be wrought in its mundane equivalent (Pettit 1980: xii). It is the ideal that helps us to strive to effect the necessary changes in the actual which will make it better than it is at the moment.

In fact the history of human advancement is the history of pursuit of visions which pedestrian skeptics have derided as impossible. Just two out of available numerous examples will illustrate this point. Before 1903, many religious skeptics, including Bishop Wright (the father of the Wright Brothers, had thought it impossible for man to fly in airplanes. They did not just think it impossible, it was, indeed, an anathema. But through persistent efforts, the Wright Brothers were the first people to successfully fly on an aircraft. That was in 1903. The second example is the vision of Henry Ford to create an engine with all eight cylinders

cast in one block. The story had it that every engineer who worked for him insisted that it was impossible. But Ford instructed them to pursue his project anyway, and remain on the job until they succeeded. Six months later, there was no progress. One year later, the engineers shook their heads dejectedly and told Ford that his mission was impossible but he remained adamant and pressed them to continue. Then suddenly, the secret was discovered and the famous V-8 motor became a reality. It was also this kind of supposedly starry vision that motivated Thomas Edison to persist through 10,000 experiments that failed before perfecting the incandescent light bulb.

Perhaps it was the power of vision and the connection between vision and great achievements that General Babangida saw and began to insist that nothing less is good enough for Nigeria than men of vision. He thought that the political process which he had engineered was capable of producing men of vision. But the fiasco which has greeted the earlier presidential primaries and the June 12th, presidential elections must have shocked him beyond words. However, he can take solace in the fact that at the state level, his innovative political engineering has been able to produce some men of vision such as Governor Ogbonnaya Onu. That was before the adoption of Option A4, a cognomen for the process of choosing presidential candidates by the two political parties through the wards, local, state and national levels and the final presidential election through the oxymoronic system of voting called open -secret ballot. There is no doubt that this process of selection has much to commend it with regards to restoring the lost confidence in the Nigerian electoral system but it is quite doubtful whether Option A4, the brain child of the political guru of Nigeria, Professor Humphrey Nwosu, former Chairmah, National Electoral Commission, has any in-built mechanism to produce men of vision to handle national affairs.

We need to observe that the poverty of leadership which has bedevilled Nigeria and most African nations is a reflection of the dearth of men of vision in the seats of power. However, this is not to imply that Nigeria and other African nations lack men of

vision. What we can correctly say is that those men of vision in post-colonial Africa are hardly given any chance, by powerful money bags, to assume national leadership. Hence, those who have the vision of a better society and meticulously worked out the means of achieving it often times perish with their vision because they could not do certain daring things that could have brought them to the helm of affairs or because the democratic process of choosing leaders is too weak and naive that bully and self-seeking men easily hijack it to attain their selfish ends to the frustration of men of vision and the detriment of the entire citizenry.

But luckily for Abia State and Nigeria at large, the democratic process put in place by the Babangida Administration which initially emphasized the need for the emergence of new breed politicians was resilient enough to produce some governors like Onu, who thoroughly understand the needs of their people and sincerely desired to meet them. But if visions are to be realized, practical steps must be taken, otherwise they will only remain wishful thinking. It is for this reason that we wish to focus attention on the practical steps taken so far by Onu since he assumed office as the first Executive Governor of Abia State, to translate his vision for the State into reality and thereby prove himself as a man of mission indeed. For we can say that vision without mission is lame while mission without vision is vacuous. This is because it is vision that engineers mission and it is mission that actualizes vision.

Towards Realizing the Abia Dream

Onu's vision for Abia State is what is now called the "Abia Dream." The ingredients of this Dream are already enumerated above. It was that vision or "Dream" that brought him to the helm of Affairs in Abia State and his practical steps towards the realization of that "Dream" constitute his mission in the State. We can now look specifically at the various facets of the Abia Dream in order to see the practical efforts so far made in the first eighteen months of his administration. However, we need to observe that all the facets are those that make for a great state, and the "Abia Dream" is the desire "to make Abia truly the

Number one state in Nigeria" (Onu 1993:1). For a man whose life history is full of firsts, the desire to make the state he governs first in the whole federation is not out of tune with his character from nature, he was the first of the eleven sons of late Eze David Aba and was born on December 1st, 1951; he was first from Standard One to the University in his first degree programme and the first to study Chemical Engineering in Uburu; first Head of Department of Chemical Engineering, University of Port Harcourt; first National President, Raw Material Society of Nigeria and now the first Executive Governor of Abia State. Given this enviable record of firsts and excellence in various endeavours, it is quite understandable why Onu's mission is to make Abia State the Number One State in Nigeria. He sought to achieve this Dream that

Sees Abia as truly Number one, as a state of equal opportunities for all citizens, a state where the ingenuity of the individual if fully tapped and channelled to optimum utility, will be a Japan of Nigeria, nay of Africa (Onu 1993:1 -2).

through the following ways:

Mobilization of Abia citizens

Onu had surmised the enormous problems confronting the young state which included very poor conditions of existing road networks and acute lack of access roads to many rural areas constituting about 90% of the State, inadequate infrastructural facilities and social amenities, a crushing foreign debt burden of \$328.35 million or over N10 billion inherited from former Imo State as well as huge internal debt, the restive social atmosphere engendered by arrears of salaries owed to teachers for as far back as 1987; and concluded that before these problems can be surmounted and the state made to move forward, all hands must be on deck. Consequently, he undertook to consult the various interest groups in the state and rub minds with them on how best to save the state from her numerous problems as well as make it the Number One State he had dreamt of. On this score, Onu reminded Abia citizens that:

As soon as I took office, like a servant who is determined to please his master, I immediately set out to hold consultations with the various Abia interest groups within and outside the State. Such groups included Chairmen of local Government areas, executives of professional bodies, Chambers of commerce, traditional rulers, student unions, patrons and executives of town unions, Abia State indigenes in other states, and market associations (Onu 1992:1).

During those meetings, he tried to revive the self-confidence of the people reminding them of their past collective and heroic efforts as a group. He reminded the Abia citizens that:

Again and again our people have proved that traditionally we are our brothers' keepers. The experience of the war and immediate post-war period gave us the opportunity to practice this on a massive scale, and the world took note. We shared everything we owned, from a mat and relief ration in a refugee camp to the use of our homes and property for the common cause. We even gave our lives that others, and those yet unborn, might live. And when we emerged from those 30 months of war, still propelled by the firm belief that our communities are our citadels, we contributed from our meagre resources to a common fund to repair our battered bridges and mend our damaged schools; to give our villages health centre and put in place badly needed public utilities (Onu 1992:5).

He reminded the people of prominent individuals in the state whose fame rest, on what they had contributed to the improvement of the environment which nourished them and the lives of their fellow men and women. Therefore the present generation of Abia citizens must jointly tackle the developmental problems of the state as they have done in various commendable self-help projects in order to realize the Abia Dream for which future generations will remember them with pride.

The Abia Dream which is predicated on hardwork, intelligence and creativity requires the collective efforts of Abia people to materialize. Hence, Onu's insistence that:

This is no time for every man to himself. When you leave this hall today brothers and sisters, go and tell our people in Lagos and Ibadan, in Kaduna and Kano, in Aba and Port Harcourt even in the remotest parts of Abia and Nigeria, that we need their help to develop our State. Tell them that a man is as great as his village. A man is as successful as his

home town, and let no man be called wealthy whose place of birth is backward. No man should be proud to live in a palatial oasis, behind concrete walls in a desert of abject underdevelopment (Onu 1992:7).

In all this, Onu was pushing forward his idea of a collective messiah for the state. In this regard, he opines that

We plan to achieve a total, and complete mobilization of our people, so that each man and woman may contribute his or her fair quota, so that each man may make an impact on his environment thereby improving the lives of all of us (Onu 1992:8)

Onu carried his gospel of total mobilization towards the collective good to all the Abia citizens even in other states of the federation urging them to "mobilize themselves and their resources to help build and develop an Abia State of which all of us and our children will be proud" (Onu April 11 1992:1).

Furthermore, he demonstrated his desire to march forward with the entire citizens of the state by setting up, within the first week of his administration, the Abia Joint Consultative Council as an equivalent of a council of state within the state. This council is made up of the Governor, the Deputy Governor and chairmen of all Local Government Areas within the state. This Council meets on regular basis to discuss the problems of the state and find solutions to them. Under the umbrella of the council he committed himself and the local government chairmen to the regular payment of workers' salaries as a condition for receiving their own. This joint commitment ensured the regular payment of workers salaries and also saw that the practice of owing teachers arrears of salaries stopped. In this way he hoped to mobilize the workers of the state and motivate them to a greater efficiency and dedication.

He also sought to mobilize the entire Abia people by ensuring even spread of Government appointments. In this regard, Onu avers that:

My next vital step in setting up my government was the appointment of commissioners, director-generals, as well as special advisers and assistants. Of the seven commissioners who were appointed, at least two came from each of the three zones in the state, while the director-general positions were distributed in such a way that each local

government area had at least one appointed from it. (Onu April 11, 1992:2)

These appointments ensured that no section of the state was left out of appointment and elicited the co-operation of all to see the Government as that of the people, by the people and for the people. In so doing, Abia state became a quintessence of democracy. For the Joint Consultative Council ensured a steady flow of ideas from the people to the government and vice versa.

Equally, in the bid to mobilize the entire Abia people towards a collective consciousness for the purpose of collective greatness, the Onu Administration sought to inculcate in the Abians certain mannerisms that would constantly remind them of the Abia Dream to be the best in all fields in Nigeria and beyond. Hence, the Administration introduced a new way of greeting which consists in clinching the fist of the right hand and raising the thumb gesticulatingly as one greets "Abia Kwe-nu", "Abia Kwe-nu" and the people would respond "Number One". Since this has become the manner of greeting in public gatherings, people are constantly reminded of the Abia Dream of excelling individually and collectively.

The Dream of making Abia State the Technological Nerve-Centre in Nigeria and the entire Africa

In the fifth chapter of this book, Onu had convincingly argued that the missing link between Nigeria and greatness is technology. He showed that Nigeria has abundant human and material resources which are important factors in the greatness of any nation but has failed to utilize them to achieve greatness because of the absence of the requisite technology. His ultimate mission in Abia is to technologize the state and make her the reference point in Nigeria's desire to develop the necessary technological know-how. This vision is nourished by the fact that:

Beneath the surface of our land are buried by God Almighty himself, such diverse material resources that are the envy of other states. We have salt, lead, zinc, limestone, gypsum clay, sand, coal and several other minerals (Onu April 21, 1992:3)

Given these material resources and the available manpower., what remains is the right kind of leadership, mobilization and motivation to harness the exhaustible natural endowments and turn them into industrial wealth that would generate income on continuous basis through the development and application of the appropriate technology.

Onu's Administration is quite ready and eager to give the right leadership that can usher Abia State into the technological arena so that other states and Nigeria at large could follow. Thus Onu declares;

Now is the time for us to say yes to technological advancement which sadly has been the missing link in Nigeria's march to greatness ... It is true that there are no major industries in this state but we have abundant material and manpower resources to make us the reference point in Nigeria's quest for technological self-sufficiency (Onu April 21, 1992:10).

This can be achieved through hardwork and sacrifice. The history of the Japanese miraculous break-through in scientific and technological knowledge and the resultant economic prosperity assures Onu of the possibility of his vision and mission.

Onu contemplates the Japanese miracle with profound wonder and draws an enduring lesson from it. He learnt that immediately after the Second World War in 1945, Japan faced grave economic difficulties somehow worse than what Nigerians suffer today. In fact, people thought that only a huge bleak future lay ahead of the Japanese people:

Hunger and despair intermingled with each other to assail them, to dim whatever remained of their energy and will to survive. Amazingly, the people refused to spend much time gloating over a battered fate. Out of the debris of war something that was later to become a technological miracle was to evolve. Soon, it did. Large open parks and fields were turned into centres of research and productivity. There were adverts calling for creative minds to come and take up residence in the centres and produce or invent whatever they could. Even illiterate but gifted local craftsmen and women and particularly the blacksmiths were

invited. Each of them was closely monitored (Onu April 21 1992:10 - 11)

This was how the Japanese experiment began. And soon;

What started like a joke blossomed into a serious affair. Competition was introduced and the desired results started manifesting. Machinery and vehicles battered by the war were cleverly remoulded and turned into better ones after series of trials and errors. Missing parts of vehicles were replaced with locally improvised ones. Each family that settled on the centres pursued a single technological effort, the cumulative effects of the various attempts in the fields of engineering, pharmaceutical, medical equipment, electronics, agricultural mechanization etc. in the long-run have continued to amaze the world. Ever since, the Japanese government has continued to ensure that any child who showed a certain aptitude pursues that line as far as his ability can carry him (Onu April 21, 1992:11).

Onu drew the striking lessons which the Japanese situation holds for Abia State, Nigeria and the entire underdeveloped world at large. Like the Japanese case, the people of Abia State had in 1970 emerged from the Nigerian Civil War with their Eastern neighbours humiliated, battered and stripped of all they had toiled for in life. Hence, like the Japanese in 1945, the people of Abia State suffered psychological and economic trauma as a result of the war in which they, like the Japanese, were on the losing side. The economic crisis which has engulfed the nation has equally worsened the economic fortunes of Nigerians, particularly those of the Abians. Also, like the Japanese in 1945, the Abia people needed a clear-sighted leader to show the way in the dark labyrinth of despair and despondence. Such a leadership emerged in Japan and now, luckily, a similar leadership has emerged for Abia State. A leadership that appreciates the fact that:

There is virtually nothing our goldsmiths and blacksmiths scattered all over the state cannot mould. For if they are sufficiently challenged soon the motor spare parts we spend so much to import would be made here in our lands, for ourselves and for others.

Given the above conviction and the lessons from the history of technological developments in other countries, particularly

Japan, which show them to be the result of conscious efforts, Onu decided to act decisively to push through his idea for the establishment of the Abia Technology Villages (ATV), now christened the IBB Technology Village Complex. IBB is an abbreviation for the name of Nigeria's former military president, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida.

The naming of the Abia Technology Villages after General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, Onu insists, was neither borne out of sentiment nor sycophancy but is rather a recognition of the fact that General Babangida has taken many decisive steps and initiated more policies that further the course of technological development in Nigeria than his predecessors. In fact, the policies of the Babangida administration towards technological development in Nigeria are very well-known and include the rejuvenation of the Ministry of Science and Technology under a very knowledgeable minister, Professor Gordian Ezekwe; the creation of the National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI) and the launching of the National Policy on Science and Engineering Infrastructure all in 1992, all still under Professor Gordian Ezekwe; the establishment of Science and Technology Fund. All these measures are far-reaching and testify to the fact that Babangida properly understands the importance of technology to the over-all development of Nigeria. Conscious of all these facts, the Abia State Government decided to honour him by naming the Abia Technology Villages after him, in recognition of the fact that he has done more to further the cause of technological development in Nigeria than any other leader has ever done.

To translate the ideal of the Technology Villages into reality, the Abia State Government organised a "National Seminar on the Road map of National Technological Development" on August 20, 1992, during which eminent Nigerians and experts, prominent among whom were ;Dr. Kalu Idika Kalu, Dr. Hamza Zayyad and Professor Gordian Ezekwe, presented papers which greatly highlighted the technological situation of the country and this helped to put the IBB Technology Village into proper perspective.

The seminar was followed up by the launching of the "One Billion Naira Endowment Fund for the I.B.B. Technology Village" at the Umuahia Township Stadium, Abia State, on September 1, 1992, under the Chairmanship of Alhaji Shehu Shagari, the Second Republic President of Nigeria with General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida as the Special Guest of Honour.

The launching was well -attended but the donations were mostly in the form of pledges most of which are yet to be redeemed. This problem adds to the serious financial straits in which the states, including Abia, have found themselves as a result of the dwindling national economy, the worsening depreciation of the naira, the increasing burden which the recent extraction of 45% salary increases by the Nigerian workers has placed on the States and the inherited internal and external debt burdens, to place a heavy financial obstacle on the practical implementation of I.B.B. Technology Village. But thanks to Onu's foresightedness that has been manifested at many fora where he openly admitted the serious difficulties on the journey to acquire modern science and technology, and which has made him not to give up in the face of those difficulties. For instance, during the launching of I.B.B. Technology Village Fund, Onu declared:

It is very clear to us that this journey of hope to acquire modern technology is going to be long and difficult. It is a journey that is bound to be expensive. But it is a journey that is going to be as exciting as it is rewarding. Yes the I.B.B. Technology Village will be a rewarding venture, a venture of hope (Onu, September 1, 1992:4 -5)

But, because of his strong conviction that what can save Abia, Nigeria and indeed Africa from the present economic woes and general backwardness is the acquisition and application of science and technology to the productive processes, he continues to insist that the dream of Abia Technology Villages must be pursued despite all odds. This dogged determination is informed by the appreciation of the fact that:

Modern technology is the tool with which we can transform Africa from the so-called fourth world to an economic power and restore the dignity of the black race. It is the tool that will guarantee us victory over

hunger. It is the tool with which we can conquer poverty. It is the tool with which we will assure ourselves of good health. Yes, modern technology is the tool with which we will achieve a standard of living that is presently a dream. It is a tool we need to have. It is a tool we have to have. It is a tool we cannot afford not to have (Onu September 1, 1992 4:).

With this view of technology as the panacea to the numerous economic and social problems which currently overwhelm Nigerians and the entire black race, Onu went ahead to flag off the IBB Technology Village by siting its three centres in the three senatorial zones of the state "with the Research and Development Centre at Uburu, Ohaozara Local Government Area; Skills Enhancement Centre, Umunnato, Bende Local Government Area, and Manufacturing Centre, Aba" (Abia State Ministry of Information, 1993:39). Already, a Chief Executive has been appointed for the scheme and certain logistics for the actual functioning of the centres have also been provided in spite of the financial constraints of the young state.

Many eminent Nigerians have praised Onu's foresightedness in taking urgent steps to realize his noble dream of bringing "home grown technology to contribute to a more rapid development of our state and indeed the entire country" (Onu August 20, 1992:7), by establishing the IBB Technology Village:

as a centre for the development of science and engineering infrastructure ... (to) spearhead the production of indigenously tooled machinery and equipment and indeed complete factories ... a village where technology is developed and where technology is transferred (Onu August 20, 1992:7).

Professor Gordian Ezekwe, Vice-Chairman and Chief Executive of the National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI), highly commended Onu's bold efforts in abandoning the usual government's rhetorics on the importance of developing science and technology for development and taking practical steps to realize this elusive but all -important dream. He observed that:

The decision to establish a multi -billion naira Technology Village in Abia State, to be named after President Ibrahim B, Babangida, will stand

out as a significant milestone on the road to our technological development. Those who know the young energetic Governor of Abia State will not be surprised at this decision. As a former member of the Board of Directors of the Raw Materials Research and Development Council (RMRDC), and Chairman of Raw Materials Society of Nigeria, Dr. Ogbonnaya Onu has been a foremost protagonist in Indigenous Technology in the country and has made very active efforts towards the realization of this ambition. The decision to establish the Ibrahim Babangida Technology Village is yet another testimony to his devotion to this noble cause (Ezekwe August 20, 1992:25).

However, the big question is: will the Abia people be patient and continue to be supportive of this worthy cause even if the fruits will be long in coming? At least, Onu has not fooled anyone by pretending that it would be an easy road. He has rather honestly highlighted the obvious difficulties on the path to indigenous technological development but maintained that with honest determination to succeed, those difficulties would be gradually surmounted and a glorious future attained for Abia State in particular and Nigeria in general.

The Dream of Making Abia State the Food Basket of Nigeria

The situation of food production in Nigeria has become so desperate that she now has to massively import food to be able to feed her citizenry. This is in spite of the past food production programmes by successive administrations: The Operation Feed the Nation (O.F.N.) of the General Obasanjo's Administration, and the Green Revolution of the Shagari's Administration. The acute food shortage in Nigeria is compounded by the continuous slide of the price of crude oil in the international market and the consequent drastic fall in Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings (which mostly come from sales of crude oil). This fact made food importation very expensive and hardly affordable. This further worsens the standard of living of Nigerians as the food scarcity has resulted in the average Nigerian family being malnourished.

Onu sees the food situation in Nigeria as anomalous and unacceptable in a country with abundant fertile land and which

produced enough food to feed herself and still export in the immediate post-independence period. He immediately launched his "Food For all Programme" designed to make Abia State the food basket of the nation. This goal is jointly pursued by the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the Agricultural Development Project (ADP), the Bureau for Cooperative and Rural Development, and the State Commission for Women.

The ADP, the office complex of which was completed in 1992 and commissioned by President Ibrahim Babangida, has continued to mobilize the small-scale farmers by making available to them trained extension workers who visit them and render expert services. During the last year's planting season, the agency sold 35,000 metric tonnes of fertilizer to farmers and plans to increase this quantity during this year's planting season to 50,000 metric tonnes. The agency has also constructed about 540km of roads to assist farm produce evacuation, and has mounted pump irrigation demonstration for vegetable growers in Bende Local Government Area.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources made available seedlings of various cash crops to farmers during the 1992 planting season. These consisted of 100,000 seedlings of cocoa; 10,000 seedlings of rubber; 30,000 suckers of plantain and Banana; and 12,000 oil palm seedlings. This was supplemented by the state commission for women which distributed improved seedlings, cassava stems, fertilizer and other farm implements to women farmers and co-operative societies (Abia State Ministry of Information 1993:23).

The State Government's effort to boost food production can be seen in the purchase of 15 new tractors and 10 tricycles, and the refurbishing of 15 old tractors and 27 implements which are now made available to farmers.

In order to meet the protein needs of the State for the purpose of producing a healthy citizenry, the State Government has acquired the Federal Government-owned fish processing complex at Ndibe beach, established a nursery fish pond for culture fisheries and and currently constructing 13 fish ponds all in Afikpo. In the area of livestock production, the Oshiri Cattle

Ranch has been commissioned and is now rearing Ndama Cattle. The government also plans to add the Muburu breed soon. Also the Golden Chicken Farm project is being seriously pursued.

Palm produce which used to be the bed-rock of the economy of the former Eastern Region but which has been neglected over the years is receiving serious attention from the Onu Administration. In this regard, five oil palm plantations abandoned in different parts of the state for several years have now been reactivated. In addition, two oil palm mills have been reactivated at Umu Imenyi and Owutu Edda while Abia Palm (Nig.) Limited has been incorporated as a limited liability company (Abia State Ministry of Information 1993:24).

The Government has also established Agric Credit Loans Board to provide credit facilities to farmers, while the Bureau for Cooperatives and Rural Development have embarked on the construction of 18 agro-based small scale industries in the 17 local government areas of the state. Already, eleven of these projects have been completed. This project is designed to provide farmers with the necessary facilities to process their agricultural products (Abia State Ministry of Information 1993:24).

Furthermore, the Government has practically demonstrated seriousness in boosting agriculture by cultivating 200 hectares of land for the planting of cassava during the 1993 planting season. Also, seedlings and suckers have been made available to farmers. In addition, Abia Palm and Abia Palm Ltd., have been resuscitated.

Realizing the Abia Dream Through Ensuring a Healthy Citizenry

Onu has predicated the realization of the Abia Dream on hardwork, intelligence and creativity. But Onu, is fully aware that these attributes can only exist among a healthy citizenry. Consequently, he places high premium on measures that can promote a healthy citizenry. In this vein, he introduced new health policies and enlarged existing health institutions. Looking critically at the health sectors he sought to tackle the health

problems of the State right from source. Hence he introduced the **Free Maternal Delivery Care Programme** which would ensure the safe -delivery of Abia children and help check the alarming rate of infant mortality and high death-rate of pregnant women during child birth. This programme takes cognisance of the fact that most deaths during child-birth result from non-use of medical facilities by the expectant mothers either because they could not afford the hospital costs or that there are no available health facilities, or both. But with the introduction of this programme and the establishment of more health centres throughout the state, many expectant mothers have taken advantage of this facility and deaths during child -birth have been greatly reduced. Records available show that:

From April 1992 (when the programme was launched) to March 1993; 48,405 pregnant women booked while we had a total of 24, 687 deliveries. Booking rose from 29,531 in 1991 to 48,405 in 1992 showing 63% increase. Similarly, delivery went up from 18,594 to 24,687 which is an increase of 32.77%. Maternal mortality rate which is the cardinal objective of the project fell from 45 per 1,000 to 15% 1,000 live births. This shows a 66% fall in maternal mortality rate (Abia State Ministry of Information 1993:30)

The above statistics proves that the programme is an instant success as has been anticipated. This success story will no doubt continue to encourage the State Government to make the necessary sacrifices to fund this expensive programme which gulped N10 million to take-off and was estimated to cost N70 million by the end of 1992. Besides, the Onu Administration further showed commitment in ensuring that Abia children are properly nourished and catered for by increasing maternity leave for civil servants from three months to six months with pay. This is to enable nursing mothers to take adequate care of their children, in the vital first six months after birth.

In furtherance of tackling health matters from the infant stage, the State Ministry of Health successfully opened the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) units and commissioned EPI cold chain stores in five local government areas where these facilities were yet to be established. These

local government areas were Ikwuano, Afikpo South, Isiala Ngwa South, Aba North and Ukwa East. This ensured that the entire 17 local government areas in Abia State are covered by immunization campaign.

To make health institutions effective, the Onu Administration has rehabilitated many general hospitals, equipped them and established new institutions for the training of health workers. For instance, the Abia State Government has established a new School of Nursing at the Presbyterian Joint Hospital, Uburu, thus bringing the number of such schools in the state to seven.

Onu's decision to site some schools of nursing in the rural areas is informed by the fact that most of the existing schools for medical workers are sited in the urban centres with the result that most of the students, who are already accustomed to urban life, refuse postings to the rural areas on graduation. Yet it is the rural areas that need their services most. Therefore, the thinking is that those trained in the rural setting would more likely accept to work in the rural areas and hence, help to realize the Abia Dream in the health sector.

Equally, Onu ensured the uninterrupted functioning of the State's health institutions by promptly paying the doctors the Revised Medical Salary Scale. Thus, while doctors in other states were on strike, their Abia State counterparts continued to minister to the health needs of the Abia people.

In the area of drug supply, the Onu Administration tackled this intractable area of our health care system with predictable wisdom. In this vein, the Ministry of Health-

established a Central Pharmaceutical Store in the Hospital's Management Board. The State Government has given approval for bulk purchase of drugs in addition to her drug procurements. The usual out-of-stock syndrome (O/S) that characterized previous administrations do not exist in our hospitals as a patient can easily buy drugs after prescription in the pharmacy departments of our hospitals (Abia State Ministry of Information 1993:32).

In the area of social welfare services, the Onu Administration has shown tremendous concern for the disabled destitute and those who, left on their own, cannot help themselves. With the strong

conviction that "a government is as good as it can help those who cannot ordinarily help themselves", the State Government has increased the annual subvention to the Itumbuzo Rehabilitation Centre in order to ensure that no mentally sick man or woman is left uncatered for in our streets.

In the area of preventive health care system, the Onu Administration has demonstrated deep appreciation of the adage that "prevention is better than cure". In this regard, an Environmental Sanitation Task Force has been established and properly equipped to clean the major towns of the State on a regular basis. The Task Force has been doing a tremendous job as such towns as Aba which were hitherto regarded as filthy are now wearing clean looks. Umuahia, the State capital, now ranks among the cleanest cities in Nigeria. Notwithstanding, the fact that it is the various local government authorities that collect sanitation levy for the purpose of keeping the environment clean, the State Government decided not to sit, watch and politic while filth becomes a living companion of the citizens and endanger their health.

The desire to ensure a clean and healthy environment and living standards is not restricted to the urban areas. The scheme was designed to permeate all the nooks and crannies of the State. Onu's concern for the general cleanliness and aesthetic beauty of the towns and villages made him to institute a competition twice a year for the cleanest local government in Abia State. The cleanest Local Government will get a trophy in addition to N50,000 cash grant while the second and third will get N30,000 and N20,000 respectively.

This has engendered the spirit of competition in the people and the cities and villages have become cleaner and more beautiful. However, his major target was to ensure a healthy environment that can support a healthy citizenry.

Realizing the Abia Dream Through Efficient Educational System

The Onu Administration knew the fundamental role which education is expected to play in the over-all realization of the Abia Dream and therefore decided to overhaul the State's

educational system in order to establish, in the long run, a qualitative educational system aimed at making Abians doers and not watchers. This vision is spread over the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of Abia Educational System.

In the area of Primary Education, Governor Onu came to power at a time when the local governments whose responsibility it has now become to cater for this sector of the educational system owed the teachers salary arrears for several months. The primary educational system was becoming crisis-ridden as teachers in some local governments, including the SDP-controlled Umuahia Local Government, were already on strike. But Onu, himself a former University teacher and a committed academic, was fully aware that the qualitative and result-oriented education which he dreams about cannot be realized under an atmosphere of strikes and negligence of teachers' welfare. This situation was unacceptable to him because it is inimical to the development and growth of education which he has declared to be a "primary industry" of the people. Consequently, the State Government took decisive steps to arrest the situation. First, the "State Government loaned the Local governments, including the SDP - controlled Umuahia Local Government, a total of N8 million to assist in paying arrears of teachers' salaries" (Ministry of Information 1993:32) The second step was that Governor Onu used the forum of the Joint Consultative Council to extract a pledge that no local government chairman should receive his salary except the teachers have been paid their own salary. These measures have worked perfectly well as the issue of the non -payment of teachers' salaries for months has become an ugly dream of the past.

With regards to secondary education, the State Government through the Secondary Education Management Board, has seriously tackled the recruitment and advancement of teachers in order to improve teaching, especially in the sciences while government is providing science equipment within the limits of available resources. Already, the State Government's drive for functional and qualitative education is yielding fruits as an Abia State indigene, studying within the State's educational system,

was judged Nigeria's Best student of 1992 based on the Senior Secondary School (SSS) Examination Results. Of course, Governor Onu has granted the student an automatic scholarship to see him through university education.

In the area of tertiary education, Onu has called his professional expertise to the service of the State. As a former university don and administrator, he is in the best position to appreciate the problems and prospects of the university. Hence, he has given the state-owned university, the Abia State University, a new lease of life by identifying and tackling its most serious problems such as funding, students accommodation, staff-quarters and others. Consequently, the State Government has increased the subvention to the university, embarked on the construction of three hostel blocks to alleviate the acute accommodation problems, provided bus services from the campus to the neighbouring towns and checked the erosion menace on the campus (Onu September 2, 1992:5)

Onu further demonstrated the premium he placed on tertiary education as a prerequisite in the realization of the Abia Dream by attracting and personally establishing the requisite higher institutions. In this vein, he successfully lobbied the Federal Government to establish a Federal University of Agriculture at Umudike in Ikwano Local Government Area in 1992. And, on its own, the State Government has also established a Polytechnic in Aba and a College of Education (Technical) at Arochukwu, "all in an attempt to produce the requisite technical manpower needed for the rapid industrial development of the State" (Ministry of Information 1993:33 -34). It is Onu's firm belief that "The Polytechnic and the technological village, when fully developed, will lay emphasis on training for skill acquisition, technological advancement and industrial management and organization... if we are to achieve early industrial take-off of the State" (Onu September 2, 1992:7).

Onu's interest in the promotion of general education is equally profound. He sought to achieve his aim of "ensuring that all residents in Abia State acquire the simple ability to read and write" by establishing the State Adult Education Agency to

promote adult literacy campaign. Furthermore, the Government has established special schools in the State and instituted scholarship awards that would promote professionalism. In Onu's own words;

To ensure qualitative education for our children, we have established one special school in each zone of the State which will compare favourably with the best schools in Nigeria when fully developed. We have also instituted a discriminatory scholarship scheme and strengthened guidance and counselling to promote professionalism and competence and a sense of direction in the choice of careers of our sons and daughters (Onu September 2, 1992:6).

Realizing the Abia Dream Through Good Information Network

The Onu Administration lays great emphasis on information management and dissemination in order to ensure an enlightened citizenry and to properly mobilize the people towards a collective goal. Consequently, when he assumed office and discovered that Abia State has no mouth-piece: neither a functioning newspaper nor a broadcasting house, Governor Onu worked relentlessly to establish the Abia Newspapers and Publishing Corporation which now publishes the *Weekly Ambassador* since August 27, 1992, and the Broadcasting Corporation of Abia State which now transmits to the people. The Onu Administration has been working very hard to provide the necessary infrastructure and equipments to these media establishments.

Realizing the Abia Dream Through Proper Motivation and Incentives

The pursuit of excellence in all fields of human endeavour by the Onu Administration has made the Government to design an appropriate reward system to reward and encourage excellence. Hence, official recognition, cash-awards as well as scholarship awards have been given to deserving sons and daughters of Abia State who excel in any field of human endeavour. Already, the mobilization towards excellence is fast yielding the desired results in various fields. For instance,

Beginning with its first commercial outing in 1992 at the 14th Kaduna International Trade Fair, Abia State's stand at the Fair was adjudged the best in the "States stand" category. Few months later, at the 3rd Enugu International Trade Fair, the State again came first in two categories: the best State stand and best organized State's day categories.

In the same year of 1992, the State was to show its growing influence in sports; as the fastest school girl for that year emerged from Abia State. Similarly, in the Yinka Folawiyi-sponsored National Athletic competition, young Abia State again clinched the first position (Abia State Ministry of Information 1993:5)

Also, in 1993, Lady Chinyere Onu, Chairperson of the Better Life for Rural Women Programme won the Queen Amina Prize for Womanhood for the year 1993.

It is therefore evident that the above excellent performances of the State in various fields reflect the spirit and character of the leader of this God's own State. For the spirit in Onu is that of diligence and excellence. The Abians are fast absorbing this spirit and it is fast yielding the desired fruits.

Realizing the Abia Dream Through Road Construction and maintenance

It is part of Onu's dream to make Abia State one big village expressly linked together by access roads, telephone exchange system, water and electricity. In these vital areas the Onu Administration has been making giant strides. In the area of road construction and maintenance, the State Government has reconstructed selected roads in Ariaria Market at Aba, constructed such new roads as Alozie Street road and Uratta road all in Aba metropolis; rehabilitated the traffic-ladden Aba-Owerri road; awarded contracts for the construction of Umule Road, Ukwu Mango-Ariaria Road, Desilting/Dredging of "Ife Obara" Lake, reconstruction of Aba (Ngwa Road) - Abayi-Nchokoro Road; construction of Abiriba Junction -Nkporo-Oso Edda Road, Afikpo Township Roads, Obiozara -Onicha -Oshiri Road, Oboro -Umuigu-Aro Ajatakiri -Mbubo -Ururuka Road; Obehie -Azumini Road and many others. Work has commenced on most of these roads.

The pursuit of the Abia Dream through channels other than the ones we have mentioned above have been intensified by the Onu Administration. The journey so far has been very tasking and often excruciating but Onu is still hot in pursuit of the vision with the full assurance from the sages that great success is hardly ever achieved without hardwork. However, Onu also finds solace in the co-operation of many people who have gradually caught his noble vision and have come to share in it. Particularly, Onu has received great encouragement and complementation of his efforts to realize the Abia Dream from no other person than his God-given wife and energetic First Lady of Abia State, Mrs. Chinyere Onu. Through the Better Life for Rural Women Programme, the First Lady has been furthering the business of the Government by embarking on many development programmes that educate, inform, mobilize and encourage the Abia women to lead a meaningful life. In this regard, we can recall the establishment and publication of a quarterly magazine called "Ezinne" in Igbo or "The Good Mother" by the Abia State Better Life, and the establishment and organisation of adult literacy centres in the various local government areas of the state. Currently, there are over 265 adult literacy centres with a total of over 15,000 adult learners enrolled. This represents 50% increase over the case barely a year ago (Abia State Ministry of Information 1993:43).

Furthermore, the Abia State Better Life Programme has established the Ezindu Community Bank at Umuahia with the Ezindu Women's Development Association and the Union of Abia Cooperative Societies as the major shareholders. The Bank is aimed primarily at granting interest-free loans to Cooperative Societies and other individual entrepreneurs and promoting the establishment of small scale industries within the community, especially among the rural women. The Bank renders a wide range of services designed to help women earn better income and enjoy a better standard of living.

The Abia State Better Life Programme has also greatly encouraged and helped to organize the women into Cooperative Societies for the purpose of pooling their resources together for

the betterment of all. The success of this led to the establishment of the Union of Abia (Better Life Programme) Cooperative Societies (UAC) which has become the umbrella organization of all women cooperative societies in the State. The UAC now serves as a link between the various women cooperative societies as well as a vehicle of providing ready and easily available revolving credits to encourage women who are already engaged in profitable ventures and to encourage the idle ones to embark on productive activities. The success of the mobilization efforts of the Abia State Better Life Programme can be seen in the astronomical rise in the number of women cooperative societies from 144 in January 1992 to 990 as at June 1993 (Abia State Ministry of Information 1993:45).

In other areas of general welfare, the Abia State Better Life Programme has established the Motherless Babies Trust Fund to supplement the meagre resources available to these charitable homes in order to give the children a more decent mode of life and a more healthy living condition so that they do not become victims of the psychological problems which often result from the feeling of not having been brought up by one's parents. The Chairperson of the State's Better Life Programme, Lady Chinyere Onu, and Mother of the State, directly supervises this Trust Fund to ensure judicious disbursement of fund to the homes.

Equally, the Abia State Better Life Programme has so far established two farmers' markets at Lokpanta in Isuikwuato Local Government Area and in Uzoaku in Ukwu Local Government Area to serve as outlets for the products of the rural women. The stalls provided at these markets are being allocated to the women without any cost.

There is little surprise then, given the fore-sighted, purposeful and welfarist programmes of the Abia State Better Life Programme that the Chairperson, Lady Chinyere Onu, won the 1993 Queen Amina Prize for Womanhood. This is a recognition of her dynamic leadership qualities and her advancement of the cause of women in not only Abia State but Nigeria at large.

So far, we have discussed Onu's vision and Mission in Abia State and the concrete measures taken so far to realize that vision within the first 18 months of his administration. It seems to us that the vision is noble and the mission heroic. As the first Executive Governor of this very young State, the obstacles on the way to realizing the Abia Dream are many and formidable but by no means insurmountable if the Abia people would be patient, understanding, resolute, dedicated to the cause of transforming Abia State to a truly Number one in the Nigerian Federation; if they can be cooperative, diligently, trustingly and hopefully following their leader.

Onu's Vision and Mission in Nigeria

Onu is not a narrow-minded visioner who only sees the good life for himself and his State, he has an expanded vision of Nigeria becoming a country of which every citizen will be proud; where patriotism and nationalism would inspire the citizens to greater heights; where the abundant human and material resources of the nation would be optimally harnessed for the equitable enjoyment of all irrespective of tribe, tongue, religion or geographical origin; a country that both wins and commands respect from the comity of nations; that is economically and politically self-reliant to be able to determine and shape her destiny in a world characterized by increasing power acquisition and power diplomacy. In short, **Onu has a vision of Nigeria becoming a respectable global power by the year 2035 A.D.** In Onu's own words;

It is easy to predict that with a **property articulated technological policy**, and certain reorganizational and structural changes, Nigeria will be on her steady march to becoming a **respectable global power by 2035 A.D.** (Onu 1982:5)

This prophecy can only become real if Nigeria can urgently develop the appropriate indigenous technology that is capable of revolutionizing production and other forms of economic activities: if we can urgently change;

our poor attitude to work, lack of adequate respect and regard for **intellectualism and creativity**, inadequate level of national consciousness

and patriotism, insufficient interest in wealth generation as against distribution, inadequate utilization of indigenous manpower and resources, just to mention but a few (Onu 1992:ix)

Onu's vision of Nigeria's greatness in the foreseeable future, if the above major constraints are consciously eradicated, is realistic as it is predicated upon the fact that, from the analysis of the factors that determine the greatness of any nation, Nigeria possesses most of these factors except the fundamental one - technology. Onu has expertly argued, and convincingly too, that technology is the missing link between Nigeria and the attainment of greatness.

Therefore, Onu's mission in Nigeria is to develop Abia State as a model for the whole nation to copy in truly attaining the Number One position in the African Continent. He wants to develop indigenous technology in Abia State in the overall aim of developing the State in order to demonstrate to the entire country that it is no use waiting endlessly for the illusive transfer of technology which can in no way satisfy the real demands for the technological development of the people; that given the political will and proper motivation and infrastructural facilities, our indigenous blacksmiths, craftsmen and artisans can, working together and exchanging ideas with one another, catapult Nigeria from an ignoble technological level to a height that has never been dreamt of. For the tradition of relying on technology to meet basic human needs has already been developed by our ancestors before European imperialism obstructed the trajectory of Nigeria's, indeed Africa's, indigenous technological development. What the situation calls for, Onu seems to suggest, is the conscious and systematic development of our indigenous technology side by side with the adoption and adaptation of foreign technology to meet local and national needs. This is the viable way forward. He believes that any hope of acquiring meaningful technological knowledge through technology transfer is tantamount to wishful thinking because the tremendous political, economic and diplomatic power which the advancement of technological knowledge confers on the possessor - nations is such that no nation would normally wish to share with any other

nation, but would rather do everything to retain, consolidate and further develop in order to achieve global leadership.

Onu wishes to see a Nigeria that is being governed by ideas of Nigerians and developing along the lines defined and determined by the needs of her people and not the whims and caprices of foreign powers no matter how apparently benevolent. He has a vision of Nigeria that is truly a global power not only as a result of crude oil and natural gas exploitation, but from its ability to feed her citizens and meet the basic needs of her people. This is where enduring strength lies, strength that can make Nigeria truly great; that can win respect for Nigeria in the comity of nations so that when the affairs of our globe is being discussed, the views of Nigeria will be taken seriously.

He further envisages Nigeria emerging as a strong, prosperous, indivisible and united nation that can present Africa in good light; a country the differences of whose parts serve to unite rather than divide; where whatever one state or individual has should be utilized to make up for what the others lack; where everyone is treated fairly and equitably as a citizen of Nigeria irrespective of where he comes from and where he is residing, like in Abia State where the Governor himself boldly declares:

In my inaugural speech on January 2, 1992, I promised to protect all residents of Abia State, indigenes and non-indigenes alike. That was no idle promise. I made the promise with the full determination of keeping it. For those of you who are not indigenes of Abia State, you should regard this as a personal assurance from me. You should all regard yourselves as full citizens of Abia State and demand for your legitimate rights like any other indigene. In the same token, I expect you to make all the contributions and sacrifices which are expected, nay, demanded of every son and daughter of this great State (Onu January 8, 1992:2).

This is the patriotic and nationalistic ideal of unity and togetherness which Onu is nurturing in Abia State and which he wishes to see nurtured in Nigeria as a whole.

Vision for Africa

Onu's vision for Africa is essentially an extension of his vision for Nigeria which is equally his vision for Abia State. He

envisages a continent that is finally liberated from colonial and neo-colonial powers of Europe, America and the highly advanced countries of Asia by Africans themselves: a continent that will generate sufficient ideas and material wealth through technological breakthroughs to meet the basic needs of her people. He sees a continent in which, after Nigeria has been able to attain greatness, Nigeria would undertake to champion the African cause effectively and lead the rest of the continent into economic and political development that would remove the current shame of being a continent of beggar-nations. He sees Africa which, after achieving a sound technological, economic and political base, can help in shaping a new international order where peace and mutual respect genuinely prevail. Then and only then will Africa change from being a dark continent to a continent of light: where continental organizations like the Organization of African Unity (OAU) will wield real power and play continental roles in the interest of Africa in particular and the world at large; it is then that other continents in the world will listen to the voice of Africa and act respectfully towards her. But this dream can only come true if African leaders can muster the necessary political will and develop and apply the requisite technology for the overall development of their nations, and if they can act in concert and decisively in tackling the numerous problems of the continent.

Throughout this chapter, we have tried to examine Onu's Vision and Mission in Abia State where he is currently in power; in Nigeria, in which he regards as a macrocosm of Abia State, as well as his vision for Africa and the world. We have equally noted the steps he has so far taken to realize the Abia Dream or his vision for Abia State and it seems to us that Abia State, the map of which resembles a plane waiting for its pilot to take off, when viewed horizontally from Ukwa Local Government in the South to Ohaozara and Onicha Local Governments in the North, has got her expert pilot in Dr. Ogonnaya Onu, her first Executive Governor. We also hope that Nigeria and African countries at large have been sufficiently challenged by Onu's ideas to contemplate immediate action.

Conclusion

Throughout this book, we have sought to know the helmsman of Abia State as a person by delving into his background, prying into his career and character from infancy to adulthood; and examining the ideas and principles which he had developed all along as a renowned academic as well as his vision and mission in Abia State, Nigeria and the world at large. We have also examined how far, as the Chief Servant of Abia State, he is pursuing the realization of the Abia Dream through practical actions and are impressed that Onu is a man of ideas and praxis.

Given the lofty ideals which Onu has for Abia State and the nation at large, and given the huge financial and intellectual demands of developing appropriate indigenous technology and adopting and adapting foreign technology to meet national needs, will the people of Abia State in particular and Nigeria in general exercise the long patience required for Onu's technological venture to mature and fully transform Abia State into the Japan of Africa and a model for the entire nation to copy? From our discussion above, Onu's vision of a strong, united and prosperous society is a vision which he believes can be realized through the development and application of the appropriate technology. And his mission is to develop that technology in Abia State as a way of showing the entire nation that indigenous technological development is not wishful-thinking. But the question again is, will people be patient with him? Will people not prefer that he buys food and distributes to them now instead of pursuing a programme which he hopes will make food abundant in the future? The impatience of people to wait for what they have not yet seen, even if it will surely come, is what Onu has to seriously contend with and manage to contain if he will not be forced by political

becoming truly Number One not only alphabetically but most importantly in achievements, and of Nigeria becoming the true giant of Africa and a strong global power through achievements.

For Onu to be strengthened in his pursuit of the Abia Dream and the Nigerian Dream, even if he were to meet with opposition, misunderstanding and sometimes bare faced sabotage, he must learn the lesson which Niccolo Machiavelli has to teach about innovators and reformers. According to him,

It must be considered that there is nothing more difficult to carry out, not more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle than to initiate a new order of things. For the reformer has enemies in all those who profit by the old order, and only lukewarm defenders in all those who are to profit by the new order, this lukewarmness arising from their fear of their adversaries, who have the laws in their favour; and partly from the incredulity of mankind, who do not truly believe in anything until they have had actual experience of it. Thus, it arises that on every opportunity for attacking the reformer his opponents do so with great zeal of partisans, the others only defend him half-heartedly, so that between them he runs great dangers (Machiavelli 1952:49-50).

Finally, Onu must know that some people may misunderstand him; some people may see him as being too idealistic to be of much practical relevance; yet some may accuse him of not building roads and bridges to their thatched huts; while others may praise him as a great and visionary leader whose towering ambition is to give the Abians, Nigerians and the entire Black Race their rightful place of pride in the scheme of things in today's complex world. Yet, if he remains consistent and dedicated to his vision and mission for Abia, Nigeria and Africa, History will judge him as a foremost nationalist and leader who really understood the problems of his time and did his best to tackle them.

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Index

- Abakaliki**, 7, 8, 21
rice, 7
- Abia Dream**, 57, 140-142, 144, 152, 154
in the health sector, 152-154
in education, 155-158
through good information network, 158
through proper motivation and incentives, 158
through road construction and maintenance, 159-160
obstacles to, 162
- Abia (New I.B.B.) Technology Village**, 147-148
- Abia Newspapers and Publishing Corporation**, 158
- Abia Palm Limited**, 152
- Abia State, Food Basket of Nigeria**, 150-152
- Abia State Adult Education Agency**, 157-158
- "Accountability Forum"**, 55
- Achebe Chinua**, xi, 120
on leadership, 120
- Agriculture**, 84, 94, 96, 102
- Agriculture Credit Loans Board**, 152
- Agricultural Development Project (ADP)**, 151
- Aristocles**, x, 46, 127 *See also* Plato
- "Army Cash"**, 18, 19
- Awolowo, Obafemi**, 46, 128, 130
- Azikiwe, Nnamdi**, 46, 83, 86, 128, 130
on tribalism, 82
on pristine ideology, 85, 86
- Babangida Administration**, 133
- Babangida, Ibrahim**, 147-148
- Better Life for Rural Women**, 159-161
- Brain Drain Syndrome**, 33
- Broadcasting Corporation of Abia State**, 158
- Bureau for Co-operatives and Rural Development**, 152
- Churchill, Winston**, 108
on education, 108
- Coal**, 28, 80
as an alternative source of energy, 28
- Conference of 30 Governors in Nigeria**, 49, 50
- Communism**, 84
- Crude Oil**, 29
- Democracy**, 53
- Development**, 26, 32-34, 58, 81, 85, 88, 94-95, 99, 101-104, 111, 124
in the USA, 32, 33
- Directorate for Food, Roads, Rural Development and Infrastructure (DFRRI)**, 91, 133
- Dualism**, 48, 51
- Dualists**, 48, 51
- Edison, Thomas**, 139
- Education**, 12, 17, 25, 79, 87, 107, 108, 110, 115-116, 155-156
- Eke, Sam**, 131
- Environmental Sanitation Task Force**, 155
- Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI)**, 153
- Eze, Agom**, 134
- Ezekwe, Gordian**, 147, 148
- Ezindu Community Bank**, 160
- Ezindu Women's Development Association**, 160
- "Ezinne"**, 160
- Farmers' Markets**, 161
- Federal University of Agriculture at Umudike**, 157

172 *Indigenous Technology: The Developmental Philosophy of Ogbonnaya Onu*

- Feuerbach, Ludwig, 48
"Food for all Programme", 151
Ford, Henry, 138
Free Maternity Delivery care Programme, 8, 9, 153
- Gandhi, Mahathma, 130
Golden Chicken Farm, 152
Greatness: of nations, 58, 59, 61-62, 71-76, 80, 125
of Nigeria, 60, 63-66, 68, 70, 80-82, 125
Green Revolution, 150
Grenada, 64
invasion of, 64
- Hegel, 48
Hobbes, Thomas, x, 46
Huxley, T.H., 101
- I.B.B. Technology Village, 147-148
Idealism, 48
Idealistic Socialism, 127
Ideology, 82-86
national ideology, xi, 84, 86, 87
Igue, 61
Imperialism, 60, 61, 93
Industrial Manpower, 25
Industrial Revolution, 100
Industrialization, 101, 207
Iron Smelting, 97
Itumbuzo Rehabilitation Centre, 155
Izzi High School, Abakaliki, 21
- Kalu Idika, Kalu, 147
King Don Afonso I of Congo, 61
King Jaja of Opobo, 61, 62
Kissinger, Henry, 65
- Leader: definition of, 120
Leadership, 87, 120-124, 139, 145-146, 164
definition of, 120
in Nigeria, 35, 94, 95, 120, 124, 125
concept of, 121
in the United States, 84, 123
Liberalism, 84
- Machiavelli, Niccolo, 167
on innovators and reformers, 167
Mao, (Chairman), 130
Marx, Karl, 48, 127
Mary Knoll College. Ogoja, 15-17, 21-22, 24, 54
Mass-education, 114, 116
McCracken, Thomas, 21
Metaphysics, 47, 51
definition of, 47
of man, 51
"Moroccan Leather", 97
Motherless Babies Trust Fund, 161
- Nana of Warri, 61, 62
National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure, (NASENI), 149
National Agency for Science and Technology Fund (NASTF), 147
National Electoral Commission (NEC), 139
National Electric Power Authority, (NEPA), 91
National Policy on Science and Engineering Infrastructure, 147
National Population Commission (NPC), 80
National Republican Convention (NRC), 128, 131
National Research and Implementation Fund, (NRIF), 118
National Youth Service Corps, (NYSC), 26
Nationalism, 82, 83
Ndama Cattle, 152
Neo-colonialism, 32
Nigeria Cement Company, (Nigercem), Nkalagu, 37, 38, 41
Nigerian Association of Northern California Incorporated (NANCI), 29, 30
Nigerian Breweries Limited, 25
Nigerian Civil War, 18, 146
Nigerian Night, 30
Nkrumah, Kwame, 32, 46, 126, 128

- Nok Culture, 21
 Nwite, Nnagozie, 134
 Nwosu Humphrey, 139
- Oba of Benin 1897, 61
 Obasanjo, Olusegun, 150
 Ogbu, Chigozie, 134
 Onu, David Aba, Eze Ada of Uhuru,
 1, 4-6, 8, 12, 18, 54
 Onu, Lady Chinyere, 31, 161
 Onu Ogonnaya (Governor):
 birth and childhood, 1-9
 educational career, 10-33
 developmental philosophy, xi,
 xii, 57
 as a patriot and nationalist, 28,
 30, 55, 58, 167
 as "Chief Servant", 44, 52, 55,
 166
 on politics, 52-57
 on agriculture, 89, 90
 on technology, 58, 73-76, 78-86,
 92, 97-99, 102, 123
 on education, 155-158
 in NIGERCEM, 37, 41
 on Leadership, 120, 122, 123-
 125
- Operation Feed the Nation (OFN),
 150
- Option A4, 139
- Organisation of African Unity,
 (OAU), 70
- Oshiri Cattle Ranch, 151
- Otto von Bismarck, 130
- Patriotism, 27, 82, 84
- Perry, Robert, 31
- Philosophy, x, 46, 113
 definition of, 46, 47
 of Karl Marx, 127
- Plato, x, 46, 87, 127. *See also*
 Aristocles
- Pluralism, 48
- Pluralists, 48
- Population, 30, 73, 80
- Presbyterian Joint Hospital Uburu,
 19, 132, 154
- Presidential Elections, 139
- "Proto-welfarism", 86
- Queen Amina Prize for womanhood
 159, 161
- Racial equality, 57
- Raw Material Research and
 Development Council (RMRDC),
 41, 42, 150
- Raw Materials Society of Nigeria,
 41, 150
- Resources:
 natural, 26, 58, 59, 63, 72-74,
 80-82, 143
 human and material, 26, 58, 63,
 72-73, 80, 103, 122, 125, 128
 138, 144, 145
- Revised Medical salary Scale, 154
- Rice, 7, 8
- Roe, Ann, 115
- Rousseau, J.J., x, 143
- Salt-rich Uburu, 1
- Saudi Arabia, 29
- Science, 77, 101, 102, 104, 108, 109,
 111-117
 definition of, 77-78
 development of, 111, 112, 115
 and religion, 112-113
- "Science Culture", 111-113, 119
- Science and Technology Fund, 147
- Scientific Revolution, 79
- Scientific Socialism, 127
- Second World War (1945), 145
- Secondary Education Management
 Board, 156
- Shagari, Shehu, 148, 150
- Social Democratic Party (SDP), 128,
 131
- Socrates, x, 46
- Techno-politics, 88
- Technology, 58, 59, 73-76, 78-88,
 90-93, 101, 103-109, 111-117,
 124, 125, 144, 149, 163, 166
 definition of, 78, 79
 and national greatness, 76-89

174 Indigenous Technology: The Developmental Philosophy of Ogbonnaya Onu

indigenous, 58, 81, 102, 124,

162-163

transfer, 104, 105, 106, 163-164

Tribalism, 83

Uburu salt Lake, 6

Union of Abia (Better Life

Programme) Co-operative

Societies (UAC), 161

United Nations Organization (UNO),

62, 66

University of Lagos (Nigeria), 24

Uranium, 80

Vision, 139, 140, 162-166

of Governor Ogbonnaya Onu,

137, 138, 162-165, 166-167

Waltz, Kenneth: on imperialism, 60

Wright (Bishop), 138

Zayyad, Hamza, 147



Given that the crisis of leadership is at the core of the issue of development in Nigeria and Africa at large, and given that the crux of the leadership problem in Africa as a whole is, indeed, poverty of ideas among those who occupy leadership positions, this philosophically provoking work provides a contextual framework within which the developmental philosophy of Ogbonnaya Onu (elected Governor of Abia State, January 1992 - November 1993) is situated and thoroughly examined.

This work has done much to underpin the problems of development in Nigeria and Africa, and has painstakingly explored how they can be surmounted in a country and continent so lavishly endowed by nature yet so materially depressed as to fall within the poorest in our globe. What marks Onu out as a man of vision is his thorough diagnosis of the problems and prospects of Nigeria's attainment of greatness, and his scientific prediction that if Nigeria can develop indigenously-inspired technology and apply same for development she can attain greatness by the year 2035 AD. But what clearly shows him as a man with a mission is his bold move to establish the IBB Technology Village.



Dr. Agbafor Igwe, B.A. (Hons) Philosophy (1984); Ph.D, Philosophy (1990), University of Lagos; author of *The Philosopher of Our Time* (1992), is a specialist in African Socio-Political Philosophy. He was born in 1958 in Amangwu-Onicha in the present Onicha Local Government Area of Abia State, Nigeria.

He is currently teaching Philosophy at the University of Uyo and is the President, Association for Research in Education and the Humanities, an international organization based in the institution.



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