

## *Full Length Research Paper*

# **The Relevance of Interdisciplinary Approach to the Study of Nigeria History.**

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**African societies were looked upon as societies that had no history. European scholars and writers like Frederick Hegel, Herbert Spencer, Hugh Trevor Rober and others regarded Africa as having no history at all before the advent of Europeans because there were no abundant written sources like what was obtained in Europe. As A. P Newton and other scholars had stated, History is concerned almost entirely with written records and can only make subsidiary use of the material remains with which the archaeologist and the anthropologists are concerned. Thus, one of the causes of the decline and lack of interest in African history particularly Nigeria History stems from its historiography and accessing the sources of information concerning the pre-literate and past events of Nigeria. Against this background, this work examines the interdisciplinary approach to the study of Nigeria history, and explores its relevance to Nigeria History and Historiography. This study argues that interdisciplinary approach will not only bridge the gap on the dearth of Nigeria history but as well made history to be attractive as it moves its study and practice to the public.**

**Keywords:** Interdisciplinary Approach, Nigeria History.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The term interdisciplinary is most often used in educational circles when researchers from two or more disciplines bring their approaches and modify them so that they are better suited to the problem at hand. Interdisciplinary approach has been frequently used in 20<sup>th</sup> century; the term has historical background, most profoundly in Greek philosophy. Julie Thompson Klein states that the roots of the concepts lie in a number of ideas that resonate through modern discourse –the ideas of a unified science, general knowledge, synthesis and the integration of knowledge.<sup>1</sup> While Glies Gunn says that Greek historians and dramatists took elements from other realms of knowledge such as medicine or philosophy to further understand their own material.<sup>2</sup> Any broadminded humanist project involves interdisciplinary, and history shows a record of cases, including 17<sup>th</sup> century Leibniz's aim to create a system of universal justice, which involved linguistics, economics, management, ethics, law, politics and

philosophy.<sup>3</sup> Interdisciplinary program often arise from a shared conviction that the traditional disciplines are unable to address an important issue. For instance, social science disciplines such as Anthropology and Sociology paid little attention to social analysis of technology throughout most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As a result, many scientists with interest in technology have combined science and technology studies programs which are occupied by scholars drawn from various disciplines. They may as well come from new research developments, such as nanotechnology, which cannot be addressed without combining the approaches of two or more disciplines. Historical and anthropological research in Africa has long adversely effected from two contradictory weaknesses. One is the problem of historians for seeing the process of social change as a mere string of dates. Hence, the urged to construct a chronology that will make human development intelligible, to neglect everything else. The other even

more serious problem may arise partly from applying to the real African preconceived ideas of the archaic condition gotten from sketch concepts of evolution; it explains structures as though they were timeless, repudiating the historical depth which alone gives them meaning, subjective or objective.<sup>4</sup> Again, some scholars are taken with the idea of the self sufficiency of their own subjects; there is linguistics allergic to any suggestion of cultural interaction and anthropologists who reject the notion of historical depth. Happily, tight compartments of this are being increasingly broken down. The realization that archaeologists, linguistics, or anthropologists are challenged with many of the same problems and that the best way of solving them is by interdisciplinary teamwork, is one of the most encouraging news in African studies today. African history is less well equipped than any other discipline to thrive in a vacuum, even when it comes to what might be regarded as history's special preserve; establishing the chronology. In some views, the best solution to a problem of chronology often calls for the use of four different sources; written sources, archaeology, linguistics and oral tradition. This co-operation helps to ensure that the picture of the past is built with a clarity and completeness that no one source alone could bring. O. Adebayo in the book, 'Issues of Historiography', had argued that; "The discipline of history is gradually coming out of its shell and cooperating with other disciplines. According to her, gone were the days when the traditional historians preached the sanctity of the discipline and exhorted that it should not be adulated by other disciplines".<sup>5</sup> The old belief was that history would lose its identity as an independent discipline; that it would become a dumping ground for the hypothesis and theories of other related disciplines like the social sciences. With this, she asserts that; there is a gradual move towards cooperation among related disciplines especially in Humanities. Conferences and research projects are packaged in a such that scholars from different discipline contribute their own perspective on a given theme thus producing a comprehensive result which no single discipline could have been able to fathom.<sup>6</sup> Ki Zerbo in "General African History" maintains that the history of Africa especially south of the Sahara is characterized by a relative dearth of written sources especially before the 16<sup>th</sup> century; African history must combine all other available sources in order to recreate the past.<sup>7</sup> According to him, no single discipline can tackle alone the dense jungle of the reality of Africa.<sup>8</sup> To Kenneth Dike; the growing tendency for scholars to become increasingly specialized within their own disciplines and for disciplines to become true to themselves has been accompanied by a re-marry of the humanities and the social sciences, a shift from the dichotomy of man and society to the integration of man-in-society.<sup>9</sup> In a sense, interdisciplinary is not new. At

most times in the past, some of the greatest contributions to human knowledge and understanding have been produced by men who ignored the artificial barriers of their own disciplines and sought in other fields the means to enrich their own studies. On a general sense, interdisciplinary approach could be seen from two angles. Firstly, experts from different but related disciplines could collaborate in a joint research effort. And secondly, historians may utilize the findings, insights, theories, hypothesis and other analytical tools generated by scholars from other disciplines to aid his historical reconstruction and interpretations. More so, the relevance of interdisciplinary approach of history can be seen in the area of getting sources, the area of interpretation, and the analysis of data. Meanwhile, the sources of Nigeria history are manifestly complementary. Any one on its own will be defective and give unclear image of reality which can only be brought into focus by means of other sources. Interdisciplinary is seen as a solution to the adverse effects of over specialization. On some views, interdisciplinary is highly indebted to those who specialize in one discipline, which is without specialist interdisciplinarians and no major experts to seek. Others put the focus of interdisciplinary on the urge to transcend disciplines, viewing excessive specialization as problematic. When interdisciplinary collaboration or research produces new solutions to issues, much information is given back to various disciplines involved. Thus, both disciplinarians and interdisciplinarians may be seen in complementary relation to one another.

## CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

**Interdisciplinary Approach-** Interdisciplinary approach means the combining of two or more academic discipline into one activity. According to Heidi Jacob; interdisciplinary approach is a knowledge, view and curriculum approach that consciously applies methodology and language from more than one discipline to examine a central theme, topic, issue, problem or work... it involves researchers, students and teachers in the goals of connecting and integrating several academic school of thought and professions along with their specific perspectives in pursuit of a common task.<sup>10</sup> Klein and Newell offered a wide definition of interdisciplinary studies, according to them, it is a process of answering a question, solving a problem, or addressing a topic that is too broad or complex to be dealt with adequately by a single discipline or profession...it draws on disciplinary perspectives and integrates their insights through construction of a more comprehensive perspective.<sup>11</sup>

## THE RELEVANCE OF INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF NIGERIA HISTORY

The aim of interdisciplinary approach is to give a good shape to the knowledge of numerous disciplines. It is a technique that establishes reciprocal relationship for better understanding of the discipline. No knowledge is permanent unless we correlate one subject with the other. Interdisciplinary approach is important because it gives knowledge stability, enables to know or acquire knowledge in a short time, reduces the load of curriculum, develops interest in the reader, and develops numerous human and social activities such as harmony etc. Interdisciplinary approach is equally an excellent way to bringing harmony between various faculties and levels. It is needed for a long term goal for any specific study. Knowledge, however, is a unity and it is essential to adopt the interdisciplinary approach in order to maintain its unitary nature. Specifically, the disciplines from which have benefited and stand to benefit the study of Nigeria history are group into three: Humanities, Social Sciences and Natural and Physical Sciences.

**Humanities:** They are disciplines that study aspects of human society and culture. Under this aspect, major disciplines include; Archaeology, Linguistics, Literature, Philosophy, Geography, Music, and Religion.

**Archaeology** is the study of the human past using scientific analyses of material remains. The aim of both Archaeology and History is the research of the human past. The difference between them derives from the source materials. Historians use written sources materials while archaeology concentrate on the physical remains. Combining the two will offer a much more holistic and thorough view and a deeper understanding of the past than either history or archaeology. Importantly the history concern with the ancient times cannot but draw on data from archaeological evidence. This applies more to the study of pre-literate society; since the art of writing in general does not go beyond 3000 B.C. According to Ki Zerbo, "what is known concerning the development of man comes from archaeological findings...Archaeology supplies chronological base or sequence useful for historical construction"<sup>12</sup>. The major dating technique of Archaeology include 'Radio Carbon Dating' which establish date as far as 70, 000BC. 'Potassium Organ Dating' is another dating technique which could as well date and extend back to 10 million years ago. There is also 'Thermoluminescent Dating' technique use for poultry objects.<sup>13</sup>In Africa for example, archaeological findings indicates that man and the earliest forms of civilization developed in Africa. Archaeology helps to get source on ancient and pre-historic societies. Against this background, A. P. Newton states; "history began when men take to writing; it is concerned almost entirely with written records and can only make subsidiary use of the

materials remains with which archaeologists are concerned"<sup>14</sup>.In Nigeria, archaeology has provided information about specific sites, land use and available technology. According to Kenneth dike; "this is not merely to recognize the value of archaeology of Nigeria history, but above all to emphasize that Nigeria historiography cannot make much further progress until archaeology is developed to the point where it can begin to make more substantial contributions"<sup>15</sup>. Even at this infant stage of its development, it is quite remarkable what contributions archaeology and archaeologists has already made to African and Nigeria history. In West Africa alone, the work of R Mauny on the western Sudan in the medieval period is well known. Bernard Fagg and his few associates have in the last few years opened a completely new vista of history in Nigeria by discovery of the Nok culture. Frank Willet singlehandedly is making some progress in Yoruba archaeology. Thurstan shaw is shedding light on the history of the Igbo. Leubeuf has been active in the Chad region.<sup>16</sup>Available archaeological evidence seems to support that the Benin kingdom was established sometime during the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Although the country is yet to produce archaeological evidence of the earliest forms of human beings like those found in the eastern and southern parts of the African continent, evidence of the antiquity of human habitation in the Nigerian area exists nonetheless. The earliest demographic evidence comes from the artifacts excavated in the village of Nok (Plateau state) which have been radiocarbon dated to c.39 000 B.C. Some other excavated sites show indications of human existence during the late stone age (i.e. 15, 000 B.C. - 500B.C).<sup>17</sup>Notable among those are the Mejiro Cave (Oyo state) and Rock shelters at Rop (Plateau state), Dama (Borno state) and Iwo Eleru (Ondo state). Indeed from Iwo Eleru have come the remains of a human skeleton, the significance of which lies in the fact that it is, in the words of Frank Willet, the earliest Homo sapiens yet excavated in West Africa.<sup>18</sup>In Nigeria, spectrographic analysis of the naturalistic metal sculpture of life has demonstrated that life art of work is manufactured in brass and not bronze as hitherto believe. Also it has indicated that the object was manufactured through the process of casting.

**Linguistic** is a study that endeavors to describe and explain the human faculty of languages. Little is known of the nature, language, culture and racial composition of the Nigerian population in pre-historical times. However, it seems safe to conclude from available linguistic evidence that a great number of the country's ethnic groups had evolved by 500 A.D.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, documentary evidence, when they began to appear, suggest that many groups may have occupied their present locations well before 1500. Thus by the date, the Hausa and the Kanuri, for example, already had established tradition of commercial and political

relations with the societies across the Sahara. In the southern part of the country the earliest European visitors, arriving from the late fifteen century, were in contact with the Ijebu (Yoruba), Benin (Edo) Itsekiri, Urhobo and Ijo in their present locations.<sup>20</sup> However, several techniques of linguistic research have yielded vital information which has been of tremendous value to Nigeria history. One of the techniques is historical linguistics which studies language change in time and in space with a view to establishing the degree of divergence between two stages of a language and accounting for the evolution of divergent stages. Another technique is the study of loan words; this shows the relationship between the speakers of one language and another language from which they have borrowed vocabulary items. For example Joseph Greenberg, the renowned linguist has demonstrated in his linguistic analysis of Kanuri loan words in the Hausa language that the Hausa had obtained several of their political titles from Kanuri.<sup>21</sup> This would indicate that the Borno Empire exercised some influence on the Hausa states in the past. Similarly, the identification of loan words as between the Kanuri and Hausa of northern Nigeria can give much information about the penetration of the Muslim religion in that area as well as the interchange of military ideas. An obvious feature of the linguistic interaction has been the existence of Arabic loan words in many Nigerian and indeed in the languages of many West African peoples that have been exposed to Islamic culture for a considerable length of time. As Mervyn Hiskett has remarked, the study of Arabic loan words in Hausa, and other West African languages like Fulfulde and Kanuri is a fascinating one which tells much about the stages by which Islam developed among West African people.<sup>22</sup> The scope and range of Arabic loan words indicate spheres and nature of the cultural interaction- trade, politics, administration, law, education, medicine, belief, life cycle ceremonies and the like. A few examples could be given at random: Rida in Hausa and Yoruba (Arabic, interest); Al-Basa in Hausa and Yoruba (Arabic, onion); Emir in Hausa (Arabic, prince, ruler); Wazi in Hausa (Arabic, minister) Sharia in Hausa, Fulfulde and Yoruba (Arabic, Law); Al-Kari in Hausa, Fulfulde and Yoruba (Arabic, judge); Qalam in Hausa (Arabic, pen); Lafiua in Hausa (Arabic, well being).<sup>23</sup> Also from the study of the linguistic Geography (distribution of languages) in the middle belt in Nigeria, Ballard, another linguist has been able to make historical inferences about the migrations of people within the region.<sup>24</sup> Through the cooperation of Kay Williamson, a linguist, plus historians, N. Nzewunwa and Fred Anozie, it has been possible to resolve some of the problems of chronology in the history of the Ijo of the NigerDelta.<sup>25</sup> The latest attempts of collaboration between linguist and historians have produced works such as the 'Multidisciplinary Approach to Africa History',

edited by N.C. Ejituwa, a midwife at University of PortHarcourt in 1998.<sup>26</sup> The historical linguist has given historians source and interpretation of the Nsibidi system of communication that developed in Cross River and Akwa Ibom states in Nigeria.<sup>27</sup> Finally, linguistic evidence sheds light on intergroup relations by highlighting the genetic relation between languages. A genetic link among a set of languages usually suggests a common origin for the language speakers. It is clear from the results that have been obtained so far that the comparative study of African languages provides the historian with considerable information about relationships between various ethnic groups and movements of peoples not only in pre historical times but in more recent years. For example, the West African languages survey has discovered, among other things, that the technical vocabulary of Ifa, the Yoruba divination process, can be traced from the Idoma in the Benue Basin, westwards, right across to the peoples of Ghana.<sup>28</sup> This gives yet another confirmation to the view that in the history of the peoples of the West African forests, east-west movements were common, and were perhaps of greater significance than the north-south movements indicated by some legends of origin and accepted by most recent writers on African history. Much can also be learnt about trade from such studies. A thorough study of Nigeria languages, their vocabularies and traditional literature provides the historian with many pointers as to the nature of past contacts of the peoples of this country. In past linguistic studies of Nigeria, attention was paid largely to the grammatical forms, and the languages themselves were neglected. Since Greenberg's famous works, increasingly an attention is now being paid to the vocabularies of the languages. The importance of reading and studying traditional literatures in the different languages is beginning to be emphasized. Apart from the importance to the historian of the conclusions reached by linguists from these studies, we have a common interest with them in collecting authentic traditional literatures like chants, songs, praise verses, proverbs and so on, and preserving and studying them as documents.<sup>29</sup>

In **Literature**, writers do turn to History to get valuable information which is like a framework into which he now feeds his imagination. Some writers even go beyond the published historical text, they dig up documents and records in archives and some conducts oral interview. And there is possibility of uncovering materials that have eluded professional historian. However, their attention to detail in exploring the lives of individual men or women could be said to have blazed a trail where the later practitioners of History from below have striven to follow. In this case, we should appreciate such creative works of 'Death and Kings Horseman' by Wole Soyinka which was based on real events that took place in Oyo in 1946 when chief Elesin was required by



native traditions to die and accompany the departed Alafin to the great beyond.<sup>30</sup> "Sunset in Biafra" by Elechi Amadi in which she is reminiscent of the Nigeria Civil War. Chinua Achebe's "Things Fall Apart" in 1958 and "There was a Country".<sup>31</sup> Finally, historians could learn the details of lives of ordinary men and women through literature.

**Philosophy** gives meaning to History on a global scale and introduced perspectives that have proved to be of great value to historians over the years. Whenever a Historian writes a piece, he is engaging a philosophy in his choice of focus, mode of analysis and manner of presentation. For instance, Karl Marx historical materialism opened the eyes of Nigerian scholars to the predominance of economic factors in historical development. Dependency theory and Marxism are very popular in the historiography of underdevelopment of Nigeria. **Geography** focuses on human interaction with the physical environment. History views human experience from the perspective of time while geography views from perspective of space. Universally it is accepted that History and Geography have very close ties. In fact it would be practically impossible to study certain branches of history without rudimentary knowledge of geography, for example the diplomatic or military history cannot be followed without necessary geographical knowledge of the region. Time and space factors give history its correct perspective. Without a geographical basis, the makers of history seek to be walking. Geography also plays an important role in national character formation and influence the human behavior. As we know that climate of a country greatly affected the civilization of a country. Hence the knowledge of geographical is very essential for historians. Geography and History enable learners to understand how events and places affected each other across time, and also history relating to the environment requests relevant data from geography. History in every country is heavily influenced by its geography, for example the earliest civilizations began in the area that has rivers and flat land like Nile and Mesopotamia. In Nigeria, the interpretation of geography helps us to know why there was early and quick civilization in Lagos Island than in mainland. E. Alagoa, the author of 'Trade and Politics' pointed to getting relevant data from geography in writing the above book. Geography helps historians to understand the past sea levels, environment and climates. Finally, it helps us to understand the impact of humans on the environment including, the land use decree of 1978, its causes and effects. In **Music**, the study of music and musical instruments by arithmetical means and statistical analysis can provide evidence on the question of the spread and development of cultures. Drums, which have their roots in tradition, is one of Africans great living books. Some drums are oracles others are broadcasting stations. A large part of sub-Saharan music, mainly

among Niger-Congo linguistic groups is rhythmic and centered around the drum. Their language is essentially a message replete with history. Palace drummers among the Akan and Ihogbe of Benin have as their duty to guide the political and religious leaders through appropriate education in history.<sup>32</sup> **Religion** as an academic field is devoted to research into religious beliefs, behaviors, and institutions. It is a fact that from the beginning of time, humans have engaged in activities that we now call religion, such as worship, prayer, and rituals marking important life passages. Religion has always asked basic questions, such as: what is true meaning of life? What happens to us after death? How do we explain human suffering and injustices? And to know more about different facets of human life. By studying diverse religious doctrines, rituals, stories, and scriptures, we can come to comprehend how different communities of believers- past and present, east and west have used their religious traditions to shape, sustain, and transform themselves. In the progressive interdependent global community, awareness of different past and present characteristics of religious life- events, texts, ceremonies, rituals, convictions, theologies, visual representations, artifacts- can lay the background for informed and thoughtful analysis of contemporary life. Such analysis is significant in considering international issues and also domestic ones (such as abortion, evolution, faith-based initiative, capital punishment, marriage, and civil rights). The study of religion thus aids to understand the faiths, world views, and ways of life of millions of people. Religion equally deepens our understanding of others and ourselves.

**Social Sciences:** Social Sciences are those disciplines which deal with the meaning of human society. There are basically different from Humanity in the bodies of theories they present, their peculiar techniques and methodology. According to Claude Ake, "The social sciences can't accomplish the task of providing systematic explanation of the social world without operating within the framework of historical analysis".<sup>33</sup> Many Historians utilize the insights from the concepts defined by social scientists such as social change, control, and mobility, and elite theory. Anthropology, sociology, economics, psychology are major disciplines in social science that history benefits in its interdisciplinary approach. **Anthropology** is the study of the origins of people and their physical and cultural development. Anthropology often records indigenous languages, cultures and customs of people. Historians are interested in past periods while the anthropologists are mostly concerned with primitive people. Social anthropology writes about prehistoric people and their traditions and institutions. Their work is important in understanding the culture and customs of groups and nations in Nigeria. For instance, an historian has used insights generated by social anthropology on

the interpretation and socio political significance of myths and legends to study the traditions of origins of the Beninmonarchy. Most recently, Murray Last has through the combination of anthropological, linguistic and documentary evidence, plausibly argued that the incorporation of Hausaland into the trans-Saharan trade network between c 1100-1400 stimulated a complex series of intergroup fusions which gave rise to centralized politics.<sup>34</sup> Anthropology gives us data to understand the times and method of human arrivals and movement across the country. **Economics** is a discipline that studies human behavior as a relation between ends and scarce means with alternative uses. Just as every piece of economic theory is ultimately crystallized history, so every individual historical narrative is based on a web of social science theories. As the activities of a man in society are very closely related with the economic matters, the historian of any period must have at least a rudimentary knowledge of the economics. In fact, the economic history of any time is an important branch of history and its understanding is absolutely important for the proper understanding of history of any period. No doubt, it is true that during the last few years economics has become very complex and difficult discipline, mostly dependent on mathematics, and a modern historian cannot get basic working knowledge of economic theory without putting a lot of time and leaving little time for the study and writing of history. Therefore, a new set of economic history by the use of economic historians have emerged who try to study the economic tools. At present, history is so closely interlinked with the study of economic issues that it would not be possible to reconstruct history without knowledge of the importance economic problems. Economics helps historians to comprehend main interruptions in economics performance and policies that have happened in the past and possibility to happen again in the future. Economics is important in writing Labor History, Trade History, and Commerce History. Various theories and concepts in economics helps historian to understand the world; (like capitalism, socialism, elite theory, social change, control, mobility, trade liberalization, unemployment, growth and development, which has led to economic history). For instance, there is no doubt in the fact that some of the postulations of the modernization theory helped Nigeria in the construction of its national development plans and associated policies. It is however, argued that the theory failed to explain the role of the colonial masters in the underdevelopment of Nigeria. This vacuum left by the modernization theorists is provided for in the dependency theory. The dependency theorists were bitter about the positions of the advocates of modernization. They argue that it is not that Africans and indeed Nigeria does not have the capacity to develop but that is hamstrung by its dependency status and its

peripheral position in the world system. **Sociology** is the discipline which concerns with the study of social phenomena and social process. The founders of Sociology, Max Weber and Emily Durkheim, sometimes referred it as Social History. History and sociology are intimately related and a number of sociologists like Auguste Comte are also important figure in the development of historical studies. Karl Marx was also a great historian and sociologists. Both history and sociology are concerned with the study of man in the society and differed only with regard to their approach. Sociologists exercised profound influence on the study of History by developing the certain narrow spheres of human activity. They adopted the sampling techniques and develop their methods with a view to reduce the subjective element. In brief, Sociology is helping History to study social dynamics which is a study not of society at rest but continuously in social change and development social processes, and social causation is giving a new idea to history. There are increasing new attention to social history in Nigeria. History is the past Sociology and Sociology is the present History. History without Sociology has no fruit while Sociology without History has no root. Sociology depends on history in order to study past events institutions. In the meantime, Sociology provides social background to the study of Nigeria history, because of this, Nigeria history is now being studied from sociological viewpoint. Sociology is important in writing various social topics on Nigeria life and activities.

**Psychology** studies the behavior of individuals or behavior in small group. It studies the peoples mind and how they behave and think. History and psychology are closely linked. Historians show some psychological insights while making an analysis of the aim and actions of men and societies. Historian work would be mere fiction unless he uses the discoveries of modern psychology. The personal life and the environment of a historian has a direct influence in his decision and often brings a bias to his account and renders the desired objectivity impossible. An understanding of the group psychology enables historians determine the role of masses in the various revolutions such as the jingoistic patriotism has been described as the cause of certain wars, historians discuss this cause with the help of the social psychology. The knowledge of psychology helps historian to know certain characters and idiosyncrasies of his subject of study. Psychology equally helps historian to know or explain community or group response to a particular phenomena. It helps historian to know the motive behind each human action.

**Physical and Natural Science:** Sciences have been randomly called upon to illuminate and unravel particular issues that are beyond the competence of the professional historian. The major subjects are: Statistics, Physics, Paleontology, and Parasitology.

**Statistics** is a branch of mathematics dealing with the collection, analysis, interpretation and presentation of data. It helps to quantify facts that would otherwise be subject to qualitative distortion. It helps historian to showcase events more nearly on the scale on which they occurred. In the present century the writing of Nigeria history has been greatly influenced by the statistical data. With the invention of computers, the collection of statistical data has become possible. The historians have given up the former practice of using the terms like majority of people, etc, and have started quoting the exact percentage of an event or the people. The help of the computer and processing of enormous data can be completed within a short span, and also systemic information can be collected. Though the conclusion drawn on the basis of the data may be known to the historians on the basis of the impressionistic evidence, which does reduce the value because it gives a concrete evidence for a previously held proposition, on the same vein the use of the historical demography namely-information regarding the movement of people, births and deaths fertility rates, immigrations etc, cannot be possible without the ways to process and correlate the vast and complex data made available by diverse official records. This type of detailed study enables the historians to understand the various facts of the past life. It has helped in studying Nigeria Diaspora, Nigeria underdevelopment and employment issues, and number of casualties in conflicts and wars.

**Physics** as a discipline involves the study of matter and its motion and behavior by space and time. The law of physics can give deep details about history; details that are difficult to find through mere observation. The history of entire universe is written in the particular patterns of the basic particles that constitute all matter. With developments in technology, historians can now use all they know about atoms to explain the truth about historical mysteries in art, archaeology, geology, and in astronomy. With this unprecedented access to times far earlier than those recorded by historians, historians can now access the rise and fall of preliterate societies, the history of the earth's climate and to some extent the origins of the solar system 4.4 billion years ago. Using this knowledge, they can finally develop a thorough and stable timeline that encompasses all the history from time immemorial till present. Modern physics, however, has been applied to the study of Nigeria history. The use of radioactive isotopes gives us a chronological gauge to the earliest days of Homosapiens in the case of Carbon 14 method and to periods more than a million years ago in the case of Potassium Argon method. **Parasitology** deals with the study of parasites and parasitism. It offers a lot to historian by way of studying disease patterns and making their findings on them available. This could be used by historian in determining the demographic growth of the people concerned.

**Palaeontology** is the study of the history of life. The history of paleontology traces the origin of the effort to comprehend the history of life on earth by studying the fossil record left behind by living organisms. Palaeontology has contributed to a rapid increase in historian's knowledge about the origin of life on earth and progress towards definition of the geologic time scale largely based on fossil evidence. It studies ancient life, and in the context of ancient Nigeria, Palaeontology along with Palaeozoology and Paleobotany is vital to understanding how ancient species have changed and adapted over time, how climate and environment impacted upon their existence, and whether humans were responsible for their extinction. Paleobotany is a field of Paleobotany that studies plant and fossil records. It analyses fossils pollens and helps to establish whether agriculture was practiced on the site where the pollens were recovered. Palaeobotany is relevant because the record of fossil plants helps historians comprehend the long process of plant evolution. Historians learn a lot about the environment during prehistoric times by studying the types of plants that grew then. Fossilized plant life tells a story of how earth has changed over time. Also, historians have been able to learn a lot about the progression of life on earth by studying the plants that lived long ago made available palaeobotanist. In Nigeria, Palaeobotany gives other useful information on the vegetation. Such studies have helped to trace the domestication of food plants in Nigeria. Example is oil palm (domesticated on the edge of the forests). Also the identification of various types of pollen grains is useful information on the ecological development of Nigeria ancient societies and their lifestyles. More so, Palaeozoology is a branch of Paleontology that deals with fossil animals. These fossils are then used to help reconstruct pre-history environments and ancient ecosystems. Palaeozoology helps in more ways than most people would think. It is deeper understanding into the past in an objective form, making historians to see events in history and how they affected the world. With further research and more studies, historians will be able to find the origins of vertebrates and maybe even the origins of human life through the works of Palaeozoologists.

## CONCLUSION

The rapport of history with other disciplines has opened up new views of knowledge and has as well increased the frontiers of research not only in the humanities but also in the social sciences. It is a bond that is mutually beneficial to all subjects and parties involved. This is a good development and more of such bond and rapport is encouraged in Nigeria historical scholarship. However, what is interdisciplinary

cooperation, and how is it to be implemented? Clearly it means more than the physical closeness and stated aim of a team of researchers, each applying his particular analytical tool to a part of the problem. Capability to associate in research with scholars from other subjects shows also an understanding of the basis of concept formation in those disciplines. Meanwhile, the characters of mind and methods of particular disciplines remain significant. What is required is that the researcher in any given field should be aware of what other scholars in other disciplines are doing and should effectively well abreast with the techniques and language used in those disciplines to allow him to make a proper use of the results of study in them. This process of receiving and comparison must be highly pursued in all fields of study in order to produce a compound but coherent Nigeria picture. The Nigerian historian, if he is to be successful, must outgrow the traditional outlook of the European historian. He must be ready to look for information not from written records alone, but also from the African societies around him, their institutions and traditional customs, their languages and literatures, their works of art, and the fossil. Most participants in interdisciplinary process were trained in traditional disciplines; however, they must learn to appreciate differing of ideas, perspectives and techniques. For instance, a discipline that lay more emphasis on quantitative rigor may produce academicians and practitioners who think of themselves and their disciplines as more scientific than others; in turn, colleagues in softer disciplines may link quantitative methods with inability to understand the bigger sides of a problem. An interdisciplinary approach may be unsuccessful if its members remain struck in their disciplinary dimension. On the other hand, and from the discipline perspective, much interdisciplinary work may be viewed as soft, lacking in rigor, or ideologically motivated; these beliefs put barriers in the career paths of those who choose interdisciplinary work.

Meanwhile, the underlying effect of interdisciplinary approach in history is actively seen under the concept of 'Public History'. Public history is the history beyond the walls of the conventional classroom. It means the way history is consumed by the general public. Public historians come in all forms and sizes. They often call themselves historical consultants, museum professionals, government historians, oral historians, curators, film and media producers, policy advisors, cultural resource managers, community activists, etc. They share an interest and goal to making history important, attractive, and useful in the public arena. Over the years, some have argued that public historians are more interdisciplinary than conventional historians, but this seems to be disappearing as the field of history itself has become more multidisciplinary. Unlike many historians in the academy, public historians frequently engage in collaborative work, with

stakeholders, professional colleagues, and community members, and some believe that collaboration is a fundamental feature of what public historians do. The collaborative method motivates regular debates about a role for a shared authority and the suitable place for the professionalization of local history. As with public scholarship in general, digital technologies play a progressive important duty in the work of public historians, creating new areas where they divide their work and meet fresh and diverse audiences.

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