CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This study shows that since the attainment of independence in 1960, Nigeria has been contributing to the realization of the aims and objectives of the African political system. Nigeria became especially active in 1970s particularly from August 1975 due to the new foreign policy philosophy of diversification, dynamism, and activism of the Murtala Mohammed/Obasanjo regime which jettisoned the pro-west policies of earlier regimes, assumed leadership role in OAU and made Africa the "Centre Piece" of its foreign policy.

Nigeria's role in the OAU has its roots in the constitutional obligations and national interest as far as its African foreign policy objectives are concerned. It, therefore, hinges upon the fact that its national interest and obligations converge with that of the OAU. It is as a result of this convergence that has given her the desired opportunities to play a leadership role in the OAU and African affairs.

On the issue of political liberation, that is the decolonization of Africa both Nigeria's and OAU's achievements are clearly visible. This has been a prominent issue in the continent since the 1960s when, most of the
African states attained their independence, as well as when OAU was founded in 1963. It was as a result of the credible support given to the dominated areas that territories like, Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia, etc. gained their freedom from the colonial rule. The support extended was diplomatic, financial and material, and channelled through the Coordination Committee of the OAU. Moreover, through their efforts both Nigeria and the OAU were able to create a worldwide public opinion in favour of Africa and the black man through the United Nations, NAM and the Commonwealth of States. The support of the former socialist bloc states was also enlisted. This led to the dismantling of the political structure of colonization. Right now, racism and apartheid in Africa are on their last leg. And with the 17 March 1992 massive mandate given to the De-Klerk government by the all whites referendum in favour of the repealing of the apartheid and racial uncivilized laws of the land, it is hoped that within a short time Azania (South Africa), shall be free as a democratic non-racial society to join the comity of nations.

In the economic field Africa has been a failure. Neither Nigeria's active role for regional economic cooperation, nor for economic integration of OAU countries under ECOWAS, Lake Chad Basin Commission, River Niger Commission, LPA and FAL have addressed to the basic problems of economic underdevelopment and backwardness of Africa.
Africa remains the least industrialized of the world's macro-regions and trends indicate that since 1975 most African countries have been undergoing rapid deindustrialization. During the eighties Africa is said to have experienced an annual growth rate of 0.8 per cent where as the countries' population has grown by 3.2 per cent, which works out to a negative growth rate of -2.4 per cent annually. Even very heavy food imports have failed to meet its daily Calorie supply requirements. The fact is that the colonial political structure has been replaced by neo-colonial economic structure with its attendant implications. Its impact is such that, it has not only accentuated Africa's dependence but, has also made the African states the economic satellites and subservient to the industrialized western nations and Japan. Thus, the political independence of the African states has not resulted in improvement and change in the nature of their economic structure and pattern left behind by the colonial masters. In such a situation, Nigeria and OAU seem helpless against the economic dominance of the west backed by their technological superiority and military might.

It has been realized in the course of this study that although Nigeria and OAU have become the African dynamos for bringing about progressive changes in the continent through their policies coordinated and otherwise, there are many challenges they had to face in their attempts to uplifting
the continent from its present level of underdevelopment and backwardness. These constitute the limitations to their endeavours and have both domestic and external dimensions. The factors which have prevented OAU and Nigeria from playing their roles effectively are tribal, ethnic, favouritism, inept administration, indiscipline, greed, misappropriation, religious conflicts that have led to political instabilities resulting in military takeovers, coups, counter coups, civil wars, border and inter-African conflicts. The existence of these divisions combined with regional economic disparities, and dependence of most African states on the developed countries for capital, technology, man-power skills and trade concessions have made the African countries ideal hunting grounds for the neo-colonial powers who have used all the possible means - sabotage, assassination, bribery, military intervention, to subserve their interests. The situation has been complicated because of the failure of the African nations to evolve political institutions responsive to their needs. This is partly due to the fact that a basically tribal society has been suddenly subjected to all kinds of ideologies and political systems - liberalism nationalism, socialism, fascism and militarism imported from outside. This sudden onslaught has disrupted the old order and made Africa politically directionless and unable to face squarely the processes of modernization.
Inspite of this failure, Africa is now on the threshold of complete political liberation, which is no mean achievement keeping in view the fact that Africa has been the worst victim of colonialism and imperialism. The honour of the blackman stands vindicated and Nigeria and OAU have certainly played an important role in achieving these ends. However, the economic crisis in Africa has deepened and it is here that Nigeria and OAU have to find the way out of this. The way out probably lies in political action that would not only rescue Africa from the clutches of the developed countries but also give Africa political institutions that are responsive to the needs of the people. This task has become much more difficult with the collapse of the USSR and the emergence of USA as the dominant actor in international politics.