

PEACE, CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND NIGERIA'S SUSTAINABILITY

AMAH, THERESA NKEREUWEM
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL STUDIES
AKWA IBOM STATE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
AFAHA NSIT

E-mail: amatheresa01@gmail.com

Abstract

Nigeria, the most populous nation in Africa is faced with social contradictions, and requires peace and conflict resolution among her citizenry. The search for peace and conflict resolution process cannot be achieved in a vacuum. In view of the current challenges confronting the social, political, religious and economic fabrics of the country, there is need to adopt new strategies to confront them. This paper focused on peace and conflict resolution and Nigeria's sustainability. It was of the view that the persistent violence and insecurity, which are heavily caused by illiteracy, poverty, excessive corrupt practices among others, could be reversed through the instrument of education, as an apparatus for change and development. The paper recommended that Peace-education culture needs to be integrated into the Nigerian education curriculum to address the identifiable issues that are threatening the sustainability of Nigeria. It equally advocated for aggressive or massive education as an antidote for illiteracy and poverty, which are some of the causes of conflicts and insecurity. Youths should be properly developed while conflicts resolution strategies should be used to ensure peace building in the country. Also youth development centers in all the local government areas should be part of the youth development initiative to empower the youths and drive development in communities for promotion of peace and conflict resolutions among the citizens for achievement of Nigeria's sustainability.

Keywords: Peace, Conflict Resolution, Nigeria's Sustainability, Illiteracy, violence, Corruption and Poverty.

Introduction

Nigeria with over 150 Million people and over 300 ethnic groups who speak up to 500 languages (NPC, 2006) are said to portray a sociable, patrilineal and polygamous characters. All these similarities and convergences notwithstanding, the whole population is divided into multiple interlocking cleavages around which affinities are concentrated. Some of these cleavages include ethnicity, regional communities. A general appraisal and exploration of the historical antecedents of conflict in Nigeria since the advent of independence in 1960 divulges the fact that religious and communal violence have received the highest number of occurrences and attentions (Obah-Akpowoghaha, Agunyai, Wewe and Ogunmilade, 2013). Communities in Nigerian rural areas are not only traditional but, spatially discrete and socio-culturally distinct. The differences in socio-cultural distinction cum economic and political calculations are the major sources of political violence among communities. Obah-Akpowoghaha *et al* (2013) further state in a more plain language that stubborn issues such as disputed tenancy as in the case of Jos

Feud and Ife-Modakeke imbroglio is a point to note.

Scholars such as Nnoli (2012) and Akpowogha (2015) opine that violence in Nigeria is a product of acrimonies between social and economic classes. However, there is a popular belief that major wars and violence are product of a cycle of hegemon that are destabilized by a great power which does not support the hegemon's control. That is the insurgency Boko Haram in Nigeria can summarily within the general assumption that unexpected shift of political power from the Northern hegemony to a minority geo-political zone (South-South) is a catalyst to violence and conflict in the country (Danjibo, 2009). The alteration of the Northern perpetual claim on political power in Nigeria as a result of the death of president Yar'adua and the emergence of president Goodluck Ebele Jonathan (South-South) as the president remains a point of reference. Moreover, some authors such as Adeniyi (2012) and Danjibo (2009) have argued that; a religious or linguistic minority might suffer disproportionately in a given society especially when the legal means of attaining political power is not demonstrated by the ruling elites, and this may form grievances that can lead to unrest across the social lines. Therefore, the failure of governance is a sure catalyst for political violence and a vital explanation for the emergences of Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria and other militancy in the country. It is also useful to note that the major area of operation (Northern-East) has the highest percentage of people living below poverty line (72:2%) (Danjibo, 2009).

However, another dimension to violence and conflict in Nigeria can be located in the youth bulge theory by Heinsohn (2016) who believes that youth bulge occurs when 30 to 40 percent of the males of a nation belong to the fighting age cohorts from 15 to 30 years. Since amenities, jobs, foods, etc. grow arithmetically and while population grows geometrically, this situation tends to escalate their adolescent anger into political violence and other social vices. The high birth rate that is partly attached to the polygamous value that is obtained within the Islamic setting which predominate the Northern part of Nigeria from where the Boko-Haram recruit their members, is a catalyst for political violence and not principally religion in Nigeria. Consequently, we can argue that religion, economic deformity and low educational status are mere medium or horses upon which Boko Haram rides, hence, the structural configuration of the Northern part of Nigeria in terms of economic deformity, educational backwardness and inadequate social amenities as well as religious dogmatism can be blamed on Nigerian leaders. In a nutshell, the Nigerian government has employed the formulae of the state of emergency to curb insurgency of conflicts in Nigeria, coupled with the amnesty programme. This method began during the era of Olusegun Obasanjo in view of Odi crises and Goodluck Ebele Jonathan led administration also adopted same mechanism to manage the situation.

Conceptual Clarification

Peace is a situation whereby individuals enjoy basic human rights of security, prosperity, good food, good education, accessible healthcare and a clean planet free from catastrophic and overwhelming pollution. Galtung (2018) described it as the elimination of violence which impedes people from realizing their potential and goals. However, conflict is a struggle between and among individuals (Mitchell, 2010). The struggles may be physical or mental (conflicting ideas). It can either be within one person or it can

involve several individuals.

Peace is a term commonly used to describe a state of being calm and quiet (Hornby, 2006); a state of tranquility, free from argument, conflict, violence and disturbances. It is also considered as the development of behaviour that can prevent the occurrences of conflict. Peace is a quality describing a society or a relationship that is operating harmoniously. This is commonly understood as the absence of hostility, or the existence of healthy or newly-healed, safety in matters of social or economic welfare, the acknowledgement of equality and fairness in political relationships and, in world matters, it is a state of being absent of any war or conflict. Reflection on the nature of peace is also bound up with considerations of the causes its absence or loss, a reflection of nonviolent lifestyle, which also describes a relationship between any people characterized by an absence of disturbance or agitation. Peace can make world feel like a home. Peace is a state in human relations that implies a sense of community, support of each other and enables freedom of expression of thought. Peace needs functioning channels for communication among people, which can express all emotions and also aggression by not using violence.

Conflict is actual or perceived opposition of needs, values and interest. Conflict can be intrapersonal (internal or within oneself), interpersonal (between two or more people) or prevalent (affecting many people). Conflict is the result of many social vices such as social disagreement, conflict of interest and fights between two individuals, groups or organisations. It can occur between two individuals, groups of friend, within and between families, within ethnic groups and between organisations etc. Conflict is a common phenomenon which has become present at one time or the other in every environment. It is well pronounced among the youth and adults in Nigeria. This is because human beings have different backgrounds, interest, and worldviews (Saraki, 2013). It is the way we respond to conflict that determines whether it would be positive or negative. Therefore, conflict is what we make it to be. Positive conflict is constructive and negative conflict is destructive.

Conflict arises because there are needs, values or ideas that are seen to be different, and there is no means to reconcile the dispute. Very often, conflicts lead to fight or even war; in this case conflicts are solved with weapons and human wisdom. Conflicts between ideas is usually fought with propaganda often arising from protest. A conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur when one party is interfering, disrupting, obstructing or in some other way making another party's actions less productive (Deutsch, 2011). Conflicts do not invariably lead to mega violence or war. Even when negotiation, diploma and propaganda fails, individuals or nations can still voice their concern through collective protest, strike, sanctions and other nonviolent means, conflict does not always start between two parties. Even within one individual, there can be conflict. This type of conflict theory is known as the dilemma type of conflict, that is, one person or actor pursuing two incompatible goals. When two parties or actors pursue the same goal this is described by Galtung (2018) as the dispute theory of conflict formation. The later theory has a sharp semblance with zero-sum game or fixed sum game as noted by (Nwolise, 2004). In this context, an actor hold antithetical desires. What one party wins means in Africa, that is, the winners take all and the losers go in pain and remain in unstable state

(Akpowogha, 2013).

Miller (2013) posits that conflict resolution is “a variety of approaches aimed at terminating conflicts through the constructive solving of problems, distinct from management or transforming of conflict” (p.8). Mial (2006), by conflict resolution, it is expected that the deep rooted sources of conflict has been changed. In the understanding of Mitchel and Banks (2012), *conflict resolution refers to; an outcome in which the issues in an existing conflict are satisfactorily dealt with through a solution that is mutually acceptable to the parties that were previously hostile adversaries; and process or procedure by which such an outcome is achieved* (p.21).

In all these, one understands conflicts resolution to imply that conflict is bad hence it is something that should not be encouraged. It also assumes that conflict is a short term phenomenon that can be “resolved” permanently through mediation or other intervention processes. Best (2005) putting these ideas together, concludes that: *...in principle, conflict resolution connotes a sense of finality, where the parties to a conflict are mutually satisfied with the outcome of a settlement and the conflict is resolved in a true sense of it. Some conflicts, especially those over resources, are permanently resolvable* (p.94).

From the above view of needs, a conflict is resolved when the basic needs of parties involved have been met with necessary “satisfiers”, and their fears have been allayed. Others “alike those over values”, according to best (2005), may be “non-resolvable and can at best be transformed, regulated or managed” (p.95).

Theories of Peace and Conflict Resolution

Scholars have advanced some theories of peace and conflict resolution to study, understand and analyses peace and conflict situation. In most cases, using concrete facts, propositions and principles, this theory has explained here provide several political, social, economic, biological, psychological, and environmental realities that explain the causes dynamics and impact of conflicts in and between people and societies.

Structural Theory:

This means structural defects, either internally generated or externally conditioned as the main cause of conflict in the society. This theory two sub-orientations: the radical structural theory propounded by Carl Marx and F. Engel and developed by Vladimir Lenin and the liberal structural theory Ross. The radical theorists claim that exploitative and unjust nature of human society's domination of one class by others results into political or economic discrimination, with the end result leading to crises and war. The theorists believed that economic relationship in capitalist societies need to change through revolution or radical transformation. The liberal structural theory propounded by Ross, Scarborough and Galturg see conflict as a phenomenon that is built in human societies according to how all agreed that conflict organized A product of deep-rooted dysfunction such as political and economic inequality, corruption injustice, unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, disease, overpopulation and exploitation. Johan Galtury views that whenever economic and political discrimination and lack of tolerance in plural societies are embedded in such human social relationship, conflicts are bound to occur higher than the societies where opposite relationship is establish.

Classical Theory:

Theorists in this group; Thomas Hobbes, St. Augustine, Thomas Malthus, and Sigmund Freud among others identified inherent tendency of man of be selfish, sinful and driven by the natural quest for the ceaseless pursuit of power as the main reasons why conflict occur and continue to rise in human society. These theorists differ however, on how the conflict could be solved. For example, according to St. Augustine the theologian, religion plays an important role in regulating the sinful impulse in man, and to Hobbes, conflict could be averted when different individuals in pursuit of selfish interest in a "state of nature" agree to surrender their will (natural rights) to the leviathan (sovereign).

Frustration-aggression Theory:

These theorists such as John Dollard, Robert Gurr, Monga, Feirabend and others see conflict as the direct response to accumulated frustration and anger particularly in societies where scarce resources hardly satisfy human needs and wants. They see conflict as arising from frustration-aggression in a given society. In most cases, conflicts occur as a result of denying the individuals' basic rights, necessities of life, justice or access to other values.

Causes of Conflicts in Nigeria

Why do people have conflict? It may be two or more neighbors disagreeing over a river or land. In a developing country like Nigeria, whatever a conflict's scale, the student of peace and conflict resolution seek to understand its nature and causes. Despite the fact that there are several causes in our societies, but for the purpose of this paper, the most salient ones are briefly discussed here.

Illiteracy: Illiteracy is one of the major problems facing Nigeria as a nation. The impact of illiteracy is very enormous and also very harmful. If you are not educated, you have no freedom; you are totally and perpetually enslaved to others. In fact, a country with majority of illiterate citizens parades with unproductive population.

Poverty: there is no gainsaying that the majority of Nigerian youths or employable adults are idling away their time at various homes. In this same case, their energies are untapped. There is no doubt that energies not utilized will be channeled to unproductive ventures. Nigerians are wallowing in poverty and joblessness. Nigerian government needs to assist her citizens by providing jobs, and engaging them positively in order to reduce the poverty level. Providing jobs for them will re-direct their energy to productive activities that can enhance the development of the country's economy. Therefore, Nigerian government at all levels has to assist her population by providing meaningful job for them in order to reduce inactivity and boredom.

Self-centeredness and greed: the selfishness or parochial interest of our leaders on offices or positions of authority are some of the cause of crises in the country. One individual or group wants to own what belong to the whole. When you listen to the sum of money being swindled by our brothers, sisters, mothers and fathers in administrative or political authority, you feel like taking over the government through any means.

Lack of Implementation of Pragmatic Curriculum: currently, Nigeria's curriculum is tailored toward training personnel that will work in rugged or tilled and good air conditioned offices. In Nigerian, the acquisition of a certificate in school does not make

you and independent man, but dependent.

Unemployment: Joblessness among our teeming population is causing a lot of fracas in Nigeria. Nigeria has “uncountable” graduates that are roaming the street looking for invisible jobs. Even when there are available jobs, it becomes a matter of “who is who” in Nigeria, either based on ethnicity or religion. Excessive bribery and corruption: most of us are aware of Nigerian culture of “who grab what” I will not waste my precious time explaining this particular act because we are all witnesses to what is happening daily in this country. Every day we hear about money laundry and how billions or millions are being swindled out of the country.

Indigenes/settlers spectacle

It does not matter how long one might have stayed in a place or community, once the person does not belong to the ethnic group within the territory, he/she is unfortunately regarded as a settler, not fit to enjoy certain rights and privileges in Nigeria. In most Nigerian communities, the said indigenes usually hold sway over political structures in their area and the so call settlers also who also predominantly depend on the state resources as means of livelihood are usually treated as second class citizens and therefore a source of frequent and sometimes occasional conflict in their communities. Plateau state has become a classical example of this issue having recorded frequent clashes which have led to a lingering crisis of supremacy since the return of democracy in 1999. However, the Plateau State is not a lone as there are notable crises among indigenes and settlers across the country as evidenced in non- subsidized education, scholarship, employment quotas, and admissions quota, etc. These are issues that have continued to generate tensions and acrimonies in various Nigerian communities. Another area of concern between indigenes and settlers is the contention on the use and ownership of land and other resources which have resulted in violent crises and conflicts among many people and communities in the country.

Farmers/Pastoralists Spectacle

The conflict between farmers and pastoralists especially over land and water resources especially in the frontline state of Yobe, Borno, Adamawa, Taraba, Sokoto, Zamfara, Katsina, Kebbi, Nassarawa, Benue, etc have time while most pastoralists allege that most earlier cattle routes and grazing reserves are now converted to farm land, farmers on the land allege that loss of products. Most worrisome is that the pastoralist who traverses the nation in search of grazing land for his animals is willing to sacrifice his life in defense of his hers as farmers are also protecting their hard labored crops. Whereas grass for grazing is available during the raining season, conflicts also occur during the period of harvest, where pastoralist let their cattle enter farm land and destroy crops and residue the period without the permission of the farmer, causing greatly lost to farmers. These clashes are usually with se effects on the people and their socio-economic condition of living.

The historical antecedent of such regular clashes in some communities particularly between the Fulani pastoralists and the local community farmers have its resultant consequence with an already stereotyped two groups as perceived or real enemies. In recent years, a new dimension is taking place in northern Nigeria with the phenomenon of cattle rustling. This is especially with regards to destructions by the armed militias. This challenge, if not properly addressed may likely be dangerous to handle in the future.

Minority/Majority Problems

There are apprehensions in most part of Nigeria as some tribes feel marginalized and dominated by other in terms of the economy, policy or another social way of life. The domination in this case refers to the advantageous position occupied by some ethnic groups to the distribution of national wealth, holding public offices, resources allocation, opportunities and sharing of political power among the ethnic groups. Coupled with the failure of the government both at national and sub national levels to provide means of livelihood, the minorities feel cheated, neglected and marginalized by the larger ethnic group. This undue domination of the smaller groups shows why ethnicity is appealing than other forms of mobilization as evidenced in the relevance of Afenifere, the Ohaneze N'digbo, the area consultation forum, the southern leaders forum, and the Ijaw national congress etc. in national politics. Even at the sub national politics, this domination is a serious conflict generating tools as evidenced in violent conflicts in many communities of Nigeria.

In Nigeria, unfortunately, ethnic consciousness is easily manipulated by politicians particularly because other identities are either weak or altogether absent. This shows clearly why most people do not feel are part of the larger territorial unit created by the state powers, because the state and ruling class do not give the minority a sense of belonging irrespective of ethnic origins thereby whipping up ethnic sentiments. Some salient examples over the years in Nigeria include conflicts between Ife-Modakeke, Umuleri/Aguleri, tiv and Hukun, tiv and Idoma, Kataf versus Hause, Hausa/Fulani Varses the Sayawa. Similarly, the cases of Urhobo, Ijaw verse Itsekiri among numerous others are widely known all over Nigeria with each having its peculiarities.

Religious Domination Spectacle

Even though Nigeria is a secular country, violent and non-violent conflicts in recent years are on the increase, leading to ethnic religious clashes between Muslims and Christians. Some of these cases have been recorded in Kaduna, Plateau, Nassarawa, Taraba and Bauchi states among others. It is evident that some unpatriotic politicians through their selfish activities are exploiting the religious sentiments of the citizens for their personal political gains. The so-called claim by Boko-Haram Insurgents to impose

sharia law in northern Nigeria especially in the north eastern state of Yobe, Adamawa and Borno through its violent campaigns have further created suspicion between Muslims and Christians with negative consequences on the already fragile national unity and development. This is unbearable as the country is roughly divided between the dominant Muslim north and the dominant Christian south with each group claiming hegemony. The relevance of religion in the Nigerian politics is also underlined by the fact that most Nigeria's ethnic boundaries tend to coincide with religion, only with the exception of the Yoruba ethnic group.

However, with the recent development and revelation as the Book Haram insurgency unfolds, it is no longer secret that some disgruntled Nigerian political classes who have nothing to offer to the masses and the nation in general hide under the banners of their religions to whip up religious support to achieve their political goals. The recent revelations and discovery on the involvement of some controversial personalities in Boko Haram crisis have further confirmed the suspicion of the intent of the whole crisis. This is further confirmed in their utterances, actions and inactions as the group continue to unleash terror in the land and the kind of sentiments they enjoy from different religious groups in Nigeria. However, the resultant consequences of these conflicts have always been paid by the least responsible especially youths, women and children.

Party Systems and Power Struggle

In Nigeria, looking at its political and economic environment, the quest to capture and control the distribution of power and resources is majorly the basis for the existence of most political parties (Abbas, 2016, Tyoden, 2016). Therefore, each political party perceives any other party in the society as a potential competitor and therefore, as an opponent in the struggle for control of power thus employing different straggles and means leading to conflicts in the process. Banking on this, desperate politicians who wish to win elections (even if they are not qualified to win elections) mobilize unemployed youths to perpetrate various electoral crimes such as abductions and assassination of opponents and innocent victims, rigging of election results. Unfortunately, this kind of electoral politics foster the development of political party thuggery. Armed banditry and assassination have, of course, signaled serous daggers for the democratic and partisan polices in Nigerian over the years. As reported by Abbas (2016) this is more evident in the deaths of numerous civilians and several cases of high profile political assassinations with the major ones in the killings of chief Bola Ige, Dr. Harry Marshall, Dr. Chuba Okadigbo, chief Ogbonnaya Uche, Sa'adalu Rimi, Funsho Williams, Lambert Saturday Dogogo, Amimnasoari Dikibo, Ayo Daramola, Modu Fannami Gubio, Dina, and several others.

Corruption and Inequality

Corruption is referred to as misuse of office for personal gains. It could be seen as an

abuse of entrusted power for private gains. Bala Mohammed sees it as lack of discipline, a diversion from the norm, appearance of bias and intention to subvert any influence by a public official receiving something to influence his/her decision. Despite the fact that, corruption has been considered as morally degrading, socially unacceptable and politically destructive, it has unfortunately eaten deep into the Nigerian society and strata. It has led to inefficiency, injustice, inequality, intolerance, conflict, thereby undermining the establishment of good government, accountability and transparency by the political class who are supposed to be the arrow-heads in solving Nigeria's problems. Indeed, the failure by the government to address these problems has produced extremely rich and extremely poor classes in most Nigerian communities, thereby leading to series of conflicts generation with attendant consequences. Beyond this, it is summarized that the major causes of conflict in most Nigerian communities among others include:

- Self-identities rather than collective identities by the national citizen;
- Degeneration of individual and group moral values;
- Lack of respect for the human Rights of citizens by individual and the government;
- Prevalence of poverty, hunger, diseases, illiteracy, unemployment, deprivations and other unfulfilled needs; and
- Poor governance as manifested in corruption, mismanagement, leading to incompetence, inefficiency, impunities, failure to deliver basic services, and overall insecurity, etc.

Strategies Adopted by Various Governments to Resolve Conflict in Nigeria

1. Establishment of Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC)

The Niger Delta region in Nigeria is an area of dense mangrove rainforest in the southern part of Nigeria, it comprises nine of Nigeria's thirty-six states: Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo, and Rivers. The region's oil accounts for approximately 90 percent of the value of Nigeria's exports, but the Niger Delta remains one of Nigeria's least developed regions (Bekoe, 2005). The underdevelopment in the area has increased the level of poverty and political disenfranchisement. The youth of the area after many attempts of demonstrations have resorted to easy buying and selling of firearms, armed groups fought each other over the control of illegally acquired oil (called "bunkering") and engaged in violent acts against oil companies, such as kidnapping officials. To resolve this crisis, the government of President Olusegun Obasanjo in the Year 2000 established the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) to help end the conflict and spur socio-economic development. Still, during and after the run-up to the 2003 presidential election, violence between rival militia groups and against the oil corporations increased considerably.

In response to the unrest, also the fear of violence may again increase during the 2007 electoral period, the Obasanjo government has developed the Niger Delta Peace and Security Strategy—a complement to its Niger Delta Master Plan, which outlines a plan for economic and social development in the region. The Niger Delta Peace and Security Strategy has a comprehensive agenda that draws in the Niger Delta's major stakeholders to address the pressing issues that affect security and economic development in the region.

These stakeholders include federal, local, and state governments; oil and gas corporations; civil society (which include foreign donors); the NDDC; the NNPC; and local communities. In this regard, the peace and security strategy will target the corporate, media, governmental, international, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to address oil corporations' responsibility toward the Niger Delta. It will also focus on mechanisms to reduce oil theft; media practices in reporting violence; reconciliation between groups; illegal arms importation; disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of militia groups; human capital development and employment/urban youth policies; early warning systems; money laundering; and good governance.

2. Establishment of North-East Development Commission (NEDC)

For more than a decade now, the intangible commodity of 'peace' has so far eluded the North Eastern part of Nigeria. Hassan and Ahmed (2017) note that conflict in the area is largely due to the activities of Boko Haram insurgency particularly in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States that crippled the socio-economic development of the region in terms of farming, fishing, education, health, infrastructure among others. In a bid to salvage the situation, the Government in 2022 established the North East development Commission [NEDC] through a bill and its subsequent signing into law, which would serve as alleviation to the plight of the humanitarian needs of the people especially the internally displaced. The NEDC would help greatly in long term planning, reconstruction, resettlement, rehabilitation and reintegration.

3. Establishment of Grazing Routes

The farmers-headers crisis has caused damages to properties and lives of humans and animals. In an attempt to solve this problem, government initiated one of the first attempt to respond to the crisis by formulating The Northern Region Grazing Reserves Law of 1965. This law created corridors for the passage of migrating livestock and 415 grazing reserves throughout the country (Ella-Ejeh, 2017). The reserves were envisioned to section off large swathes of land to be exclusively used by herders to graze their livestock. While initially considered a legislative solution, population growth, urbanization, and migration encroached on these designated areas, reducing herders' access and usage of the reserves. In addition, herders were often unable to find sufficient pasture and water within the confines of the reserves due to climate changes and poor maintenance. Keeping livestock in one place increases the animals' vulnerability to disease and banditry, which incentivized herders to keep their herds moving outside the boundaries of the reserves.

In 2016, the National Assembly attempted to pass legislation to address conflicts between farmers and herders through the controversial National Grazing Reserve (Establishment) Bill 2016, which ultimately was not passed due to the fact that the Land Use Act of 1978 vests all powers related to the regulation of ownership, alienation, acquisition, administration, and management of Nigerian land with the state governors (Land Use Decree No.6, Cap 202). This brought another lingering conflict between farmers and herders in the state; In response to this bill, the Benue State Government enacted the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law, 2017 which other

states mostly dominated by farmers later joined.

4. Setting up of Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC)

The spate of insecurity, threats to lives and property in Nigeria and civil crisis have reached an alarming proportion despite the increasing viability of the Nigerian Police and the military in the management of internal conflicts; this however, made the Federal Government to promulgate the Act known as NSCDC Act No. 2 of 2003 and amended by Act 6 of June 4, 2007. This Act makes the Corps a full-fledged paramilitary outfit of the government under the then Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs, now Ministry of Interior, and by this enactment, the Corps now has some statutory responsibilities to perform. Some of the constitutional roles of NSCDC as contained in the establishing Act (as amended) are to:

- i. Assist in the maintenance of peace and order, and in the protection and rescuing of the civil population during periods of emergency;
- ii. Maintain 24-hour surveillance over infrastructures, site and projects for the federal, state and local governments;
- iii. Have power to arrest with or without a warrant, detain, investigate and institute legal proceedings by or in the name of the Attorney General of the Federal Republic of Nigeria against any person who is reasonably suspected to have committed an offence under the Act or is involved in any:
 - (a) Criminal activity.
 - (b) Chemical poison or oil spillage, nuclear waste and poisoning.
 - (c) Industry espionage or fraud
 - (d) Activity aimed at frustrating any government programme or policy.
 - (e) Riot, civil disorder, revolt, strike or religious unrest.
 - (f) Power transmission line, or oil pipelines, Nigerian Postal Service (NIPOST) cables, equipment, water board pipes or equipment vandalism.
- iv. Monitor, investigate and take every necessary step to forestall any planned act of terrorism among others.

Conflict Resolution Strategies and Nigeria's Sustainability

Conflict resolution strategies in Nigeria do not appear to have gone beyond the traditional or customary methods of resolving crisis. At best, the society uses some rudimentary modern conflict management or conflict resolution strategies. Generally, in Nigeria when aggrieved parties (individuals and communities) are trying to resolve conflicts/disputes and feel that negotiation would not resolve their problem there is the tendency for them to become agitated and aggrieved. When individuals or groups feel that their rights are being violated by powerful political forces, they will either resort to violence or engage in an all-or-nothing contest "to reclaim their entitlements when their customary strategies fail to yield positive result (Nnoli, 2012).

The prevailing approach to conflict resolution in Nigeria is rooted in the culture. For instance, conflict management strategies in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria where the communities and oil corporations operating in the area have engaged in an unending dispute/conflict, seem to reflect the conflict management strategies prevalent in the

society. The conflict management strategies espoused by the participants in conflicts (The communities, the oil corporations and the government) demonstrates how seriously they have identified the issues in disputes. They perceive the conflicts in the region as abuse, right violation and injustice against the natives.

The communities in the region (and individuals elsewhere in Nigeria) that feel they have been marginalized or their properties have been taken away from them, will be fighting by any means to reclaim their rights. The collapse of 'civic institutions', because of corruption, poor leadership and governance, have contributed to the delay in the settlement of conflicts or resort to traditional strategies. Under intense pressure, the communities through their representatives would take some rash decisions and adopt reactionary strategies and policies that are combative in nature (Onosode, 2003).

For instance, the aggrieved communities in the Niger Delta region have a list of demands from the government and oil corporations. They include: Political empowerment, they claim that their voices have been drowned; increased in monetary allocation from the oil revenue, or outright control of the oil resources to enable them develop the region. Some of the strategies adopted to resolve the conflicts in the Niger Delta region and other conflict situations such as labour disputes include "unorganized and organized verbal threats organisation, community meetings, sit-ins and vigils, and written petitions to the oil companies and the government" (Onosode, 2003). Others include media interviews, newspaper publications, delegations to oil companies and government, announcements, mass rallies, demonstrations, temporary occupation of oil installations and premises of oil corporations. Yet, other strategies comprise abduction of oil company workers, obstructions and disruptions of company operations, legal suits, sabotage, and hostilities between the contending communities and political action (Onosode, 2003). These strategies appear to have only succeeded in causing more violence, and thus, intensifying the "tension, insecurity and conflicts in the region. Alternative strategies such as conflict prevention, conflict control, conflict management, dialogue and other modern conflict resolution strategies with inbuilt participatory approach to conflict management are imperative. This is because they are more likely to produce desired outcome, which is peaceful co-existence and win-win solution. Although change, as we know it, is constant, it is not easy for people to change from the ingrained belief system. As a result, in communities where they are skeptical about change, the people will more often than not, praise the past and thus prefer to keep the status-quo.

Thus, during communal crises they could resort to the customary system of conflict resolution where the chiefs and elders in the community would step in to resolve conflicts between aggrieved individuals and groups in the communities. This approach empowers authorities in the community to take active part in resolving conflicts or problems. They think it is the way they have always done it as the conflicts resolution based on the customs and belief system was handed down to them by their forefathers. There are also occasions when parents, grandparents and uncles as well as aunties would step in to mediate basic disputes that produce lasting solutions. The first step in resolving a conflict/dispute is to recognize it and respond with effective strategies before it escalates. But for individuals (or the youth) to effectively participate in conflict resolution, it is essential that they should have adequate training in conflict mediation and crisis intervention. Nigerians are, thus, advised to "seek dialogue" when they are confronted with conflicts/disputes, instead of "confrontation" to

avoid conflicts from escalating into violence.

Problems militating against Peace and Conflict Resolution for Nigeria's Sustainability

1. Bad governance resulting from flagrant disobedience to the rule of law, due process, fairness and enforcement of the law as entrenched in the constitution.
2. Selective settlement/reward and selective punishment in line with those who are in the good Book or bad book of government.
3. Continual re-cycling of political offices amongst the political elites who grow pot bellies with corruption at the detriment of infrastructural development.
4. Failure to address drastically and decisively cases of injustice, Poverty, unemployment, and marginalization.
5. Failure to eliminate all forms of violence against women.

A typical illustration of some of these issues is the war between the National Assembly and the Executive over the exclusion of the Security and Exchange Commission's (SEC) budget from the 2013 National Budget as a result of the executive's failure to remove Mrs. Oteh as the Managing Director of the Commission. These actions of both arms of government affected the approval and signing of the 2013 budget. These were capable of causing serious constitutional crisis which could have led to demands for the impeachment of the President and serious insecurity and conflict as funds might not be available for development efforts.

Proliferation of small arms and light weapons which has manifested in increased violent crimes: kidnapping, terrorism, armed robbery, murder, communal violence, border crimes and general insecurity, lack of synergy amongst government security agencies coupled with inefficiency and corruption as evidenced in the unprofessional tackling of insecurity and conflict situations specially in extra-judicial killings, escape of political and high profile criminals and wanton destruction of criminal habitats. The involvement and proliferation of foreign mercenaries and criminals in home grown terrorism, violence and internally generated conflict resulting in increased level of destruction thereby complicating conflict management as we have witnessed during the Nigerian civil war, religious riot in the North and Boko Haram outrage.

The emergence of various ethnic militias in the name of vigilante group, most of which arose in defence of their ethnic and parochial political interest while they were established originally to complement government efforts in providing security for the citizen but eventually turning around to be security threat to the people. The example of Bakassi Boys, Odua Peoples' Congress, Egbesu Boys etc. are cases in point. The new trends in conflict and violent attack through the use of improvised explosive devices (IED) or bomb and the emergence of suicide bombers which are used to attack worship centers, military/police barracks, market places, prison, public leisure areas and security roads blocks as witnessed by the activities of Boko Haram. This trend is dangerously moving to motor parks as witnessed recently in the Sabongari motor park suicide bomb attack at Kano.

The sponsorship of terrorist groups by the political elites, under the guise of thugs or vigilante groups poses a great threat to conflict management in Nigeria. This is basically because after they have been used during elections to win political votes for their masters, the group now becomes a little tough to dismantle. Deradicalization of militia groups after

election is the key to conflict management in Nigeria. The meddling of foreign countries in our domestic affairs especially aiding, abetting and financing terrorist activities in our country is a grave danger to our national security. We have seen how arms imported into the country were traced to Iranian citizen in the country. We have also seen how the Iranian citizens are recruiting and training Nigerians in their country to be used to commit terrorist acts in Nigeria. The part Nigerians, Chadians, Cameroonians and Beninoires (countries sharing borders with Nigeria) play in the internal insecurity of Nigeria is very worrisome and pose serious security challenge to the country.

The use of offensive-lead stories and headlines on newspapers, which incite violence have been identified with Nigerian media. We note that through the use of such inciting and offensive headlines, the Nigerian media consciously or unconsciously contribute to the escalation of conflicts in the country. The passage of the freedom of information bill is an added leverage for Nigeria media to report uncensored news which may escalate violence and further stretch our conflict management.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to resolve conflicts in Nigeria:

- i. Government at all levels should create avenues for our children to go to school, so that they can think critically and analyze issues by themselves. This will liberate them from "Go" and "Come" commands, and also stop them from being used as political weapons.
- ii. Peace education should be incorporated into Nigeria education curriculum whereby students will be thought on how to co-exist with each other; how not to discriminate based on religious grounds, and how to see each other as one and indivisible entity. They should be taught that multiplicity of religious and ethnic groups in the country should be seen as advantageous rather than the opposite. This could be the thought of those who initiated the National Youth Service Corps in the country.
- iii. Pragmatic curriculum should be put in place to teach the children agricultural education, thereby disabusing their minds that they cannot survive unless they work in the civil service.
- iv. Nigerian political and religious elites should play good role models and learn to guard their lips and refrain from making unguarded and inflammatory statements that could spoil the minds of uninformed youths and adults in various ethnic setups. They should not make inciting statements that will affect the unity of the country and plunge it into crisis.
- v. The Nigerian government at all levels should provide meaningful jobs for the teeming population to engage them positively on daily basis.
- vi. Finally, peace education centers should be established in all local government headquarters to enhance peace education culture in the country.

Conclusion

The consolidation of our nascent democracy and even the sustenance of the Nigerian state have come to depend on the ability of the federal government to manage contending pressures which seem to pose great challenge to the government. In Nigeria, the response of government to conflict management has been mainly the use of police and military forces. In order to preserve our democracy and our entity as a country, the root causes of insecurity and conflict needs to be addressed instantly with a wider range of policy response. The failure of government to address basic issues relating to resource control, also give impetus to the current cycles of violent conflict and insecurity in the country to persist beyond our imagination.

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