

# **CONFLICT AND THE INCIDENCE OF DISPLACEMENT: NIGERIA IN PERSPECTIVE**

By

**ABDULLAHI, MOHAMMED YAMMA. Ph.D**

**Department of Political Science, Nasarawa State University, Keffi**

**mohyamma@gmail.com (08133089120, 08055520569)**

**&**

**DANJUMA, YAHUZA IZOM. Ph.D**

**Department of Academic Services, National Teachers' Institute, Kaduna**

**yahuzaimom@yahoo.com (08036697227, 08055263574)**

## **Abstract**

Nigeria as a nation is anchored on several ethnic groups, varying socio- economic structure and multiplicity of religion which today found itself in a series of conflicts. These persistent conflicts in the nation paved ways for scientific research and analysis. These conflicts have continued to threatened the corporate existence of this nation called Nigeria and subsequently called for a national discussions as to whether the country should be an indivisible nation. The methodology of this paper work is to give a systematic knowledge into the causes of conflicts and the incidence of displacement in Nigeria and proffer very crucial recommendations on how to avert conflict and achieve lasting peace, as peace remains the only instrument of togetherness.

## **Introduction**

Peace is a term, which means free from all forms of conflicts, mutual understanding, tolerance and harmonious co-existence. Peace can also be said to be the process of bringing lasting solution to conflict. In the global scene it is generally noted that conflicts is the major hindrance to development and key factor to displacement. Conflict has the ability to strongly stagnate developmental strata by spoiling the existing structures and putting on hold all development.

Retrospective, Kano riot of 1<sup>st</sup> May, 1953 marked the commencement of series of violence against non-Muslims inspired by bigotry. Since post independent of 1960, the country has gone through series of conflicts ranging from civil war that started in 1966 to 1970. So also the issue of international boundary conflict between Nigeria and Cameroun over Bakassi peninsula. It

was after the civil war that Nigeria started experiencing various degrees of conflicts culminating from ethnic and religious angles such as Jukun, Tiv, Hausa-Fulani, Zangon-Kataf, Bassa and Ebira. The nation has witnessed Jukun- Tiv conflicts severally and many lives were lost and people have to flee their homes to a safer place. Fulani herdsman conflicts in Plateau, Nasarawa, Kaduna, Zamfara, Niger, Enugu, Benue, Taraba, Ekiti states among other states in the country. In 1980s, the country experienced Maitatsine religious conflict in Kano where reasonable numbers of lives were equally lost, just like what was and still happening in the North East with Boko Haram where several people have been killed, many villages razed by fire amounting to thousands of people displaced all the country. Displacement areas are in Borno, Adamawa, Yobe, Abuja, Gombe and Bauchi states respectively. The displacement in Cross River State is that of the residents of English speaking area of the Republic of Cameroun who are agitating to pull out from Cameroun. The issue of Shiites conflict in December, 2015 that occurred in Zaria where Army and the religious groups were engaged in a gun battle that killed people and many others were injured. Recently is the issue of boundary crisis between Yobe and Gombe states which the National Boundary Commission had to intervene. Other intra conflicts are Aba Women Crisis which took place in November to December, 1929 and was initiated by the women in Calabar and Owerri provinces. (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org>).

Just like Nigeria had suffered and is still suffering from conflicts, other Africa countries have also suffered and are still suffering such as Sierra-Leone, Liberia, Angola, Rwanda, Burundi, Guinea Bissau, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Niger, Lesotho, Somalia, Sudan, Southern Sudan, Libya, Egypt, Gambia, Zimbabwe, Uganda and Chad. Several people died and many rendered homeless and some fled their countries to another for safety of lives. All these conflicts have in many ways retarded the development of those countries involved (Shedrack, 2016)

### **Theoretical Framework**

A study of this nature needs the assistance of a theory for better understanding of the subject matter. It is in this regards that Human Needs Theory will be the bedrock. Human Needs Theory is similar to that of Frustration- Aggression Theory propounded by John Dollard and his research associates. The main thought is that all humans have their basic needs which they seek to achieve and in an attempt to deny or frustrate the needs by another group or individuals may result to immediate or later conflict. These needs include physical, psychological, social and spiritual

needs. This is to say that providing access to one of the physical needs like food and denying others with food may resort to violence. Many scholars have tried to mention some of these needs which if denied will cause conflict.

Abraham Maslow in his motivation and personality noted that physiological needs, safety need, social; esteem and self actualization are the needs of human. Burton (1979) in his assertion also listed response, stimulation, security, recognition, distributive justice, meaning, need to appear rational and develop rationality, need for sense of control and the need for role defense, Azar (1994) also identified the basic needs like security, distinctive identity, social recognition of identity and effective participation in the processes that shape such identities.

Burton tries to establish a relationship with frustration which propel human into acts of aggression and in the other part of individual to meet his basic needs. He noted that individuals will not be taught to agree with his doings that will tarnish their identity.

Human needs are to live, secured, sense of belonging, understand, participate, creative and identity which are linked by all people they are not restrainable. This is to say that no matter the pressure of political or social system to frustrate or suppress these needs they remain important. Max (1991) believes that the tension between deprivation and potential are main issues addressed by human needs theory because when important needs are not sufficiently satisfied, economic and political problems will continue to be sustained. That the absence of economic growth, unnecessary high inflation, and poverty are clear indications of economic inequality, while political inequality results to fear, dislike of foreign people, crime and violence, forced migration, voluntary or forced exile and political marginalization which will subsequently lead to violent conflict.

However, needs theorists have noted various human needs, some which are known to be basic human needs, they have all accepted that the fact that frustration of all needs stampede the achievement of the potentials of groups or individuals , in the long run cause conflicts. The scholars have the consensus ideas that conflict situation should be resolved or even be averted. Therefore, needs should be met to satisfy them appropriately including the needs that were initially denied.

## **Concept of Peace**

Peace is a word that is explored when there are obvious disagreements between opposite parties. This is done in order to avert conflict that will subsequently lead to loss of life, property and displacement of people from their ancestral homes. According to Howard (1987), peace is a word that is primarily concerned with the creation and maintenance of a just order in the society. Miall (2000) in another angle sees peace as having six different meanings namely:

- 1) The absence of war (absence of direct violence);
- 2) Justice and development (absence of structural violence);
- 3) Respect and Tolerance between people;
- 4) Gaia (Harmony or balance in, and with the ecosystem-ecosphere);
- 5) Tranquility or inner peace (Spiritual peace) and
- 6) Wholeness and making whole (being complete).

Galtung (1990 and 1996) saw peace as negative and positive aspects. He explained that when peace is said to be negative, it means that the peace in existence include only the absence of direct violent, war, fear and conflict at individual, national, regional and international levels. While peace in the positive aspects, means the existence of direct violence, war, fear, conflict at individual, national, regional and international levels. In addition, the absence of unjust structures, unequal relationship, justice and inner peace at individual level are features of positive aspect. This one is termed as the real peace or complete peace because it involves both absence of war (direct violence) and the absence of unjust structures (indirect violence).

In the African continent, there are traditional ways of creating peace in order to avert conflict in our various cultural settings. Nigeria is not an exception. For example, in the Northern Nigeria, Arabic and Islamic word has peace- that is "salaam" a form of greeting. The word "salama" which is known and practised by northern Nigeria is a concept of peace, tranquility and harmony. This further translate that peace is the absence of conflict and imbibe the spirit of harmony. Any word contrary to harmony could be termed as conflict.

## **Concept of Conflict**

Many scholars have viewed conflict from different perceptions. However, all the scholars have agreed that violent conflict is marked with death/loss of lives, property and displacement of people from their original place.

Burton (1993) sees conflict as a term, is used usually for the range of arguments, tensions and violent conflicts that occur both within and between states. Nicholson (1992) noted that conflict is an existing state of disagreement or hostility between two or more people. In the definition of conflict given by Nicholson noted that there must be an opposition on a specific value which was not agreed by the parties resulting into conflict. Conflict is said to exist when two or more groups engage in a struggle over value and claims to status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate the rival (Jeong, 2000). In another dimension, conflict is a demonstration of cross-purposes of distinct or similar political groups which often end in political violence when they are contextualized in the Weberian sense.

Conflict in its real manifestation does not allow progress in whatever sphere of pursuit but rather marked with destruction of lives and property with a remarkable flee from the original place of birth. This situation often result to increasing unemployment, poverty, malnutrition and rapid spread of communicable diseases and the survivals are psychologically traumatized.

Major conflicts that have happened in Nigeria since independent in 1960 are: civil war between 1966 to 1970, Maitatsine Religious crisis in early part of 1980s, Zangon-Kataf religious crisis of 1992, Shagamu Ethnic crisis of 1992, Tiv-Jukun conflict, Fulani Herdsmen-Farmers Conflicts, Niger Delta militants, crisis of Independent People of Biafra led by kanu and the Boko Haram religious crisis that still on-going at the north east part of the country.

### **Causes of conflicts in Nigeria**

Various scholars have tried to fashion out the causes of conflicts in different dimensions. The first dimension is that they tried to anchor the causes of conflict into social, political and economic factors. In 2016, President Muhammadu Buhari identified poverty, injustice and lack of job opportunities as the major reasons for conflicts in the country. Other scholars approach it to be ethnic, religious, political and economic tensions (<https://connectnigeria.com>).

However, ethnic factor as the root cause of conflicts are amalgamation, tribalism, favoritism, corruption, resource control, inexperience leadership, marginalization of some ethnic in the country played a vital role in fueling conflicts in the country. Other factors are constitutional reform, religious intolerance introduction of Sharia criminal legal system, herdsmen attack, dispute over ownership of land, long military incursion in government and lack of vision by the leaders.

**Religious factor to conflict in Nigeria.** Lack of respect and tolerance of respective religious faction play a vital role in igniting conflicts in the country. The country have had series of religious conflicts such as Maitatsine's conflict in Kano in the 1980s, Zangon-Kataf conflict and recently in Southern Kaduna, among others during which many lives were lost and so also many people were displaced from their original settlements.

**Political Tension,** this factor manifested clearly during the 1983 general election with violent conflicts which happened almost all over the country between NPN and NPP, NPN and UPN which resulted into loss of lives. Of recent, Rivers State is another example of political conflict that claimed many lives between PDP and APC. Boko Haram is also of political factor that have bedeviled the North East region that have rendered thousands of people homeless and displaced them all over the country. Shiites group versus Nigerian Army was another form of conflict that also claimed many souls and some incapacitated.

**Economic factor** could come into play as a result of unemployment, inflation and poverty. This is a situation where people cannot afford their basic needs to survive. To care for their health, pay school fees of children and provide necessary shelter. Crises have occurred severally because of hike in petroleum products in Nigeria.

### **Types of conflict**

For the purpose of understanding, there are six types of conflict which are likely to occur:

- 1) Intra-personal conflict;
- 2) Inter-personal conflict;
- 3) Family conflict;
- 4) Intra-state conflict;
- 5) Inter-state conflict and
- 6) Global conflict

Even though the worrisome conflicts to the government of any nation and likewise Nigeria is the intra-state conflict, inter-state conflict and the global conflict.

- 1) Intra-personal conflict. This is situation in which a state of violent inward collapse within individual controlled by the state of mind. This conflict is determined by the circumstances such individual found himself. Ross (1993) noted that the circumstances are anger, depression, confusion and frustration could lead to aggression, erratic

behavior, addiction and extreme cases, suicide. Lamb (2008) noted that this type of conflict has been described as “man against self”.

- 2) Inter- personal conflict. This type of conflict is described as “man against man”. This type could manifest as blow or fight between man and man. This is common type of conflict in our society in which a scarce commodity is been competed between one another.
- 3) Family conflict. This often occurs in a family setting. Sociologists describe this as intra-unit conflict. This conflict can take dimension like from brother –brother, sister-sister, brother- sister, husband –wife, father-son, mother-son or daughter and may even go to extended family.
- 4) Intra-state conflict. This type of conflict that takes place within the country. For example Boko Haram, Niger Delta conflict, Fulani herdsmen and Farmers conflict and religious and ethnic conflicts.
- 5) Inter-state conflict. This type of conflict involves two or more countries in the conflict. Nigeria and Cameroun is a classical example over the issue of Bakassi peninsular and Nigeria and Chad Republic.
- 6) Global conflict. This type of conflict has to do with the entire world. Classical examples are the first and second world wars (Folarin, 1997).

### **The Concept of Displacement**

Displacement is a term used to describe the movement of people from the usual site. This normally occurs as results of conflict or as a result of an outbreak of diseases in a particular location where people run for their lives in fear of being killed or being attacked with the disease in question.

Nigerian government in recent times has witnessed displacement of people as a result of the conflict of Boko Haram in the North East part of the country. Currently there are displaced people within Borno, Yobe, Adamawa states and Federal Capital Territory. The country presently has displaced people from the Republic of Cameroun settling in Cross River State.

What these people need is adequate care that will make them feel at home in order to avoid the manifestation of psychological trauma because issue of displacement is becoming common in the Nigerian state.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the study noted that conflict in Nigeria is fast spreading and the earlier is better for government of Nigeria to take pro-active steps in curtailing the menace. That people who are displaced are confronted with psychological trauma and that those displaced should be treated with sense of humility and concern. The factor responsible for various forms of conflicted were adequately noted. Also in the study is the types of conflicts that could happened either to as an individual, group or the nation at large. Finally, recommendations are proffered to achieve peaceful co-existence among the citizenry in order to attain development.

## **Solutions/Recommendations**

A topic of this magnitude should not be short of tangible recommendations that will provide a pulling weight for the authorities concern to ensure lasting solution to conflicts. Therefore, having critically dwelled into the study, the followings are key issues to be noted:

- 1) Through management of enough and accurate intelligent gathering. In the present global insecurity and conflicts, no amount of security report should be taken with levity. This is because one cannot tell when such conflict will occur. Therefore, Nigerian government needs to take pro-active approach in attending to the lingering issues of an anticipated conflict. This conflict may come through religious or ethnic angles. The Fulani herdsmen issues with farmers that has being happening across the country, the government must engage the security operatives to act fast and get accurate information gathering and such information should be treated with the highest degree of confidentiality. Civil society of proven integrity should equally be co-opted in the search of information. The government needs to avert any situation that will cause violent conflict in the Nigerian society. The case of Shiites and Nigerian Army, if there were enough security gathering such conflict would have been curtailed. In addition to above submissions, government should provide employment opportunities, alleviate poverty by provision of entrepreneurial skills opportunities, provision of good and affordable health care facilities, good roads, provision of agricultural facilities and provision of adequate and efficient electricity supply.
- 2) Dialogue. This remains one of the best methods of ensuring peace in any society. It is also an instrument of peace making. Dialogue can be used after intelligent gathering and

during the conflict proper. Take a case study of Niger Delta militant as an example; it was through series of dialogue that the lasting peace was achieved. First was the amnesty granted to the entire people that were involved in militia activities. Government set aside a monthly steepens and sponsored them in batches to entrepreneurial skills that will keep them busy when they return.

It was through dialogue that the Chibok girls that were in Boko Haram captivity, that the government secured the released of one hundred and twenty one (121).

It was through this same process of dialogue that some Fulani herdsmen voluntarily submitted their weapons to mark the end of conflict between them and the farmers.

It is therefore, good enough for the government of Nigeria to set up a permanent Peace Mediation Commission at the federal level and further mandate the states to set up same commission in their various states.

- 3) Military intervention. The military men are vested with the constitutional authority to protect the territorial integrity of a nation. However, if the conflict is above the internal security men, the leadership that nation solicit the intervention of military personnel. The case of Maitatsine religious crisis that took place in Kano in the early part of 1980s, when the internal security men could not contain the crisis, military personnel were dragged into bringing an end to the crisis. The same thing now applied to military presence in Benue, Taraba, Niger, and Plateau among others.

Another clear example is the issue of ongoing Boko Haram conflict, until it was above the power of internal security operatives that Nigerian Military were asked to rescue the situation. It is with the military intervention that the country has achieved considerable peace in the North East area.

- 4) Adequate care of the displaced people. It is not always in the interest of people to leave their ancestral homes to other alien destinations but when it has become obvious, the government should provide absolute care to the affected persons. This is because they are psychologically traumatized and they need a sense of belonging. All the social amenities should be made available in their respective camps.

## REFERENCES

- Anifowose, R. (1982) *Violence and Politics in Nigeria. The Tiv, Yoruba and Niger Delta Experience* (Lagos: Sam Iroanusi Publications).
- Azar, E. 'Protracted International Conflicts: Ten Propositions'. Quoted in Rabie, M. (1994) *Conflict Resolution and Ethnicity*. London: Praeger.
- Barash, D.P. and Webel, C.P. (2002) *Peace and Conflict Studies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication.
- Burton, J.W (1993) 'World Society and Human Needs' in Margot Light and A.J.R, Groom edited *International Relations: A Handbook of Current theory* (London), Printer.
- Bur (2001) *The Dynamics of Conflict Resolution and National Integration: The Nigeria Experience*, Makurdi.
- Folarin, S. (1997) "Christianity and Islam in the University of Ibadan", B.A Long Essay Project, Ibadan.
- Galtung, J. (1990) *Cultural Violence*, *Journal of Peace Research*.
- Galtung, J. (1996) *Peace by Peaceful Means*, (London) Sase.
- <https://connectnigeria.com>
- <https://en.m.wikipedia.org>
- Ibeanu, o. (2003) "Communal Conflict and Population Displacement in Nigeria: An Exploratory Analysis" In Nnoli O., (ed) *communal conflict and Population Displacement*, PACREP, Enugu.
- Jeong, H. (2000) *Peace and Conflict Studies: An Introduction* (Alershot: Ashgate).
- Lamb, N. (2008) *The Art and Craft of Storetelling*, (F+W Media, Inc).
- Johnson. O, Akinpelu, F. Adegoke, F. and Ezeani, S. (2010) *Causes of Conflict in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria as Expressed by the Youth in Delta State*.
- Miall, H. (2000) "What do Peace Studies Contribute Distinctively to the Study of Peace?" The Richardson Institute, Lancaster University, Paper presented at Bisa, Conference, Bradford.
- Nicholson, M. (1992) *Rationality and the Analysis of International Conflict*, (Cambridge University Press).
- Oby, E. (2001) *Counseling for Conflict Resolution*, Makurdi.
- Onimode, B. (2000) *Africa in the World of 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Ibadan, Ibadan University Press.

Ross, E.I. (1993) Write Now (Barnes and Noble Publishing).

Shedrack, G.B. (2016) Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies in West Africa, Spectrum Books Limited, Ibadan.

Suberu, R.R. (1996) Ethnic Minority Conflicts and Governance in Nigeria, Spectrum, Ibadan

Victor, U. (2017) 13 Causes of Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria, Information guide in Nigeria.