PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS OF ETHNO RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF PLATEAU STATE JOS

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INTRODUCTION

The deteriorating level of insecurity in Nigeria is a great concern, Being the populated country in Africa (Ucha, 2010). The greatest challenge facing Nigerian democracy is how to protect lives and property since the returned of democracy in 1999. This is evidenced by the spate of kidnapping, assassinations, armed banditry, cow rustling, herdsmen’s conflict, religious and ethnic crises, added with the inability of security apparatus to curb criminal behaviors (Ojo, 2010). The issue got compounded as a result of lack of employment for the timing Nigerian youth which is easy to recruit them into criminal activities (Nigerian tribune, 2002).

Before the emergence of 1999 democracy in Nigeria, plateau state, jos, is one of the most peaceful state in Nigeria. According to ubang king (2002) Therefore “the state of fear or anxiety streaming from concrete or alleged lack of protection is defined as Insecurity.”. It refers to lack of or inadequate freedom from danger. This definition reflects physical insecurity which is the most visible form of insecurity such as economic security and social security. The issue of ethno-religious conflict arises from the distrust among various ethnic groups and major religion in the state, especially among the Hausa Fulani and the indigenous people of the state.

The problem of indigenous/ settler syndrome was the major problem in jos which tier the people apart especially among the Hausas and Birom over the supremacy of jos north local government, simultaneously, religion became the issue and the issue was amplified which resulted in bringing other people to line up behind two original parties to the conflict(Gomes, 2011).

Nigeria is called the giant of Africa, and is a key player in Africa, it’s one of the world’s most ethnically diverse nations, it composes multietnic nationalities between 250 and 450(idahosa1997, Aghemelo and osumah2009). Some of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria are larger than many independent states in Africa. In the early 1960s there are estimated 3000 ethnic groups in the world and about 445 are in Nigeria (Alkali 1997). Based on numerical strength Hausa are found in northern region, Yoruba’s in the western region, while igbos are found around eastern part of the country, While Birom, Gwari, Tiv, Ibibio, constitute the minority(Wikipedia, 2011). Those that have political power at the national level are the ethnic group with the numerical strength (Imobighe, 2003).
Muslim are the majority in the northern with more than 50 percent of the population, while Christianity is the dominant in the southern region amounting to 35 percent of the total population, while the remaining balance are animist (Dibie 2000). The problem of ethno-religious conflict in Nigeria have reach an alarming rate and causing displacement of people into refuge crises, loss of investment, and causing inter communal or ethno-religious conflict threatening public order and internal security. Nigeria is now perpetually at war with each other (Imobighe 2003). Several efforts have been put enlace such as peaceful dialogue among religious groups, and setting up different panels in order to manage the conflict, couple with huge deployment of security personnel in plateau state, jos to manage the conflict but with little or no positive results. Therefore, this paper would look into the problem of ethno- religious conflict in jos with aim of proffering solutions to the menace in Nigeria.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY.

1. To examine whether democracy have contributed to the issue of managing the ethnic and religious conflict in jos.
2. To determine youth unemployment also pose a serious problem to the management of ethno- religious conflict in jos.
3. To examine the inability of the army, police and other security outfits in bringing those that engineer the violent to justice.

METHODOLOGY

The research design is content analysis as opposed to survey design, hence the secondary source of documented data was gathered for the purpose of achieving the research objectives.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ethnicity

Ethnicity have different approaches, but the primordial approach is the oldest and commonly used by Anthropologist and sociologist, it argue that its inherited since from childhood, driving from the kinship structure of the society. Its therefore more or less static or permanent (Geertz, 1963, Isaacs, 1975, Stack, 1986).

Therefore, interaction between differ members of ethnic group is called ethnicity (Nnoli, 1978). It arises as a result of sharing common consciousness characterized by an ethnic group in relation to out-group and in-group, therefore discriminations on identity would result into conflict as a result of scarce resources condition for ethnicity.

Religion

Religion could be viewed in different perspective, including spiritual and material. In the later its perceived as a religious establishment and at the same time religious and social. In the case of spiritual perspective, religion is
conceived with social and individual behavior which make believers to planned their everyday lives. In view of that religion is seeing as supernatural realities and scared (Alanamu, 2004). Therefore an average Nigerian is religious as noted by some sources (Oluuduro, 2010, Ekundayo, 2013). Religion performs a very important role in the society and has been a strong force in uniting people and at the same time have contributed in different conflict in Nigeria. Nigeria have witnessed several ethnic and religious conflict between 1980 and 1994 (warner, 2014).

**Conflict**

Conflict could be defined as an interaction and struggle to claim scarce resources, status, and power, belief, desires and preference. The purpose of the conflict among parties would extend from simple attempt to gain resources, secure advantage to injured or eliminate opponent (HBino, 1988).

Conflict arises as a result of incompatibility as manifested in interaction process, disagreement or dissonance among or between entities (ieindividual, groups, organization (M A Rahim conflict in organization 2001). As mentioned by (Wolf 2006), conflict means “a situation whereby two or more people pursue incompatible, yet from their individual perspective entirely just goals”. He went on by saying that conflict results as a result of struggle by leaders and their subordinates to have power and material control due to their selfish interest, there are entrepreneur who gain during conflict and therefore prefer conflict to negotiations (Wolf, 2006). For instance if the area is endowed with natural resources like diamond, timber, gold, oil or if there are cultural attachments to the territory. In another way (Otite, 1999) believes that most conflict in Nigeria premise on land space and resources competition, creation and location of local government council headquarters, disputed jurisdiction of traditional rulers. (Wolf 2006) Therefore violence is unlawful use of force to make decision against the will of the people.

**PROBLEMS**

There are so many reasons as to the causes of ethno-religious crises in Jos, Plateau State, one of the reasons is entrepreneurs who gain from these crises are continuously mobilizing negative ethnicity, sentiments and instigating one religion against one.s partisan politics is another reason why the crises continue to persist. Furthermore, the able-bodied youth who are aggrieved with the system, frustrated and with hope of not gaining employment are ever available to be recruited to engage in religious conflict and political violence in the sense that it gives them an opportunity to break into private and public property and take away whatever they can lay their hand on (Imobighe, 2003). The continue occurrence of violent conflict is been attributed on the security for their laxity to protect lives and property and also to bring the perpetrators to justice (Abah, 2009).

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MODERN METHOD OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

There are so many ways in managing conflict in the society, the most commonly used include political, diplomatic and judicial. The political method includes peacemaking/keeping, peacebuilding, confidence building, negotiations, mediation, reconciliation inquiry, peacemaking is the act of an act of settling disputes or conflict through mediation, arbitration and reconciliation. Peacemaking entails prevention of hostilities, diffusing tension, opening channel of dialogue between warring function and proposing ways to ending hostilities, peacemaking are individuals, organizations or groups of states.

Peace building has been defined as “the deliberate and systematic build-up of interaction dense and durable, initiating a state in which the resumption of conflict would be impossible”. Peace building essentially arises after cessation of hostilities, it includes assisting refugees and displaced persons with drugs, clothing, shelter. Confidence building logically flows after peace building. It denotes an attempt to reduce or eliminate misconception about specific military threat and concerns by communicating adequately verifiable evidence of acceptable to the effect that those concern is groundless.

Negotiations is a process in which explicit proposals are put forward essentially for the purpose of receiving an agreement on realization of a common interest where conflict of interest are present. Mediation involves interaction of the third party or group of parties with the aim of brokering compromise. Essentially, conflict resolution is intended to provide good framework and process that would observe the implementation of the initial agreement and guide those in the dispute toward achieving a comprehensive solution.

TRADITIONAL METHOD OF CONFLICT MANagements

There are different types of traditional methods of ensuring peaceful resolution of disputes, among such methods include elder’s forum, oat taking and ostracism. Elders forum mechanism involves traditional chiefs and leaders in conflict managements, especially at the community level. This approach dates back to the pre-colonial era in African societies. In African culture age is accorded a lot of respect and in some areas, it is synonymous with wisdom. As a result, elders are consulted in finding functional traditional conflict management strategy, it involves the barring of guilt person or person who committed heinous crime or perpetrated conflict from social gathering or the community at largess
REFERENCES


