

GOOD GOVERNANCE AS A PANACEA FOR PEACE AMONGST THE ETHNIC GROUPS OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

Nigeria has been embroiled in series of conflicts dating back to the colonial period, which have resulted in instability of the polity and insecurity of lives and property of its citizens. In the post-independence era, crisis in the polity plunged the country into a Civil War from 1967-1970 and in recent times increased agitations from various sections of the country threaten the corporate existence of the country. As a result of these unending conflicts, there have been calls by stakeholders for peaceful solutions. The aim of this paper is to suggest solutions to the problem of conflict, instability and insecurity in Nigeria. Drawing data from theoretical and empirical evidence, this paper found that bad governance is at the root of various conflicts in the country and therefore recommends good governance as a peace and conflict resolution measure.

Keywords: Conflict, conflict analysis, insecurity, good governance, peace and conflict resolution

1. Introduction

Nigeria like other countries of the world is riddled with conflicts. From the pre-independence era to date the country has been embroiled in one form of conflict or the other. These conflicts which are political, ethnic and religious in nature became more evident after the colonization of Nigeria and the subsequent division of the country along regional lines. Fidelis, (2017) for instance, looks at the peopling of the Niger-Benue Confluence before the coming of the British. He posits that, the Niger-Benue area housed several ethnic groups, belonging to the same Kwa group of language family under the rulership of 'Attah'. They all lived in harmony before the British occupation of the area. The state of affairs after the advent of Europeans has taken its toll on the

country in terms of loss of lives and destruction of property. The divisions left behind by colonialism, has continued to have implications for the country, not only internally but for her relations with other countries as a result of the external dimensions of some of the conflicts. For instance, at the height of Niger Delta crisis in the south-south region of the country which witnessed the abduction of foreign nationals, countries like France, Italy and Germany recalled their nationals and moved their businesses to safer and stable economies.

While the causes of some of the conflicts in the country have been attributed to cultural, ethnic, religious and economic factors, the role of governance is often neglected. Kaufman et al (1999), for instance defines governance as the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. They categorized the different aspects of governance to include: 1. the process by which government is selected, monitored and replaced; 2. the capacity of the government to effectively formulate sound policies; 3. the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that governs the economic and social interactions among them. This suggests that a deficit in any of these may lead to bad governance and the resultant conflict.

Conflict may also be as a result of structural factors that have become built into the policies and fabric of a society. A good example is bad governance which is increasingly being regarded as one of the root causes of all evil within the Nigerian society (UN, n.d). The role of bad governance in driving conflict cannot be underestimated; bad governance can lead to loss of credibility for any regime leading to manifest instability. It is common knowledge that conflicts arise when people are not satisfied or happy with the way they are being governed. It could also be the result of the inability of a leader to address the grievances of certain groups within the country but instead is seen as a leader of only his/her ethnic group. The result is that the other groups may not have a sense of belonging but seek to secede as the case of the Ogoni in the Niger Delta region and Igbos in the Eastern region of Nigeria (Ajodo-Adebanjoko, 2017). According to Adibe (2017), Biafra agitation gained momentum after President Buhari gave an address at the United States Institute for Peace (USIP) in 2015 and created the impression that he would discriminate against the Igbos for not voting for him in the 2015 general elections in the country.

Conflict may also arise where the government is oppressive, undemocratic and does not have respect for the rule of law. Even in democracies, if the government is not seen as being responsible to the people by way of addressing their challenges, dissatisfaction may set in and this may result into violent protests and demonstrations as witnessed often in the country. On the other hand, good governance accompanied with public acceptance of across cultural, ethnic, and economic lines can discourage conflict as was the case of Nelson Mandela in South Africa. Good governance, therefore, remains the best way to prevent conflicts before they erupt or address them where they have erupted. It is in this regard that this paper aims to provide solutions to the problem of conflict in Nigeria.

2. Conceptualising Good Governance

Governance means the exercise of political power to manage the affairs of a nation. According to the World Bank, governance deals with the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development (Egugbo,2016).The United Nations (n.d) defines it as the process of decision-making and implementation. Ndehfru (2007 cited in Coker & George-Genyi, 2014) views governance as a fundamental process through which the lives and dreams of the citizenry are collectively pursued by deliberate and systematic strategies and policies, for the realization of their maximum potentials. He argued further that this process is a combination of responsible leadership and enlightened public participation. In other words, governance should not be the exclusive preserve of the leaders only but must include the citizenry who shapes it or participates through public opinion. The main elements of governance, according to Adamolekun (2002) are 'rule of law, freedom of expression and association, electoral legitimacy, accountability and transparency, and development-oriented leadership'.

Good governance according to Boeninger (1992 cited in Beetseh&Akpoo, 2014) has to do with the capacities of a political system to exercise authority, win legitimacy, adjudicate conflicts as well as carry out effective programme implementation, while Kukah (1998) views it as governance that is responsible, accountable and transparent in policy formulation and implementation. The World Bank (1989) conceives of good governance as the exercise of political power in the management of a nation's

affairs. As a policy framework, good governance imposes demand on policy makers in their exercise of power and encompasses an effective state, that is, a state that has enabling political environment for effective distribution of resources to improve the living condition of the ordinary people and the use of political authority and the management of the resources of society to better the lot of the people (Beetseh, & Akpoo, 2014). Eight characteristics of good governance, according to the United Nations (n.d) are: being participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive. Above all, it must be governance that follows the rule of law.

3. Historical Background of Crises in Nigeria

There have been series of crises in Nigeria for decades and dating back to the colonial period. It is believed that uprisings in the country are the result of the unwise decision of the colonialists to lump together people of different backgrounds and cultures who had little or no contact with one another. With this lumping of strange 'bedfellows', there has been no love lost among the various groups. The question has been asked in recent times as to who signed the Amalgamation Treaty of 1914 which brought the north and south together, considering that Nigerian nationalists such as Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Sir Ahmadu Bello and Tafawa Balewa to mention a few were either too young at the time the treaty was signed or were born after. The conspiracy on the part of the imperialists no doubt has fuelled suspicion and crises in the country so that today the north and south remain divided. This division has continued to fuel agitations in different parts of the country.

Crises in the country have occurred over different issues spanning politics, ethnicity, religion and ethno-religious issues. As early as 1929, Aba women in a popular move referred to as the Aba Women Riot revolted against the colonial government over the introduction of a system of taxation which was foreign to the womenfolk resulting in the death of about seven women (Ajodo-Adebanjoko, 2016a). It marked the first time women protested against the imperialist policies in the country and would go down as a watershed in Nigerian's political history. The Aba protest was followed by series of agitations during the period which were quelled by the colonialists. As Nigeria prepared for independence, sectional agitations became prominent

and the first of such was the Kano Riot of 1953 which resulted from an attack on southern delegates led by Chief S.L Akintola on a mission to Kano to enlighten the north on the need for self-government. The conflict which lasted for four days led to the death of thirty-six people and two hundred while forty-one were wounded (Ojie & Ewruhjakpor 2009). This attack marked the beginning of conflict between the north and south as it soured the relationship between the two which continues to date.

From the 1959 general elections that ushered in independence in 1960, Nigeria began to experience exacerbated electoral violence varying from physical, structural and psychological violence (Nwolise, 2007). While the country was still grappling with the task of cohesion, the first political conflict erupted in the form of the Census Crisis of 1962/63 over alleged attempt to rig the exercise in favour of the Eastern region which sought to control the House of Representatives in Lagos and to break Northern dominance. In November and February 1963 and 1964 respectively, a new census was conducted with the result showing the North as having the highest figures. This was however rejected by many southern students, lecturers and politicians who violently protested. Another major crisis which threatened the corporate existence and unity of the country was the Action Group crisis of 1962 between Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the leader of the AG and Chief S.L Akintola his deputy party leader which was one of the remote causes of the military coup of 15th January, 1966 and the Civil War of 1967-1970. The crisis led to the declaration of a state of emergency in the western region by the Federal Government.

Regional politics also heightened crises in the early years of Nigeria's independence. The first general elections conducted by Nigeria after independence, in 1964, were characterized by violence such as maiming, kidnapping, arson and murder. Election violence reached its peak in the Western Regional elections 1965-1966 where the tense electoral battle for the control of the government of the Western Region led to the loss of about a thousand lives (Malu & Ogbu, 2006). The Federal Election and Western Nigerian crises in 1964 and 1965 respectively contributed in no small measure in threatening the stability of the nation. These crises, like the census crises, are believed to be one of the remote causes of the military coups and the intervention of the military in Nigerian politics beginning from 1966-1979

and 1983-1998. From the first military coup on 15th January, 1966, there have been a total of nine coups with some of them being bloody. These series of interventions in the political affairs of the country no doubt led to the dominance of the military in Nigerian politics, and delay in the evolution of genuine democracy. In addition, frequent military coups have led to political instability in the country as a result of suspension of the constitution and discontinuity in the programmes and policies of the previous government. (Nigerian Observer, 2015).

4. Contemporary Conflicts and State of Insecurity from 1992 to 2019

In recent times in the country, there have been agitations by various groups and these have adversely affected the unity of the country. Some of the agitations include crisis in the Niger Delta which has metamorphosed into militancy, the June 12 election annulment crisis, ethnic and ethno-religious conflicts, Boko Haram insurgency, herdsman and farmers crisis, the quest for a republic of Biafra and armed banditry and kidnapping. Although these agitations have some semblance of a recent movement, there is no doubt that they are *new wine in old bottles* as they stem from past agitations.

4.1. Niger Delta Crisis

The Niger Delta region comprises nine littoral states of the country's thirty-six states namely: Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers. These states are oil producing States of the South-South (Ajodo-Adebanjoko, 2017). Although conflict in the region has been present for many years, it began to surge appreciably in the late 1990s mainly over resource control (Bekoe, 2005). Most of the conflicts that have occurred during the period under study have been as a result of agitation against environmental degradation by Multinational Oil Companies (MNOCs) and perceived neglect by the Federal Government of Nigeria.

Crude oil was discovered in commercial quantity in Oloibiri in 1956 by the Royal Dutch Shell Company and with time other MNOCs such as Chevron (Gulf oil), Texaco, Mobil, Agip, British Petroleum (BP) and later Africa Petroleum entered the market as competitors for the exploration and production of oil (Amusan, 2009). With the oil boom of the 1970s, crude has remained the lifeblood of the Nigerian economy but despite its natural

endowments and centrality to Nigeria's economy, oil has been more of a curse than a blessing to the Niger Delta. Though Nigeria has earned over \$500 billion since 1970 from Niger Delta oil and still counting, the region still shows little sign of economic development (Ikenna, 2017). In what is commonly referred to as a paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty, the Niger Delta is a reflection of the 'resource curse' or 'Dutch Disease', (Mittelman, 2017; Auty, 1993; Ross, 1999; UNDP, 2006). The Niger Delta is characterized by gross underdevelopment which manifests in the living standard of the people. There is also massive poverty with people living in abject squalor and unable to afford the basic things of life such as food, clothing, good shelter, hospitals, basic infrastructure, unsafe drinking water and the means to send their children to school.

There is also the problem of unemployment particularly of the youth. In addition to these, communities in the region suffer from environmental degradation such as air and water pollution which are the result of oil exploration activities by Multinational oil companies in the area. It was estimated that since the advent of explorations, over 60,000 oil spills have occurred in the region with about 7,000 spills between 1970-2000 and 418 oil spill cases in the first six months of 2008 (Eyinla&Ukpo, 2006; Afiotan & Ojaborotu, 2009). These unwholesome conditions in the Niger Delta have led to series of uprisings.

Beginning with the Ogoni Crisis championed by the late playwright and environmental activist Kenule Saro-Wiwa in 1992, the Ogoni people under the instrumentality of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) demanded for compensation for years of neglect and environmental degradation by oil companies operating in the region. This protest eventually led to the hanging of Saro-Wiwa and eight of his kinsmen by Abacha government in 1995. Although Initial protests against MNOCs in the region were non-violent in nature, however after the killing of Ken Saro-Wiwa and his kinsmen, a violent form of protest which took the form of militancy was introduced to the struggle in the 2000s with the emergence of various militant groups which threw the region into what has been referred to as a 'Hobbesian Niger Delta' (Ibeanu, 2006). The groups which emerged during this period include Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Niger Delta Liberation Front (NDLF), Niger Delta People's

Volunteer Force (NDPVF) and Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV) which unleashed terror on the region. The new wave of protests witnessed hostage taking of foreign oil workers, disruption and bombing of oil installations in different parts of the Niger Delta leading to a loss in daily oil output as well as a reduction in the country's external reserves. Militancy in the region has also led to the death of many Nigerian nationals as well as foreign oil workers in addition to destruction of lives and property. Militants and criminal gangs have been blamed for hundreds of kidnappings involving the payment of ransom, thereby, turning what began as a political weapon into a veritable economic activity and a new occupation for unemployed youths in the Niger Delta (Ehwarieme, 2009).

In 2009, the Federal Government under President Yar' Adua proposed an amnesty programme aimed reducing conflict in the region and this led to over 34,000 militants sheathing their sword in exchange for state pardon, rehabilitation and reintegration into the society (Ajodo-Adebanjoko, 2016b). However, there has been renewed militancy as some ex-combatants took up their arms once again in 2016 with renewed bombing of oil installations. Critics have referred to this as the touting of "resource control" or "fiscal federalism," which results from the failure of the 13% derivation principle and amnesty to produce development in the region (Akintunde & Hile, 2016). The spate of militancy in the region in recent times has become worrisome with the government, corporate organizations and well-meaning individuals seeking for solutions to end it.

4.2. The June 12 Election Annulment Crisis

Following the annulment of the June 12 Presidential election of 1993 which was alleged to have been won by Chief M.K.O Abiola of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), protests erupted in different parts of the country. The June 12 election made history as the first election in the country to be adjudged free and fair by national and international observers was however annulled. IBB's action sparked off a wave of violent protests across the country particularly in the west, where it was thought that the annulment was unjustified and was done to continue the political dominance of the north, a reminder of the politics of the 1950s. In a bid to douse tension and deny allegation of wanting to extend his tenure, Babangida hurriedly resigned and

cobbled an Interim National Government (ING) on 26th August 1993 with Chief Ernest Shonekan as the head. The ING lasted for barely three months before it was overthrown in a palace coup by General Sani Abacha on 17th November, 1993. There is no doubt that the action of Babangida helped in fuelling the bitter rivalry between the northern and the southern parts of Nigeria and affected the country's image globally. As Omale (n.d) observed, "Nigeria's image was battered internationally as a result of the annulment of the election and the public called for sanctions on the country and the world hearkened to these calls and Nigeria was sanctioned accordingly".

4.3. Boko Haram Insurgency

Boko Haram as a sect was founded by Mohammed Yusuf in 2002. Boko Haram which translated means '*western education is forbidden*' shows the opposition of the sect to anything and everything about western civilization which it feels is corrupting. Insurgency by the group is an attempt to establish a Sharia government in Nigeria. It has become a dreaded group instilling fear in the minds of many and making the country insecure. Some of the strategies employed by the group include: arson, mass killing by gunfire, suicide-bombing, and use of improvised explosives, kidnapping, media propaganda, jail break and forced enlistment of young boys and girls as combatants, among others. Major bombings in the country such as the June 2011 Police Headquarters and August 2011 UN House bombings, and recent bombings in Nyanya and Wuse II in Abuja and January 2012 Kano bombing that left over one thousand people dead, Jos 2014 bombing in addition to sacking of entire villages, attacks on individuals and churches were carried out by the group with over 2000 people said to have been killed in the various attacks. In 2014, over two hundred school girls were abducted from a secondary school in Chibok, Borno State and this led to calls for their unconditional release culminating in the 'Bring Back our Girls' campaign. Political analysts are of the view that the inability of the Jonathan-led government to rescue the girls may have contributed to its inability to stage a comeback in the recently concluded elections in 2015 and with a new government headed by a retired General, Muhammadu Buhari. While some of the Chibok abductees were rescued in 2017 by the Buhari administration, a total of 113 are either dead or still in captivity. Apart from the Chibok girls, 110 schoolgirls were abducted from a school in Dapchi, Yobe State in 2017 and while four were said to have

died, 104 were released and one held in captivity because of her faith.

Initially an intra-state conflict, an international dimension was introduced to the Boko Haram insurgency with the pledge of allegiance by the sect to the Islamic State in West Africa (ISWAP) in 2016, making the sect an international terrorist group. Boko Haram's threat to neighbouring countries has led to the Armed Forces of Niger, Chad and Cameroun fighting against them. Nigeria on her part has made remarkable progress in her fight to rid the country of these dissidents and continues to rescue hundreds of women and children held in captivity by the sect. Despite this, the challenges of insecurity, humanitarian crises and capital flight have been enormous and although the Nigerian government has made some gains in reclaiming some towns from the insurgents, the fight against insurgency rages on. In April 2019 alone, Boko Haram was said to have killed over 60 people in Borno State while several towns in Bama are deserted (John, 2019). In many cases, killings carried out by the sect are unreported while for some it may take several hours before these are reported.

4.4. Ethnic Conflicts

Nigeria is a heterogeneous society with more than 250 ethnic groups and over 120 languages (PBS Newshour, 2007). The major groups are Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba and minority groups being the Tiv, Igala, Efik, Idoma, Jukun, Ijaw, Urhobo and Itsekiri and a host of others. Ethnic cleavages and consciousness continue to cause conflict in the country among the major and minority groups as ethnicity is often used as a veneer by the elites to mask their intra-elite and intra-class struggles over power and resources (Adibe, 2017). Ethnic conflicts in the country take the form of clashes between communities or different groups within a community. The root of ethnic cleavages was laid in 1946 when the country was divided into three regions namely Eastern, Western and Northern regions, an arrangement which favoured the three major ethnic groups and neglected the minority groups. In spite of a restructuring of this arrangement and its replacement with the state structure leading to creation of more states and local governments, smaller ethnic groups referred to as 'ethnic minorities' continue to complain of domination and marginalization by the major groups. Beside this, creation of states and local governments has led to the problem of border clashes which

has resulted in series of conflicts between the various groups. All across the country, there's an ever-lengthening thread of ethnic crisis as seen from the Ife/Modakeke, Ogoni/Andoni, Ijaw/Itsekiri, Ijaw/Ilaje, Tiv/Jukun, Aguleri/Umuneri ethnic conflicts (in the Eastern part of the country) to mention but a few. Many of these conflicts like other conflicts have led to destruction of lives and property and continue to polarize the country.

4.5. Ethno-Religious Conflict

This is a combination of ethnic and religious crises. With Nigeria's over 190 million population divided along ethnic and religious lines, it is not surprising that ethno-religious conflicts are rampant in the country (Worldometers, 2017). Ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria date back to the colonial era. Riots against Igbos in 1953 and in the 1960s in the north were due to the combined factors of ethnicity and religion. In addition, riots against Igbos in the north in 1966 were also said to have erupted as a result of radio reports of mistreatment of Muslims in the south. In the 1980s, serious outbreaks between Christians and Muslims occurred in Kafanchan in southern Kaduna State in a border area between the two religions. Ethno-religious conflicts have also occurred in Jos Plateau, Nasarawa and Benue states among others. In Plateau state there has been between the Hausa-Fulani and the Berom people. This conflict has left many dead while property worth millions has been destroyed. Jos, the city of attraction for tourists has become a shadow of itself. In Nasarawa state, there is conflict between the Eggon-Koro/Migili in Obi Local Government while the Alagos and Hausa are locked in internecine conflict with the TivCommunity in Awe Local Government over land matters. Also, there is conflict in Nasarawa Local Government between the indigenous Afo and the Hausa/Fulani over chieftaincy dispute (Ajodo-Adebanjoko&Ogwuoke, 2014) while in Benue state there is conflict between Fulani herdsmen and the local people. All these conflicts have had negative impacts on the inhabitants.

4.6. Renewed Calls for the State of Biafra

The quest for Biafra or the Republic of Biafra was the secessionist bid in eastern Nigeria that culminated in a Civil War or Biafran War from 30 May 1967 to January 1970. This war was the result of deep-seated animosity which was the product of remote and immediate factors such as regional politics,

fear of marginalization, mass killing of Igbos in the north, politicization of the army, failure to implement the Aburi agreement to institute a confederal government and personality clash between Lieutenant-Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu and General Yakubu Gowon among others.

In recent times, there have been renewed agitations for the actualization of the State of Biafra and since August 2015, protests have erupted in cities across Nigeria's south-east. Though peaceful, the protesters have been routinely attacked by the Nigerian police and army, with scores of people reportedly killed. Many others have been injured and/or arrested (The Economist, 2015). Among these agitating groups is the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) which accuses the state of marginalising the Igbo people. MASSOB has a 25-stage plan to achieve its goal peacefully. However the Nigerian government has accused it of violence, arrested and detained its leader, Ralph Uwazuruike in 2005 on treason charges. In 2009, MASSOB launched an unrecognized "Biafran International Passport" in response to persistent demands by some Biafran sympathizers in the diaspora (Vanguard.com, 2009).

Another pro-Biafra group, Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), led by a United Kingdom-based Nigerian of Igbo descent, Nnamdi Kanu, reinvigorated the quest for Biafran realisation in 2012. While the Biafran agitation seems to be the only separatist threat in the country, there are other separatist agitations in the country which are waiting to implode. For instance, among the Yoruba, there is a call for Oduduwa Republic while in the north; there are intermittent demands for Arewa Republic (Adibe, 2017). These various agitations show that Nigeria is sitting on a keg of gunpowder and waiting to explode if nothing is done.

4.7. Herdsmen and Farmers Conflict

Conflict between herdsmen and farmers in different parts of the country particularly the Middle Belt States of Benue, Kaduna, Plateau and Taraba and in the northwest in Zamfara continues to have negative implications for the country's national security. The conflict which has been on the increase since the advent of democratic governance in 1999 has been raging between crop farmers and pastoralists or cattle herders who are Fulani. A number of factors such as population explosion leading to migrations, climate change, blockade

of traditional grazing routes, cattle rustling and rural banditry as well as politicization of the conflict by the political elite are some of the factors responsible for the conflict which has led to over 6,000 deaths and the worst humanitarian crisis in Nigeria's history (Ajodo-Adebanjoko, 2019). Despite efforts by the Federal and State governments and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), the conflict rages on with no end in sight. The most worrisome thing about the conflict is that the political class has hijacked it for their selfish interest and introduced the issue of religion which has further people along religious lines. For instance, the conflict is often regarded as a clash between the two major religions in Nigeria, Christianity and Islam and this often diverts attention from the main causes. According to the International Crisis Group (2018) rising conflict between herders and farmers in Nigeria is already six times deadlier in 2018 than Boko Haram's insurgency.

4.8. Armed Banditry and Kidnapping

According to Odinkalu (2018) "Bandits" have emerged as the new bogey man for insecurity in Nigeria, joining along (and still growing list) that includes Boko Haram, cultists, herdsmen,

kidnappers and militants. In different parts of the North-West, from Birnin-Gwari in Kaduna to Tsafe in Zamfara, bandits are offered as the trope for an intolerable carnage." Although post independence banditry in Nigeria can be traced to "shortly before the civil war, when government broke down in some parts of the Western Region and there was a blurred line between political violence, crime, and organised insurgency, the recent spate of armed banditry can be traced to 2015 when cattle rustling was at its height. Armed banditry is prominent in Zamfara, Katsina and Kaduna States. In Zamfara State alone, between 30 to 50 people are killed on a daily basis (BBC News, 2019). Zamfara is said to have become more violent than the states of the northeast where Boko Haram operates considering that over 169 people have died in the state between March and April, 2019 compared to 28 in Borno and 14 in Adamawa states (Ahmed cited in BBC News, 2019). To halt armed banditry in the state, in 2019 the Federal Government suspended mining activities in the state (AFP, 2019).

Kidnapping for ransom on the other hand is credited to Niger Delta militants and became widespread after amnesty was declared in the region.

According to Okoli (2019), Nigeria has the worst case of kidnap-for-ransom. Kidnapping has been adopted by perpetrators as any other lucrative business in Nigeria except that it is illegal and not backed up by law. While the practice is common in different parts of the country particularly in Edo, Kogi, Lagos among others, in recent times, Kaduna state has gained a notoriety for being the den of kidnappers. The Abuja-Kaduna highway has been the base of operation by kidnappers leading to many abandoning the road for rail transport. In 2019 alone, more than 2000 people comprising politicians, government officials, influential people and traditional rulers have been kidnapped. While some of the victims were rescued after paying huge amount of money as ransom, those who are unable to pay end up being tortured, raped and/or killed as the case may be (Abdulkabir, 2017).

5. Good Governance as a Panacea for Peace and Conflict Resolution

Mechanism in Nigeria

Conflict resolution refers to the process of solving a problem. According to Miller (2001), it is a variety of approaches aimed at terminating conflicts. Conflict resolution is a comprehensive term which implies that the deep-rooted sources of conflict are addressed and transformed. Methods of conflict resolution vary according to the nature of conflict, the context of conflict, history of conflict and the culture within which conflict takes place (Onu, 2006). Conflict resolution methods could be peaceful, without the use of force or could be coercive, involving the use of force. Most states usually resort to force when the peaceful methods fail and vice versa. For effective conflict resolution, conflict analysis is critical because it is the foundation for conflict resolution; analysis, indeed, is the first step to deal with a conflict effectively and aims at gaining a clearer and deeper understanding of the conflict. As defined by USIP (n.d), conflict analysis is the systematic study of the profile, causes, actors, and dynamics of conflict. An analysis of a conflict helps conflict resolution experts to determine the strategies necessary for its resolution. In the case of Nigeria, looking at the various conflicts that have erupted in the country, resolving them would require an analysis of their root cause(s) and the best strategies for addressing them.

Various conflict resolution mechanisms have been put in place to forestall or resolve conflicts in Nigeria but these have not ushered in the

needed peace. For instance, after the Nigeria Civil War Gowon's government was saddled with the task of reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction as a way of ushering in lasting peace but this aim was not achieved as conflict remains intractable in the country. Also, the Federal government set up an amnesty programme in 2009 when the use of force could not achieve the goal of making militants in the Niger Delta to sheath their swords. While amnesty lasted, some measure of peace reigned but in 2016 militants took up arms once again and renewed bombing of oil installations. In the north east where insurgency is ongoing, lasting peace has not been attained while in the east, government is still clueless as to what to do to resolve the ongoing Biafran agitation.

From empirical analysis, it has been found that bad governance is a major cause of conflicts in the country. Most of the conflicts are the result of neglect of the people by the leaders, corruption which has deprived the country the commonwealth required for development and wellbeing of the people, divide and rule policy by politicians, injustice, and tribalism which manifest in opportunities that are given to particular groups because of their affinity to the government of the day. This is why scholars are unanimous in their views that good governance remains the solution to the problem of conflict and insecurity in the country (Egugbo, 2016; Edeh & Ugwueze, 2014; Beetseh, & Akpoo, 2014; Coker & George-Genyi, 2014; OhiomuandDibie, 2014; Danjuma, 2012).

Good governance has been found to be an effective tool for conflict prevention, resolution or management. It is in this regard that George-Genyi (2013) views it as a key instrument that sustains peaceful, secured and overall development of society. Indeed, good governance involves the delivery of basic amenities to the Nigerian people which, if effectively done, prevents, mitigate or resolve conflicts. Poverty, unemployment and corruption are some of the major factors which give rise to conflicts in the country. Current unemployment and poverty rate in the country is alarming and the allure of quick money by nefarious means such as kidnapping has increased. Massive hunger in the country as a result of the bad economy has led some Nigerians to now eat from the dustbin, steal pots of soup or sell their children in exchange for food (Dachen, 2017; Nigerian Current, 2016; Utebor, 2016). There is no doubt that if such people are promised money in return for

criminal activities such as participation in militant activities against the government, they will readily give in. In fact, it is a known fact that many of the Boko Haram members in the northeast are idle and unemployed youths who are disgruntled and see membership of the sect as a forum to fight against the government.

For good governance to be effective in conflict resolution and management it must also involve proper socialisation of the citizenry (George-Genyi, 2013). Many Nigerians are ignorant of government programmes and as a result even when the government has recorded some achievements, people are still discontented and critical. There is therefore need for people to be educated on the programmes of the government for the masses from time to time. Documentary on government's achievements and uncompleted projects should also be done.

Good governance also ensures that there is effectiveness and efficiency which produce results that meet the needs of society while making the best use of resources at their disposal. This requires tightening all loopholes to prevent resources wastage through corruption. Closely tied to this is accountability of the private sector and civils ociety organizations to the public and to their institutional stakeholders (United Nations, n.d).For this to be effective, there must be transparency and the rule of law. Rule of law means that there are fair legal frameworks that are enforced impartially and requires full protection of human rights, particularly those of minorities. For an impartial enforcement of laws and independent judiciary is required as well as an impartial and incorruptible police force.

Another element of good governance as a conflict resolution measure is equity and inclusiveness. A society's wellbeing according to United Nations (n.d) depends on ensuring that all its members feel that they have a stake in it and do not feel excluded from the mainstream of society. This requires that all groups, but particularly the most vulnerable, have opportunities to improve or maintain their wellbeing. In line with this, Nigeria's leaders must run an inclusive government and not marginalise regions or groups that did not vote them in. In the same way, irrespective of their faith, they must treat people of every religion equally. A situation where government is accused of favouring a particular segment of the society or religion would not augur well for the country.

Good governance also involves government securing the lives and property of citizens. Apart from the challenges of internal security, the country has the problem of a porous border which encourages the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and their availability to insurgents thereby leading to increased rebellion. Since 2006, Nigeria has ranked 15th on the failed state index indicating her growing susceptibility to collapse (African Union, n.d). With ill-equipped and inadequately trained security personnel, some analysts are of the view that internal rebellion could lead to the nation's collapse (Ajere, 2012). That the country cannot secure the lives of her citizens is seen from the proliferation of private security outfits across the country (Mijah, 2009; Mijah, 2006).

6. Conclusion

From the above discussion, one can deduce that the conflicts which have engulfed the country since independence can fall have been due largely to bad governance. Notably, this is a problem with the process of leadership recruitment; there is a problem with the capacity of the Nigerian government to effectively formulate sound policies that will address the Niger Delta crises. And finally the lack of respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that governs the economic and social interactions among them which have been demonstrated by religious intolerances. If all the different aspects above are in place, it will lead to good governance and a stable polity.

Basically, conflicts have become synonymous with the Nigerian State and most groups within the country see it as the only means for ventilating their grievances. While agitations are not negative in themselves, they become worrisome when they are violent and divisive as most agitations in Nigeria are. If agitations are not addressed they could spiral into full blown armed conflicts which would have negative consequences for the parties involved and this is why resolution of grievances becomes necessary. The various agitations in Nigeria can be prevented, resolved or managed depending on their nature, the timeliness and the manner of approach of those involved in the resolution or management efforts. In view of this, we recommend the following as away to resolving conflicts in Nigeria.

1. There is need for government to be proactive. Many of the conflicts that

have occurred in the country could have been forestalled if the government had been proactive.

2. Empirical evidence has also shown that the use of force is often resorted to in quelling uprisings in Nigeria. Government's efforts to manage conflicts have always been confrontational and coercive, involving the use of the police and military which often exacerbates such crises. In the 'heydays' of the Niger Delta crises, the use of the JTF never reduced or ended militancy in the region despite the onslaught of the soldiers until a truce was declared in the form of amnesty.

3. Parties to a conflict should be conciliatory at the end of a conflict. Following the end of the Civil War in 1970, the then Military Head of State declared that there was neither a winner nor a loser with the dictum 'No victor, no vanquished.' This statement no doubt helped in diffusing tension.

4. Finally, leaders and the citizenry must see Nigeria as the only country they have and can be proud of and therefore shun any act that may breach the security of the country. As President Goodluck Jonathan explained on why he conceded defeat in the Presidential election of 28 March, 2015, he wanted a Nigeria where his children and grandchildren would live and be proud of.

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