STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING ETHNO-RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS IN A DEMOCRATIC SYTEM: NIGERIA IN FOCUS.

BY

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria as a nation remained the theatre of armed communal conflicts which result in widespread destruction, thousands of deaths, and enormous property losses for several years. These violent conflicts are labeled ethno-religious because what we normally call religious conflicts here often has ethnic, political and economic undertones, while the so called ethnic conflict are complicated by religious, political considerations. The perennial occurrence of the problem does suggest the inadequacies of both the prevailing intellectual analysis and prognosis of the problem as well as the remedies proposed and tried so far. This require an adequate understanding of its root cause, the course it takes, the intervening variables, and the potential outcome of the complex series of events which go into its making. This paper is an attempt at providing such an explanation concerning the devastating consequences of the long period conflicts and crises of and also discusses various strategies that should be adopted by all relevant agencies and groups for a lasting peace in the country.

Keywords: ethno-religious, conflicts, socio- economic, political, government, crises, management.

1. Introduction

The events of ethno-religious conflict that have pervaded the country as reported above are also stark reminders that the conflict hot-beds around the country are many and may still be waiting to explode.

This shows that, the ethno-religious conflicts are evils that are always around us and which as claimed by Jega (2002:36) tend to always stretch the bounds of unity to a potentially snapping point. The most logical question that arises from the above is what are the causes of these ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria?

In this project, ethno-religious conflict will be distinguished from other types of social conflict in that it involves ethnic groups, which are of different religions. In discussing the causes of ethno religious conflict in Nigeria therefore, it is important to mention at this point that both religious and ethnic factors are present in the majority of social conflicts the Nigerian people have witnessed. Religion and ethnicity as they present themselves in Nigeria have therefore become critical factors in ethno-religious conflict. At different levels and times people experience religious or ethnic discrimination, people complain of past and present religious and ethnic discrimination, people demand for religious or ethnic rights in their state, and more importantly, the state uses religion or ethnicity in political discourse or action. What the above means is that ethno-religious conflict is a multi-causal variable. For effective discussion of the causes of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria therefore, there is a need to put this into consideration.

A major cause of what we now see as ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria has to do with the accusations and allegations of neglect, oppression, domination, exploitation, victimization, discrimination, marginalization, nepotism and bigotry. In every nation (Nigeria inclusive), there is no complete agreement on how wealth, power and status are to be shared among individuals and groups.

There is also no agreement on how to effect necessary changes and reforms. This is because, different groups and individuals have diverse interests in which case, some groups will have their aims met, while others will not. What this means is that conflict (ethno religious ones inclusive) usually occur when deprived groups and individuals attempt to increase their share of power and wealth or to modify the dominant values, norms, beliefs or ideology. Thus, in Nigeria and going by the various examples of ethno-religious conflicts cited earlier in this paper, there seems to be a divisive interplay of politics, ethnics and religions, which has consequently led to the rising nationalism and militancy of various ethnic and religious movements. It is interesting to note that the overall

consequence of this is the escalation of various ethno-religious conflicts that are witnessed all over the country today which are meant to correct any perceived form of marginalization, oppression or domination.

It is important to note here too that the failure of the Nigerian leaders to establish good governments, forge national integration and promote what can be called real economic progress, through deliberate and articulated policies, has led to mass poverty and unemployment. This has resulted into communal, ethnic, religious and class conflicts that have now characterized the Nigerian nation. Poverty and unemployment have therefore served as nursery bed for many ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria because the country now has a reservoir of poor people who warmongers as mercenary fighters. What this means theoretically is that poverty and unemployment increase the number of people who are prepared to kill or be killed for a given course at token benefit. This explains why all ethno-religious crises that ever occurred in Nigeria have a large turnout of people (including the under-aged) as fighters.

A very important cause of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria is the breakdown of such vehicles of social control that characterized the traditional African societies such as the family, education, law, religion and political system that cared for the well-being of all citizens. Indeed, the malfunctioning of all these important institutions has actually increased ethnic and communal conflicts in Nigeria. For instance, the inability of many homes to make the ends meet with the family income tends to increase immorality, broken fatherless/motherless homes, divorces and drunkenness, leading again to a large reserve of youths who could be employed for execution of ethno-religious conflicts.

The long military intervention in politics tends to encourage and legitimize the use of force and violence as instruments of social change and attainment of set goals and demands. From this, it is customary to see that as a hangover from the military era, the use of coercion and force in settling conflicts has become a tradition in the Nigerian body politics. Strongly related to this is the uncontrolled arms supply, which has quickened the outbreak of conflicts, and encourage belligerents to go on fighting rather than find peaceful settlement to disputes.

The ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria also have some historical antecedent. This is because many governmental actions during the colonial rule and after independence encouraged, to a large extent, the sowing of the seeds of ethno-religious conflicts that are found to be rampant in the Nigerian nation today. As noticed by Ikejiani Clark (2005) over the years, many events in Nigeria have led to the politicization of mistrust, intolerance, violence and acrimonious relations between the mainly Moslem north and the Christian south of Nigeria. To this extent, Ikejinai-Clark contended that there has been an unfortunate insertion of ethno-religious discrimination and incompatibility in the structures of the Nigerian State since the colonial period. In 1931 for instance, the colonial administration under the leadership of Governor Donald Cameroun did not encourage intermingling of religions. An advice given by the governor is indicative of this. The Governor advised the Christian missions to thread softly in Moslem areas so as to maintain the stability of indirect rule. The political events of the January 15, 1966 coup and the July 1966 counter-coup further entrenched ethno-religious configuration in Nigeria. This is because the killings and counter-killing that follow the coups which took ethnic and religious colorations as the Muslim dominated tribes in the north were set against the Christian dominated tribes of the southern region.

The ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria also have some connection, with a number of politico-religious developments at the international scene. According to Albert (2005), religions crises in Nigeria could be traced to the developments in the Middle East. In this regard, he pointed out that religious issues became particularly phenomenal since the late 1980s with the death of the cold war and replacement of communism (a global social and political ideology) with Islamism. With this new Islamic ideology, the Muslims worldwide, and particularly in the North-East and Middle East, were determined to resent the 'socio-economic impoverishment and psychological alienation that stem from failed modernization and excessive westernization in the post-cold war world (Ayubi, 1991, Dekmejian 1995; Faksh, 1997). The contemporary increase in the incidences of terrorism around the world has also been linked to this new ideology of Islamism (Cordesman, 2003; Booth and Dunne, .2002).

It should be understood that the problem created by the new Muslim ideology was not limited to the Middle East as the increasing feelings of relative deprivation and alienation around the world makes developing states with large Muslim populations susceptible to militant forms of Islamism in the Middle East. This explains why the increased rate of religious violence in Northern Nigeria (a Muslim dominated region) since 1980s can be understood from this perspective. The influence of foreign factor on ethno religious conflicts in Nigeria becomes obvious in 1983 when the then Nigerian Minister for International Affairs attempted to link the development crises in Nigeria to the global political economy. It was the opinion of the Federal Government of Nigeria that many of the ethno religious crises had foreign backing and as such ordered that aliens without valid permit must leave the country within a fortnight. The main reason given for this expulsion order was that the presence of the aliens at the time threatened the economic and political security of Nigeria (Albert, 2005). Particularly referred to, as the justification for the government action, was the 1980 Maitatsine riots led by Marwa, a Camerounian by nationality. In 1985 too, Major-General Tunde Idiagbon pointed to the foreign connection in the ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria. In this regard, he alerted Nigerians about the impending crisis and the foreign supports some religious fundamentalists were receiving (Ilori, 1987:25).

The years between 1952 and 1966 brought change in the political culture of the country, transforming the three regions into three political entities. Thus, the struggle for independence was reduced to the quest for ethnic dominance. At this time, ethnic and sub-ethnic loyalties threatened the survival of both East and West, while the North was divided religiously between Christianity and Islam. It was a period of politicized ethnicity and competition for resources, which worsened the relationships between ethnic groups. There was a high degree of corruption, nepotism and tribalism. The national interest was put aside while politicians used public money to build and maintain patronage networks. Since independence, the situation in Nigeria has been fraught with ethnic politics

whereby the elite from different ethnic groups schemed to attract as many federal resources to their regions as possible, neglecting issues that could have united the country. The anarchy, competition, and insecurity led to the demise of the first republic. Military intervention culminated in the gruesome ethnic war from 1967 to 1970, when the mistreated Igbos of eastern Nigeria, called Biafrans, threatened to secede from the federation. The Igbos' grievances were because they were denied of their basic human needs of equality, citizenship, autonomy and freedom, (Burton, 1992). Wherever such basic needs are denied, conflict often follows as the aggrieved groups use violent means to fight for their human rights.

Ethnocentrism in the country and evidenced corruption of the electoral and political process led in 1966 to a number of revengeful military coups in the country. The first military coup was in January when a collection of young leftists under Major Emmanuel Ifeajuna and Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu led a coup, it was partially successful; the coup brought about the death of some notable figures such as the former Prime Minister, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Premier Ahmadu Bello of the Northern Region and Premier Ladoke Akintola of the Western Region.

Later, another counter coup by another successful plot, which were primarily supported by the Northern military officers and those Northerners who in favor with the NPC. This time, it was planned and carried out by the Northern officers and gave Lt. Colonel Yakubu Gowon to become head of state. This series of coups led to an increase in ethnic tension and violence. The Northern coup, which was mostly motivated by ethnic and religious reasons, the result was a bloodbath of both military officers and civilians, especially those of Igbo extraction. The violence against the Igbo increased their desire for a demand of their own autonomy and protection from the military's wrath. By May 1967, the Eastern Region had declared itself an independent state calling themselves "Republic of Biafra" with Lt. Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumekwu Ojukwu as the leader, (Murray, 2007).

Partly because of their tendency to spill over from their initial theatres into other localities, states, or even regions of the federation, ethno-religious clashes have proved to be the most violent instances of inter-group crisis in Nigeria. They have occurred mainly in the Middle-Belt and cultural borderline states of the Muslim north, where Muslim Hausa-Fulani groups have been pitted against non-Muslim ethnic groups in a "dangerous convergence of religious and ethnic fears and animosities…[in which it] is often difficult to differentiate between religious and ethnic conflicts as the dividing line between the two is very thin" (International IDEA 2000: 296). The major examples of violent ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria have included the Kafanchan-Kaduna crises in 1987 and 1999, Zangon-Kataf riots of 1992, Tafawa Balewa clashes in 1991, 1995 and 2000, the Kaduna Sharia riots of 2000, and the Jos riots of 2001. Although no exact figures of casualties are available, the Kaduna riots of 2000 and the Jos riots of 2001 each claimed several hundreds of lives and generated violent ripple effects beyond Kaduna and Jos, respectively.

The foreign connection in ethno-religious crises in Nigeria is also evident in the involvement of non-Nigerians in a number of urban insurgencies. These foreigners have been found to actively participate in the ethnic conflicts around the country and particularly in the Northern part between the Hausa-Fulani Muslim hosts and their Christian dominated southern Nigeria 'strangers' who reside in their midst. A scuffle that started between an Igbo trader and a Fulani security guard at the Sabongari Kano market developed into city-wide ethno-religious conflicts in which many non-Nigerians from the neighbouring African 'states were arrested fighting on the side of the Hausa-Fulani Muslims (Kano state, 1995:1617).

In addition to the above, it is important to note that foreign preachers often contribute to the insurgence of ethno-religious crises in Nigeria. For instance, in 1991, the religious crisis in Kano was traced to the plan of Evangelist Richard Bonnke, to conduct a crusade tagged 'Kano for Jesus' in Kano'.

Simply because the government had earlier denied access to Kano a Muslim cleric from South Africa to preach in the city, serious crises loomed up between the Muslim and Christian populations.

Schmidt and Kochan (1972) define conflict by saying that a perceived opportunity exists for interfering with the other's goal attainment. Finally, Hocker and Wilmot (1985, p. 23) define conflict (from a communication perspective) as "an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce rewards, and interference from the other party in achieving their goals."

Obviously, there are many definitions of conflict. Deetz and Stevenson (1986) also list negative assumptions about conflict that are prevalent. They include:

1) Conflict is an unnatural departure from human sociability.

2) Conflict can and should be avoided in most situations.

3) Conflict is largely a result of a communication failure -- conflicts arise mostly from misunderstandings.

However, many researchers have changed their views concerning conflict. Conflict is now seen as having the prospective for positive growth. Both Hocker and Wilmot (1985) and Deetz and Stevenson (1986) have postulated about the positive reflections concerning conflict in order to counter the earlier, negative impressions. Hocker and Wilmot (1985, p. 32) say conflict can have highly desirable, productive functions in a relationship. They point to Coser (1967), who noted that elastic systems aren't likely to be threatened by conflict. Also, they consider the various works which say that conflict is present in both happy and unhappy marriages, but that the former are characterized by their management of conflict (Braiker and Kelley 1979; Altman and Taylor 1973; Navran 1967; Locke 1951; Birchler, Weiss, and Vincent 1975) .

2. Conceptual Clarification of Terms

Ethnicity:

Ethnicity according to Nnoli (1978:5) refers to as a social phenomenon associated with interactions among members of different ethnic groups. He further held that ethnic groups are social formations distinguished by communal

character (i.e. language and culture) of their boundaries. Also, Otite (1990) defined ethnicity as categories of people characterized by cultural criteria of symbols including language, value systems and normative behavior, and whose

members are anchored in a particular part of the new state territory. These definitions are adopted for the purpose of this study.

Crisis: Crisis is a state of tension, fear and insecurity within a state, group or organization.

Conflict: Conflict denotes clash, contention, confrontation, battle, struggle, controversy or quarrel. Conflict may either be violent or non-violent. Conflict often manifests in violent form. Violence denotes employment of illegal methods of physical coercion for personal or group ends.

Ethno-Religious conflict is the clash, contention, confrontation, battle, rivalry, controversy or quarrel among ethnic religious groups. groups. Ethno-religious conflict stem from an irreconcilable posture with regards to symbolic values to the groups concerned. These symbolic values, which cannot be compromised, are religion and language.

Conflict Management is concerned with the processes for controlling and regulating a conflict to ensure that it doesnot escalate. It is also concerned with techniques involved in the avoidance, prevention, containment and resolution.

Mediation refers to a process through which a third party provides procedural assistance to help individuals or groups in conflict to resolve their differences.

Facilitation is an assisted process which is similar to mediation in its objectives; however, facilitated processes typically do not adhere to a tightly defined procedure. In this type of arrangement, the facilitator works with parties to increase the effectiveness of their communication and problem-solving abilities. The facilitator may be either a third party or a person within one of the groups who is able to provide procedural assistance and to refrain from entering into the substance of the discussion.

Arbitration is a form of dispute resolution where a third party makes the decision on the outcome of dispute. Typically, the parties appoint the arbitrator to render this decision. The arbitrator's decision is either binding or non-binding on the parties depending on the arrangement made prior to entering the arbitration process. Non-binding arbitration is frequently used to assist parties who are deadlocked on a certain issue. While there is no obligation for parties to accept the outcome, the weight of the arbitrator's decision may provide the impetus for parties to reconsider their settlement options (Ibid.).

Conflict resolution is a broad term which refers to the many ways disputes are resolved. Conflict resolution is a progression from an order based on coercion to one based on voluntarism. It creates a relationship not characterized by hierarchy but one marked by equality, participation, respect, mutual enrichment and growth.

3. Understanding Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Northern Nigeria

In the first decades of independence, which were marked by frequent violent conflict between the regions for control of state resources, the north saw the military as a route to power and influence. But following the disastrous rule of northern General Sani Abacha (1993-1998), the return to democracy in 1999 was viewed as a chance for the north to seek political and moral renewal. This lead to the reintroduction of Sharia in twelve states between 1999 and 2002, although only two have applied it seriously. Sharia caused controversy over its compatibility with international human rights standards and the constitution and regarding the position of Christians in those states. It also exacerbated recurrent conflicts between Muslims and Christians. But it was supported by many Muslims, and some Christians, who had lost faith in secular law enforcement authorities, and it also stimulated much open and democratic debate over the rule of law. Tensions over the issue have declined in recent years.

Debates among Muslims in the region tend to divide those who respect the established religious and secular authorities and their two-century-old Sufi heritage from those who take a "reformist" view. The latter cover a very wide range of opinion, from Salafist-type anti-Sufism to Iranian-inspired Shiite movements, and combine anger at the establishment's corruption with a promise of a more individualistic religious experience. Typically, some end up being co-opted by both religious and secular authorities, largely due to the latter's control over public resources. But others maintain a hostile or rejectionist stance that in some isolated cases turns into violent rejection of public authority. As in the south, religion provides a sense of community and security and is increasingly public and political. In combination with more polarised communal politics, this has led to clashes over doctrine and political and spiritual authority (Africa Report No 16820 Dec 2010).

According to lawanty.blogspot.com, the issue of ethno-religious crises in Northern Nigeria, although might be caused by breakdown of institutions that ensure societal control. These institutions include the family, law enforcement agencies, religious and community leaders, and more importantly the political system. Most of these institutions over the years are left on their own. Our educational institutions are in shambles, there are no regulations guiding the practice of religion in the country; so the country becomes a breeding ground for all sorts of criminals, hoodlums and thugs. Moreover, as the elder statesman Alhaji Abbas Dabo said in an interview recently (Sunday Trust, March 8, 2009) we don't want to hear the truth. We all want things to be done to favour us and our families and to large extent our ethnic and religious groups. It is quite unfortunate that after twenty years of going through the same problem, our leaders failed to come up with workable solutions to ethno-religious crises in the North.

For the purposes of this research, the most common and salient grievances include corruption among political and economic elites, economic disparity, barriers to social and educational opportunity, energy poverty, environmental destruction, human insecurity, and injustice. These topics were discussed by virtually every person interviewed for this research monograph, often in considerable detail, and are well-represented in the media and the scholarly literature on Nigeria.

4. Colonialism and Ethno-Religious Conflict

According to Ray Ikechukwu Jacob (2012),the giant-lion of African continent, just like the origin of conflict is said to have stated very old in human history, even so in the case of Nigeria, which can be traced to the colonial period of history. Conflict takes different sizes and shapes with diverse reasons and purposes. Majority of the conflicts takes time before their escalation and at such, could have been transformed right at their respective early stages.

The then British colonial policy was autocratic and it denied the people's participation, basic needs, equality and social well-being and thus led to conflict. For instance, the separation of governments which Colonial administration introduced in the North and the South were designed to lead to growing ethnocentrism. This era of provincial development, though were relatively peaceful, and yet their built on the future foundation of an unending conflict, which has being experiencing in the country till present. Notwithstanding, the "indirect rule" administration in Nigeria by Lord Fredrick Lugard, the chief administrator, was inappropriate decision-making tool for managing tribal tensions and hatredness in the colony. According to some scholars' views, the system not only reinforced ethnic divisions, "it has complicated the task of welding diverse elements into a Nigerian nation" (Coleman, 1958:194: Nnoli, Okwudiba 1980:113). This implementation and method governance distanced ethnic groups from each other by the way Lugard gave power to the traditional rulers who corruptly abused and misused it in the villages to amass wealth, land and establish patronage networks, which, seconded and encouraged in the long run, tribalism and nepotism. The segregation of the Nigerian colony was also reinforced by the colonial laws that limited the mobility (Afigbo, A.E., 1989; Okonjo,I.M., 1974) of Christian Southerners to the Muslim North, created a separate settlement for non-indigenous citizens in the North, and even limited the purchase of land outside one's own region. Prejudice and hatred became the order of the day in the provinces as different ethnic groups started looking at each other suspiciously in all spheres of contact. Unequal and differential treatment of ethnic groups was responsible for the intense competition in the society. It created disparity in educational achievement and widened the political and economic gaps between northern and southern Nigeria. This was as a result of decision making implemented wrongly by the authorized power in the then leadership.

5. Democracy and Ethno-Religious Conflict

Generally speaking, democracy is a way of life that involves freedom to make choices about what one does, where he lives, and how he uses his earnings; the operation of institutions-the home, the church, local, state and federal government; the right of justified property ownership; social justice and fairness; absence of social and class barriers, equality of opportunity; and the solution of common problems through the exercise of the free will of the people (Mbachu,1990:187-197). Only democracy therefore provides and allows conflicts in society to be resolved by rational argument and persuasion rather than by violent coercion. In a democracy, government should not only be responsible or acceptable to the 'demos'-people or the masses-but indeed political power itself and its expression should emanate from the popular will.

The political class in Nigeria lacks legitimacy, for it is unable to address the basic problems of national integration. Having failed to bring about genuine development and having also failed to come up with an appropriate integrative outlook for Nigeria, the elites have resorted to divide and rule politics. The legitimacy of the state is linked to its capacity to present itself as a provider of necessary public good and more importantly, a neutral arbiter that guarantees the security of all sections of the society. Tribalism and manipulation of religious sentiments and regionalism are pushed forward as explanations for unequal development.

When the state is generally perceived as serving the particular interests of one group, it starts loosing its legitimacy, and indeed, its authority. As state capacity declines, fear of uncertainty increases to an extent that citizen's resort to other levels of solidarity like religious, ethnic, regional and so on, with a view of getting guaranteed security. The result therefore is the perennial social tension, political instability and change that have not been accompanied with progress. Misunderstanding therefore arises as every ethnic group or religious inclination sees the other as rival that must be out-staged by all means. This has greatly hampered national integration in our polity.

MacIver (1996:5) alerts us to the fact that national integration may be conceived from either a subjective or objective perspective. Subjectively, it posits the presence of those feelings and attitudes among people that lead them to make their own identification. Oftentimes, this includes a psychological sentiment of national consciousness among the citizens of a state; citizen's love for and loyalty to their particular states. On the objective side, it relates to common identities that in reality are not always present, yet does not hinder the spirit of nationalism.

Jibrin Ibrahim et al (2003) posited that there has been an explosion of political and religious conflicts in Nigeria since the return to democratic rule in May 1999. The expectations that the departure of military rule would reduce arbitrary rule, allay fears of ethnic and religious persecution, and consequently reduce political tension and conflict have not happened yet. On the contrary, the number of conflicts has been increasing and their spread has been widening. As the level of violence grows, their locations are becoming more provincial and the consequence is that political, ethnic and religious tolerance has been declining dramatically. The usual explanation for the growth of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria is that one majority group or the other is monopolising power. A closer appreciation of the political situation in the country will however reveal that it is simplistic to continue to assume that the steady decline of political and religious tolerance in the country is a direct result of the political domination of the country by one, or even three hegemonies. The Nigerian political elite has been involved in an intense struggle to have access to what has been called the national cake. In that process, patterns of political domination are constantly being transformed. It is this constantly changing pattern of domination that is producing the fears and anxieties that underlie increasing conflict and intolerance.

In Nigeria, the concept of integration has disappeared to the concept of segregation as consciousness is patterned in such a way that each group sees the other as rivals in contest rather than partners in progress.

6. The problems of Leadership in Northern Nigeria

We know that Northern region of Nigeria had produced prominent, famous, and notable leaders of Nigeria whom they fought & succeed for the gaining of Independence of our blessed country Nigeria. Among them are Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Sir Ahmadu Bello (The Sardauna of Sokoto), Dr. Yusuf Maitama sule (Dan Masani Kano) Malam Mudi Speaking to mention but few. All above mentioned had contributed immensely towards the success of the Independence and Development of the Northern region of Nigeria. Suleiman Nasiru (June 15, 2011) said that history will record it for the coming generation of Nigerians that northern Nigeria houses the poorest people in the country and at the same time the poorest region in the country. It is unfortunate the present situation in the region that once boost of great leaders, leaders that have the love of their people at heart and ensure their people are not left behind in terms of development, ensure young northerners are sent abroad to study and acquire education and skills that will benefit the region and the country at large. Great men like Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the Isa Kaitas, Sir Ahmadu Bello the Sardauna Sokoto and the Premier of the northern Nigeria.

According to Lawanty (2012), if Sardauna, Tafawa Balewa and even Murtala Mohammed were to come back today would they be proud of the kind of leaders they trained to develop the North? This will be hash, but the generation of leaders trained with tax payers' money in the '70s and '80s need a rethink. Someone should start taking responsibility. They failed the North and the entire country. The North and the country deserve better than what we are seeing today. The leaders of the northern Nigeria put in place structure and establishments to cater for the needs of the coming generations. These are men with farsightedness who saw tomorrow from today and ensure the people of northern Nigeria will be tall among their equals. Sardauna established institutions like the New Nigerian Newspapers, New Nigerian Development Company, textiles companies and many more establishments, but where are all these establishments? What happen to them? Nobody can explain. The past leaders of this region have their names written in gold in the anal of history of Nigeria, they are gone but their name is still a resounding message to all, they are epitome of good leadership. Little wonder their names are used by politicians of today to cajole people to support them, it is when they needed the support of the masses they will be claiming affinity with these great men. It will be recorded in history books for the younger generation to read that ineptitude of our present leaders caused this region to be backward their continual creation of poverty through their corrupt practices and creating division among the people of the region to cover for their shameful leadership style of self-enrichment and satisfying their personal interest at the detriment of the generality of their people. They introduced religion into politics to establish their divide and rule system, which has caused us a lot in northern Nigeria. In the history we read about the mid-west, but now in the north brothers killing brothers all in the name of politics, we are all divided against our selves what a shame! Northern Nigeria is now known for many negative things, which many believed is promoted by extreme poverty in the region accentuated by continual irresponsible leadership that has taken over the region, leaders who fail to follow the footstep of one of the greatest leadership example who show complete transparency in leadership, backed by honesty and humility, Sir Ahmadu Bello will never forgive these men who continue to use his name to deceive the masses while in the real sense they are busy destroying the legacies he left behind. What is the state of New Nigerian Newspapers today? Does NNDC mean anything to any young northern Nigeria today? Where are the textiles industries today, what happen to agriculture that has fend for the nation in the past? How about provision of education to the younger generation of this region? Why is poverty rate so high in this part of the country? All these history will record it and the next generation will read and know those responsible. All these the next generation will surely here it that there are sets of people who lead this country and everybody were happy and another sets came and sorrow all around. The one time big strong and united northern Nigeria now divided against itself. They say, a house divided against itself cannot stand!

7. Economic Implications of Conflict in Northern Nigeria

In spite of its huge potentials in both human and mineral resources, the foreign direct investment indices of Nigeria are increasingly becoming quite devastating on the nation's economy. These crises have negatively impacted on the economy over the years. This assertion is however supported by the fact that, these incessant crises have made Nigeria's economic climate in conducive, hence unattractive for investment.

John Shiklam(2012) writes on the devastating activities of the Islamic sect, Boko Haram, on the people and economy of Northern Nigeria. According to him, the deadly activities of the Islamic sect, Boko Haram, are killing the economy of the North is an understatement. In most states in the North, the devastating socio-economic effects of the sect's serial killings and bombings, especially in Borno, Yobe, Niger, Kaduna, Kano, Plateau (which is more of ethno-religious conflict), Kogi, Bauchi and recently ,Sokoto, has destroyed economic and commercial activities with many people relocating to other places.

In Maiduguri, Borno State, where the sect originated, the frequent bombings and clashes between Boko Haram and security agents have weighed down seriously on commercial and businesses activities in the city as many business have reportedly crumbled while many people have fled the state.

8. Summary

Many analysts have contended that understanding the factors behind the spate of ethnic conflicts in Nigeria must begin with the appreciation of how the country involved in line with this perspective Coleman(1995:41) had noted that the unity and disunity experienced in independent Nigeria is a reflection of the form and character of the common government imposed over the collection

of cultures that made up Nigeria by the colonial power. Extending his contributions, Coleman observed that stable countries are born from similarity of culture, language or a sentiment or desire of the people concerned to come together as one under a common authority, alternately, a single powerful group cultures. According to the authors, in the case of formation of Nigeria, the British colonial power forced various ethnic groups together without establishing conditions for the emergence of common value among the people. The implication of the loose integration was that the various cultures, Igbos, Yorubas and Hausa-Fulanis saw themselves as competitors instead of one people. And without such partial and wrong decision making implementation, there wouldn't have arise such negative feeling and tensions among the ethic groups. So decision making process has a greater hands in the prevailing condition of the present Nigerian's ethnic conflict which had been causing the lost of uncountable lives and deaths, not to talk of displacements, destructions of properties and valuable substances, etc in the mentioned country.

Will, James E. (1998) also posited that the viciousness of modern ethno -religious conflicts can be attributed to the fact that these are not mere conflicts of interests. They are conflicts of identity. The key elements in such conflicts are religious, moral, cultural and emotional. The strong identities produced by tribalism have positive effects, such as pride and a sense of belonging. But vicious conflict can occur when one tribe seeks to dominate another.

Will James argues that religion plays a role in the formation of all national identities; hence he uses the term "religio-nationalism." Like identity more generally, the influence of religion on national identity has positive and negative effects. On the positive side, religions aspire to create just and loving relationships among people. This is the relational universal core of religion which is manifests itself in different ways in different communities. On the negative side such differences can spark violent conflicts. Will seeks a way to maintain these positive effects while avoiding the negative.

If we are to have world peace, Will argues, and then we must draw upon religion to guide communities toward the relational universal of love and justice, even though communities will differ in the ways that they exemplify that universal. Attempts to remove the influence of religion have simply produced nations without a spiritual core. This leads to unlimited nationalism, which may become idolatrous or even demonic. Love and justice cannot be learned in the abstract. We become loving and just people in the concrete context of our particular family and community. As Gandhi said, "Unless one becomes able to serve his or her family and village, there is little possibility of genuine service to a larger or more universal cause, such as a 'global village'."(p. 120) and so religiously shaped communities, with their attendant differing identities, are necessary.

9. Conclusion

However one may like to look at the Northern Nigeria conflict as it takes little effort to find out the underlying religious fodders. Unity of Nigeria can only be achieved in the balance of respect, justice, equality and opportunities between Christians and Muslims. With the current state of Muslims carving niches for themselves, which in most cases are to the detriment of Christians in the areas of law, international affairs, banking and civic life, this balance cannot be achieved. But this opportunity can only be profited from if both religious groups can unitedly take a strong stand and call for a review of the structures operating in the country. The future of the country would be guaranteed if justice, equality of citizens, fairness and mutual respect of the religions attend such discussions. Such discussions would be sterile if efforts are not geared to rolling back all the structures that are already fueling religious tensions. Until that is done the true enemy of Nigerians is not Boko Haram or the Fulani herdsmen, but those who castigate them and those who, even though do not castigate them, do not believe in taking active steps to correct the structural anomalies in the fabric of Nigeria.

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