

Internal Conflicts and African Development: *The Nigerian Experience*

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Abstract: *The work was guided by the interest to find out what the causes of internal conflicts in Africa are, the impacts and the general affect on the under-development nature of Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. To get these objectives achieved, some leading questions were asked to help enquiring into these areas. First, it tries to find out if high incidence of poverty accounts for the persistence of internal conflicts in Nigeria and secondly, to know whether the low level of development in Africa today is a consequence of persisting internal conflicts. Guided by the relative deprivation theory, the paper came up with the findings that internal conflict and undemocratisation stalls the Nigerian development and indeed African development. Based on these, the paper made the suggestions in the form of conflict resolution strategy that could put the African countries out of contentions and conflicts and in the part of development.*

Key words: *Conflict, Internal Conflicts and Development.*

I. Introduction

Literature on conflict all over the world and Africa specifically is littered with the notion of the predominance of internal or inter-group conflict over international conflicts (Vogt and Aminu, 1996; Okafor, 1997; Okwueze, 1997; Riley, 1998; Elaigwu, 2005; Nwanegbo, 2005b, 2006, 2008). Hardly would one read the dailies or listen to the radio, both local and foreign or the television without getting the news of domestic problems. It is obtainable worldwide but assumes chronic level in the Africa Countries. Indeed, Riley (1998) noted that most African conflicts were intra-statal rather than interstatal, although they do have a much broader impact by fuelling regional parallel economics in light arms and assets, generating displaced refugee populations, and creating exiled communities. Most African conflicts are thus becoming highly internationalized both in their effects and in the efforts of various parties to prevent, manage or resolve them.

It follows that the consequences of internal conflict are much and not only on the warring states alone but also to the other countries either bordering with them, existing within the same regional line or having interest of the conflicting nations. It hinders the countries politically, economically and also on social stability and consequently, all of them leads to problems of development in Africa.

Development in this context goes beyond individual country's development. It has to do with African development. Conflict creates refugee problem to other countries, it sets neighbouring and interested countries apart, and it distracts and distorts the principles on which regional developmental organizations are based. For instance, Economic Commission for West African States (ECOWAS) virtually left its traditional economic interest and objectives and went into very expensive peacekeeping operation. It breeds crimes and other social ills in the warring country and accommodating neighboring countries.

One highly supported argument in the African underdevelopment is the unequal relationship existing between African countries and the western capitalist countries. This was both on unequal exchange and or terms of relationship and international division of labour. These lead to the establishment of the continental/regional organizations like the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS) in Africa, simply to enhance unity, cooperation and co-ordination of resources to pull through the excruciating relationship of the countries and continent with the western capitalism. Some other organizations also were established by other International Organizations to enhance third world development (at least on the economic side) like United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), World Bank etc. Still, they could not, for as long as they have existed, engendered development in Africa or even economic progress. Record of underdevelopment for all these long, keeps rising. But noticeably, rising with it is the records of internal conflict in most countries in Africa. Even those countries not known before for destructive conflict now top the list. This calls for investigation. Hence, this work seeks to investigate the place of internal conflict and its effect on African underdevelopment conditions (raise pertinent questions) and accordingly explore the ways of mitigating the incidence of conflict and hence achieve the much-needed development in Africa.

In the cause of this study, we limited our empirical study to Nigerian experience. The reason for selecting Nigeria is because Nigeria presents a good example of an average African country with numerous ethnic groups, religious groups, interest groups and other forms of groupings and also has experienced

difficulties in the effort to achieve stability and in nation building. There have also been conflicts of various dimensions in Nigeria; religious, political, ethnic, intra-communal, inter-community conflicts over land and natural resources, positions and representations, and more still, full scale intra-country civil war etc. We therefore hope that the result of Nigerian analysis will form a good analytic foundation for generalizing on the effect of internal conflicts in Africa and would lead us to resourceful conclusion.

II. Problematizing Internal Conflicts in Nigeria

In most recent years, there has been unimaginable rate of conflicts in Nigeria and the threat of others. In a study conducted in 2005, Elaigwu (2005) identified over one hundred and forty (140) recorded cases of internal conflicts in Nigeria between 1980 and about June 2005, with over one hundred (100) of the cases coming up between 1999 and 2005 alone. People have been easily mobilized into confronting the other group and the workers, civil society and the students have also been easily mobilized to confront one set of people, policy, activity or the other. The process and plan towards achieving success in these confrontations have even taken upper position in the minds of the leaders instead of planning for national development. Positions of political leaders of various groups in Nigeria and their preparedness to initiate or respond to conflicts even in both verbal (oral) confrontations justify the above position. Infact, this has been so widespread that you will hardly think of any region, ethnic group or organization that is not at anytime structuring its mind towards having an advantage over the other group or people and the other group poised at stopping them. As Oche (2000) explains, this situation has so much deteriorated to the extent that it has assumed the dimensions of a scourge. This position is underscored by the changing character, increased frequency and intensity as well as the deplorable implications and costs (Nwanegbo, 2006: 120).

Looking at what happened during the Nigeria civil war and the devastation on the country; one would appreciate the enormity of the consequence of conflicts. In the early stage of the civil war, Oyediran (1979: 126) recorded that over 100,000 lives were lost. Prior to that, more than 50,000 persons have either lost their lives or had parts of their body maimed during the carnage in the North against the Igbo people in 1966.

Another very devastating consequence of internal conflict is the problem of refugees on the host communities. The refugees create as much devastating effect to their host communities like the wars themselves do to those fighting. Instances can be seen in the Tiv-Jukun conflict, Zango-Kataf, Ife-Modake, Omasi-Igah, etc (Nwanegbo, 2005b). They were also quite devastating in effect and created insecurity for farming and other businesses (see Nnoli, 1998). It also happened in some other African countries; Somalia, (UN Report, 1993: 3-6), Rwanda, Liberia before the interference of ECOMOG in 1989, etc (Vogt & Amina, 1996 in Nwanegbo, 2005: 5).

Politics and ethno-religion are two most common areas of conflicts in Africa. Many also are linked up to group struggle for political leadership.

If we take the geo-natural fact that African countries and precisely Nigeria is a country endowed with the quality of resources that could ordinarily, if well utilized, put the country into forefront of the world countries (See NEPAD-Full Text, 2003), we would understand that something is basically wrong with the continent. Nigerian State has enormous resources in agriculture, in the economy, multi-pluralist democratic political advantage, and in personnel. But instead of these pulling her ahead, there has been series of distracting and disturbing conflicts, which ranged from full-scale war, riots, massacre, situation and preparation of wars. These scare away both national and foreign investments, leads to unending legal battles that keep resources engaged in unproductive exercises, loss of productive labour force, etc.

Furthermore, with inter-group conflicts among African nations (for those that went out of proportion), the countries involved becomes detached from enhancing generic development in Africa. The African organizations established for the development purposes also turns concentration of efforts and resources to preventing, managing and resolving conflicts rather than carrying out the initial responsibility. Also other international organizations that dwell on third world development see humanitarian works of taking care of refugees, providing welfare to war destitute, food, drugs, and resettlement etc, as primary needs of African countries (See UN Secretary General's Report, 1998). While doing this, the basic efforts towards African development rather suffers. This is outside the destruction that is caused by wars and conflicts on existing structures and establishments.

This work, commits itself to finding the place of these conflicts on the persistence and deepening of poverty in Africa which most scholarly works have attempted to explain from different backgrounds and the which condition still seems intractable in Africa today. Though this study may not go into analyzing every conflict that took place in Africa in searching form the answer, but will make conscious effort to draw instances from specific cases in Nigeria, review it and use it to answer certain pertinent questions bothering on "whether high incidence of poverty account for persisting internal conflicts in Nigeria"? Secondly, to know "if low level of development is a consequence of persisting internal conflicts in Nigeria"?

III. Relative Deprivation Thesis and the Foundation of Internal Conflicts in Nigeria

Previous researches and scholarly endeavours have advanced theoretical bases for understanding the reason for conflicts. These postulations, which arose out of hypothetical explanations, all drive towards rationalizing conflicts within human societies and further serve as body of knowledge towards achieving research ends. Though they are many good ones, this work relies on the "Relative Deprivation" theory of conflict as a suitable instrument for explaining internal conflicts in Africa. In discussing the theory, this work understands the problems facing the African societies as arising from contests by various groups over means of development. African societies lack in the basic variables of development from either the understanding of the modernization scholars and the dependency scholars. As a polity, most African states have not developed the operational variables to sustain the system. These variables which includes under the "Capability" and political institutionalization, the participatory variable of political mobilization, political integration and political representation (Jaquaribe, 1969) are lacking in most African societies. Rather, in line with Varma's (1975) postulation, African societies parade the state systems which have largely taken resort to more of coercion than consensus. The consequence as he offered further is not only the development of tension but also a complete dissolution of the entire society. The society exists in bits. Demands from the state thence take the form of group and sub-group demands for participation and representation in the common good, while each maintains a different good and goal. Denial or perceived denial from equal participation in this effort amount to deprivation and leads to the wide complain of relative deprivation.

Relative Deprivation theory is of the view that interface with goal directed behaviour creates frustration which in turns, leads to aggressive response usually directed against the reputed to be the cause of the frustration (See Gurr, 1968; Dowse and Hughes, 1972). The proponents of this view see conflict as the outcome of deprivation of groups in society vis-à-vis other groups; that is, what one should get relative to what others whom one identifies as one's peers or equal are getting. This condition derives out of scarcity and usually, competition for scarce socio-economic resources remains the basic causative factor for inter-ethnic conflict (Nwanegbo, 2005), and generally, mostly, conflicts among human existents. It has to do with recognizing justice. Without recognition of justice (in sharing and public interest), in exchange and distribution of resources, problem arises. According to Zartman (1997: 124), unequal divisions are unacceptable and most time negotiation stalemates. Thus unequal norms can also be interpreted as a different kind of equality, not in exchange for the other party's contribution but in exchange for one's contribution. The justifying criterion shifted from an international (between parties) to an internal (within party) exchange. Such equalizing is the meaning and purpose of equality in the legal sense, where various instances of compensatory justice are involved to temper the severity of partial justice principles (Duetsch, 1985; Homans, 1961; Adams, 1965; Messe, 1971).

Relative Deprivation is very suitable in the attempt at finding out the place of conflict in Africa's underdevelopment. Firstly, it links the numerous problems of conflicts in Africa to a cause. It helps us to understand that the numerous problems in Africa are predominantly contention for the resources (as will be seen in the next section). To make this argument's sustainable, we should know that resources are scarce relative to human needs every where, but of peculiar circumstance is Africa having been exploited, and as post colonial states and being still, an appendage of the imperialist countries of the world Junior partners in the international division of labour and thence, subjected to unequal exchange and denied of investible surpluses from their economy. The scarcity generated by this, leads to high struggle for the few resources and as groups, inordinately lumped together, conflict ensues in various magnitudes.

The essence of this is that conflict is permanently generated when there is a disagreement among various interests in the society over the appropriation of the resources. Those deprived, then, in many ways try to get advantage or disrupt the skewed appropriation. Their instruments could either be their ethnic group, their religious group, their corporate group etc. It is relevant in understanding also that the problem of development in Africa is not totally removed from the various country's social injustices which colonialism, through its developed and transferred government structure introduced to African's heterogeneous societies and un-technically merged nations (Coleman, 1986). To Elaigwu (2005) the conflicts (political) in Nigeria can be traced to two factors, which borders on Nigerian federalism. They are the structural imbalance in the federal system, and the differential spread in the pattern of western education. Though, as rightly stated, these situations do not just spark off... conflicts (Nnoli, 1978). As could be deciphered from the earlier explanation of relative deprivation thesis, it arose out of insufficiency. It has to be re emphasized again that when items are insufficient only few would have access to it. When such few are in control, the remaining people may start seeing themselves as being deprived. They would naturally make efforts to balance the situation or change their disadvantaged position. Failure to achieve the balance usually leads to frustration, then confrontations, struggle, conflicts and violence. This as has been mentioned is specific on political conflicts and does not therefore explain the entire conflicts as none politically motivated conflicts are numerous.

This situation is exacerbated, as it is in the case of Nigeria and in most other African countries where the State is the major provider of employment. Political parties are largely, either regionally or ethnically based.

Hence, the multi-ethnic character of Nigerian State makes conflict even more likely, leading to an often-violent politicization of ethnicity. Infact, as it is now, the rival communities perceive that their security, perhaps their very survival as a corporate group, can be ensured only through control of state power. The situation has deepened since the 1980s when the federal government introduced the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) as a way or revamping the economy. Things got worse, largely due to insincere implementation of the economic adjustment policy (see Obasi, 1986). Consequently, many industries closed down, as they could no longer source their raw materials from the international market. This led to loss of jobs as many people were retrenched from their jobs in the “Austerity Measure” and SAP policies. Embargo was also placed on the recruitment of new workers to the public service. As Albert (2005), Albert et al (1994) and Osaghae et al (1994) variously found out, it was the social dislocations (job losses, breakdown of family ties, erratic educational calendars occasioned by incessant teachers’ strikes and so on) that resulted from these, that goaded several thousands of Nigerians towards both criminal and political violence. Ethnic groups began to clash with each other as they competed aggressively for control of the limited social, economic and environmental resources within their localities. Religious groups were not left out of the melee; they started to manipulate their exclusive identities in ways that heightened social tension in the country (Albert, 2003). The situation has increased both in the extent and in the intensity of occurrence since 1999.

Onyeaji (2001: 142) has noted that extreme poverty prevalent in many African states is a veritable source of civil strife. In an earlier research, Nnoli (1978) was of the opinion that politics (and their consequent conflicts) though blurred, are inter-ethnic socio economic competition. In reality he said, Nigerian politics was the struggle among various factions first to dominate the wealth in their region of origin and, second to use this regional dominance as a springboard for the acquisition of some of the non-regional wealth. In the pursuit of these objectives, these petty bourgeois and comprador bourgeois leaders elicited the support of the various other classes by an appeal to ethnicity. This was why many scholars and analysts think that ethnicity was central to the course of the conflicts in Africa (Onyaji, 2001; Abdullahi, 2001; Ugbana, 1977). But since this control was not an end in itself, it was employed in the services of the leaders’ underlying political motivation, the use of political power to achieve interclass economic dominance.

Considering that the real people involved directly in these conflicts in Nigeria are usually youths and young adults that see involvement in such group conflicts as means of ensuring their means of existence or survival in the face of harsh economy, there becomes a need to answer the question on the impact of poverty in the raging of conflicts in Nigeria.

IV. Poverty and Conflicts in Nigeria

One of the fundamental postulations of this work is that “there is a strong relationship between high incidence of poverty and persisting internal conflicts in Nigeria”. The intention of the work here is to find out to what extent the poverty situation has helped to generate and or sustain conflicts in Nigeria.

First, it is known that African countries are poor. Infact as Onu (2003) presented it; the economic situation of African Countries has always been precarious. It had 16 out of the 21 poorest countries of the world as at 2003 and the situation has rather worsened instead of improving. The progressive record of African debt problems testifies to this.

The situation we find in Nigeria, our case study depicts the poor conditions of African states. It has been on record that a great number of Nigerians are really living in an unprotected condition. Infact, the basic needs of life are clearly and unfortunately lacking. This situation of abysmal condition and vulnerability of Nigerians is presented by Asobie (2008: 2) very palpably as thus:

Poverty is at the heart of Nigerians socioeconomic problems. Poverty manifests as hunger, ill-health or poor health, illiteracy and low level of formal education. It also takes the form of inadequate housing, poor clothing, malnourished off- springs, and even early demise ... they (Nigerians) live ... not really like humans. They are compelled to exist, nay vegetate, at a level that is fit more for animals, than for humans. They share the rain-filled holes, which constitute the main source of their drinking water with pigs and goats, cats and dogs, ducks and fowls. They buy the left-over food items in the market: rotten tomatoes; ill preserved meat; and the hides of cattle. Our people die in their thousands every day from ignorance, disease and they eat by chance and therefore survive by chance, but ultimately, they suffer with certainty, early miserable death.

Under this circumstance, many people have been exposed to various forms of unimaginable social insecurity and to all sorts of social crisis both interpersonal and inter-group conflicts (Nwanegbo, 2009).

There is a complete drop in the individual members’ capacity to satisfy his basic needs of food, clothing and shelter. In 2000 only 72% of urban residents and 49% of rural residents had access to safe drinking water. Only 48% of urban residents and 30% of rural residents had access to adequate sanitation. Unfortunately, the record is not improving. There is a high rate of unemployment. The NBS Report indicated that 20% of people between ages 15 and 24 are unemployed. While generally, 6% of the people above 15 were unemployed (see Nwanegbo, 2009).

Those persons that in one way or the other found themselves in the position of responsibilities and authority do not want to lose them. They also strive so hard to not only secure their leadership and juicy positions, but also to wrestle the power and positions out of their contenders. This situation was explained by Nnoli (1978) that "...the Nigerian privileged and ruling classes are very desirous of perpetuating the inherited socioeconomic organization of the society, with its accompanying interethnic situation (and the attendant crises) because of the benefits they derive from it...". And because the youths are not engaged due to high level of unemployment and underemployment, they are easily mobilized. First because they are not busy and vulnerable, and secondly because they see the contest as a means of guaranteeing for themselves the means of living.

If we look at some situations of Nigeria we may find correlation between the positions expressed above. The Tiv riot we analyzed above, just like the Kano riot, the Western Nigerian Election crises, the Pogrom had more of the field soldiers from the great number of unemployed and underemployed youths. The June 12 political crisis, though started as Pro-democracy groups' mobilization against perceived attempt of the military to stultify the democratization process going on in the country then, but was high jacked by the large number of street touts and unemployed youths in Lagos. What therefore was planned to be a peaceful resistance of the military's anti-democratic agenda then turned into a nation wide violent crisis. In the Aguleri-Umuleri, war, what explains the innate inducement for the sustenance of the war was the fact that after the war, a good number of the combatants that acquired the weapons either became part of the crime problems in Anambra state or became members of the vigilante services that operates every in the state recently. Ijaw-Uhrobo-Itsekiri situation is not different from the above explained situations. Meanwhile, if you get to the Niger-Delta environment of the wars, you would see palpable poverty even up till this moment.

Some other political violence and of the recent time were also sustained by mobilizing a group of unemployed youths and either using them as paid thugs or making them to believe that they were (are) fighting for their community values that will sustain them too. For this, we can say that there is a strong relationship between deep poverty, desperation, expectation and reactions as well as sustenance of the conflicts in Nigeria

V. Conflicts and Development in Nigeria

The second supposition is that, "Low level of development appears to be a consequence of internal conflicts in Nigeria". To adequately look at this hypothesis, we may need to literarily look at the consequences of conflict and from there, we may find out if and how it affects development. As Oyediran (1979: 35) and Pogrom (1966) presented it;

Period of wars are periods of destruction, savagery and carnage. Apart from soldiers who die at war front, the civilian populace are equally subjected to torture and killing, as in Nigeria 1966-70, Liberia, Rwanda, Somalia, Burundi, etc. During the early stages of the Nigerian civil war, over 100,000 lives were lost (Oyediran, 1979:35)... Prior to that period, more than 50,000 have either lost their lives or have parts of their body maimed during the carnage in the North against the Ibos in 1966-67 (program, 1966).

Conflicts have impeded peace and progressive development of African nations since their flag independence. It hinders political development, it affects rapid economic growth, and it distorts socio-cultural equilibrium and lead to environmental deterioration. The consequences are enormous. It retards and destroys all the sector of the societal life. These areas not growing impliedly mean the sectors not developing. We shall take briefly on the aspects mentioned as thus; political, economic, social and environmental consequences of conflict.

VI. Political Consequences

What makes a nation state is the ability of a collection of people and groups of people to belong together within a geo-political environment as a nation. The psychology of the people is therefore very central to the building of nationhood that guarantees the state demands and individuals or groups willingness. In African societies so lumped together by colonialism this psychology is very vital to the being of the countries. War and conflict simply cracks the foundations and exposes the line of differences. Sometimes it makes it endemic and for a long time after it remains a monster in the country's way of achieving nation- state.

Good governance and laws sometimes remain the only factor or factors that sustain the states. But with conflict, good and acceptable government is not guaranteed as even elections into the government reflect the divisions. It equally affects the voting pattern as well as appointments and government policies etc. Nigerian instance provides a good case for study. The Igbos (Easterners) still remained, after thirty-eight years, losers of war. At the nuclear level areas with boundary disputes, etc continues to experience charged elections and skewed government policies at the local government level.

At the continental level, political development, with the wave of global state, starts from having a continental state. This state could as well be as we have in Organization of Africa Unity (OAU) or African Union of today. It could also end at sub-regional level live ECOWAS and others. The main thing is that they

provides a big family stance for Africa, Legislate for continental development, settle conflicts or better still, prevent conflict as well as present a solid political structure enough to cut off imperial encroachment. Conflicts within countries (as we have now) misdirect these political bodies, divide them and hinder their progress.

VII. Economic Consequences

Literature on conflict has more patronage of economic discussion on consequences (See Oluyole, 1958; lauer, 1978; Ikpeze, 1997). This underscores the fact that the economic cost of conflicts is much. One economic truth that is constant for ages now is that resources are scarce and needs is at the same time innumerable. For this, human being have to ration their need according to mean to exist and develop. Issues pertaining to the allocation of society's resources to competing ends are therefore, for the same reason above, central in the interface between armed struggle (whether intra or inter-country) and economic growth and development. Economic growth, defined simply as a statistical increase in the Gross National Product (GNP) depend inter-alia on resources availabilities (Ikpeze, 1997:1). Economic development on the other hand, denoting an "upward movement of the entire social system according to Myrdal (1968:189), depends not only on resource availabilities but also on the pattern of resource use and, in particular, on the composition and distribution of output. Based on the above, a submission could be made that anything that causes distortion towards the achievement of the above, hinders economic growth and development. This is what military expenditure (specifically) and conflict (generally) tends to achieve in a country's economy. According to Ikpeze (1997:1), for the entire social system to experience an upward shift, the structure of production has to tilt in favour of civilian consumption, there has to be greater participation by the citizenry in the production of the GNP, and the national income must be more equitably distributed, even as its rate of growth is increasing. He went further, that given that resources are everywhere scarce relative to needs, all military uses of resources are bound to compromise economic development because they divert resources away from civilian application, example education, health and physical infrastructure. Sharing the same opinion, Oyediran (1979:43-46) state that all the period of war, there is acute imbalance in budgetary allocations as defence or military allocations are given priority over and above other sectors of the economy, as during the Nigerian civil war. To see and appreciate the contrast between the magnitude of global military outlay and basic human needs in less developed countries (see Ikpeze, 1997; United Nations Study Series, 1983; McHale, 1969 etc).

Before going into the analysis of the economic effects on conflict, it should be in place to state that African countries, precisely, Sub-Saharan countries have for the reasons of proliferation of armed conflict within states tended to consistently in recent year, spent a higher proportion of the GDP on military than industrialized nations (see Human Development Report, 1994; and Ikpeze, 1997:3).

Financial expenditure is not the only form of economic cost of a conflict/war. They still include; natural resources (minerals and raw materials), human resources (manpower), and material resources (capital and technology), at any point in time, these resources are finite.... And given that they are finite, their allocation to military purposes,

- i. Necessarily compete with the allocation for socio-economic development;
- ii. Is liable to distort priorities in the allocation of resources not used directly by the military sector, and
- iii. Can aggravate conflict situations emanating from resource constraints with the risk of diverting additional resources to military uses. Financial outlays therefore are incapable of capturing the ramification alone.

In comparison, the opportunity cost of armed conflict in terms of diversion and distortion encompasses

- i. The industrial production (forgone)
- ii. The depletion of important and non- renewable minerals, notably those used either in the manufacture of military equipment (Aluminum, copper, Nickel, platinum) used in military operation (petroleum);
- iii. The diversion of a significant proportion of scientific and Research and Development (R&D) efforts to military purposes;
- iv. The assignment of an undue proportion of the population as the regular soldier, Para-military forces, and civilians in defence activities;
- v. Competition with civilian demands for land (what ever purpose, be it industrial, agricultural, recreational, or environmental) (Ikpeze, 1997:11-12).

This situation it must be emphasized is applicable to both international and internal conflicts. Conflicts lead to high importation and depletion of foreign reserve, it diverts resources from the said country's economic capacity to produce basic goods and services and thence avoid scarcities in future. The above two, conspire to put pressure on prices, often leading to the institution of cumbersome controls (such as rationing), and foster the development of an underground economy with its attendant distortion. This also leads to severe scarcity. It also leads to the flight of the existing capital away from the country or Zone in conflicts. In Nigeria it led to even brain drain, sanctions and others.

Conflict and war also lead to dislocation of people from their base. This leads to disruption of economic activity, unemployment, and underemployment for those not engaged in military operation and

refugee problem that generically affects the neighbouring countries too. Some people have, even in the face of negative consequences, tried to justify military spending but we may not bother ourselves about them as those reasons have been debunked and criticized extensively. What matters mostly is that a war economy results in “a tremendous wreck of human, monetary and natural resources” (Eitzen, 1974).

VIII. Social Problems

Social development has been described as the process by which the well-being of any society and its people is ensured through collective action *Vis-à-vis* the changes taking place in politics, economics and social life of the people (Akukwe, 1978). Its basic aim according to Uzuegbunam (1997) is to ensure that the quality of human living reaches an acceptable standard. Social development is a very broad concept which includes activities covering all aspect of life namely politics, economics, social, religious etc, while typical social development programmes includes the following; family welfare services, Health, Housing, Education, Rehabilitation, Corrections, Community development, Youth service and Women and Development (Uzuegbunam, 1997:3-4; Nnoli, 1978:285), poverty disease, illiteracy, hunger and starvation (Igbo, 1997:7). Igbo, quoting the Federal Government Social Development Policy of 1989 sees social development as “the process of continuous improvement of the social structure, institutions and programmes in order to create a social condition in which the rights of citizens are advanced and protected; their welfare enhanced; and their effective functioning and self actualization ensured”.

Just like it is of the political and economic situation, internal conflict and infact conflict as a whole hinders social development. Enumerating the consequences of conflict on the earlier itemized social structures, we have;

1. Education:

The educational services here include more of formal training programmes acquired at pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary levels in Africa. They need building and equipments, teachers and teaching aids, free meal etc. to effectively operate. During high level conflicts like is experienced in some Africa states (Nigerian Civil War, other Nigerian developed crises, Rwandan, Sierra Leone conflicts), school building were turned into military barracks and training schools, some teachers join army (either voluntarily or by conscription). The students themselves do get involved both as soldiers or in “Boys Company” and consequently education halts, facilities get destroyed and the students get the negative military violent orientation, which hinders proper education even after the conflict.

2. Medical Care:

Medical services are not spared, both in Personnel, Structures and Services. For instance, most major hospitals turns into military hospitals, nurses and doctors convert into the army. Drugs become insufficient; women, the aged and children suffer as the bulk of the civilian population. It also exposes people to health hazards and epidemic.

3. Agriculture:

This is affected in many ways. Firstly, the land that is very essential for Agricultural production becomes battlefield or occupied by enemies during war. Even the very few spaces of land that may be unhampered with, still, in most occasions remain uncultivated and unused, as the active age in the society in different ways will be engaged in military operation. Even when foods come in either through importation or as aids, it is channeled into sustaining the operation men first. Hunger and squalor therefore is imminent in war situation.

4. Security:

One of the “basic needs” of man according to Igbo (1997) is security-freedom from poverty, want, diseases, hunger and danger ... and war brings these, most serious of them being security from danger. The war causes not only death of soldiers but also of civilians. Life is full of insecurity and uncertainty under conflict situation.

5. Social Amenities:

Social amenities like schools, Houses, Hospitals, Markets, Electricity, Water Treatment and Generating plants, Waste disposal facilities etc get greatly affected by civil conflicts. They are neglected (not maintained), destroyed (as part of military strategy) or converted for military uses.

6. Family Welfare Services:

These includes pre-marital and marital counseling, single parent services, services for abused spouses, services for neglected and abused children and elderly- those facilities, not physically created or seen, but they enhance human psycho- physically stability and development of individual and family units. These facilities are, under conflict situations neglected and/ or are not provided, thereby hindering social development on that line.

7. Rehabilitation And Correction:

Rehabilitation for Blind, Crippled, defected human, which comes through trainings to enhance their self-sustainability and stability, are punctured during conflicts. This brings them back to the street either begging or for the deviants, committing crimes.

8. Community Development:

This is summarily stopped, while the already developed communities are destroyed both physically, socially and psycho- culturally. Youth's services and women development face the same fate too. The above-explained costs of conflict did not include the invaluable cost of loss of lives, which is individual's inalienable right. Unfortunately, this is usually the first to be mortgaged. They have been recorded as the worst affected by war. Oyediran (1979:35) Pogrom (1966) Vogt and Aminu (1996) UN (1995:1) Green (1994:34) all recorded the enormity of human loss of lives during violent conflicts.

IX. Environmental

The environment has always formed a central part of the developmental focus. This is because it is in the environment that development takes places and also, it is from the environment that good development stems (See Nwanegbo, 2005). Conflict has led to environmental degradation, poverty and hindered rapid economic growth and development.

For clarity of the position taken above, it should be understood that ecologically, African continent is filled with environmental problems arising from natural disposition and development activities of man.... neglected to engage in internal wars. These problems have attracted foreign aids in many ways and from many countries and organization totaling about US \$ 954 million (as at 1997), which has been classified as gains to Africa (Boutrous- Ghali 1995:35 commission on Global governance, 1995; Ogoke and Igbozurike, 1997). These aids, if sustained and managed, could improve our environment and enhanced the tapping of the abundant natural resources embedded in our soil. Conflict rather scares away international communities and foreign on that area.

On the other hand according to Phil-Eze (1997) other consequences of conflict on environment are;

- i. Pollution by war equipments on the environment by gases, chemicals and toxics, radio-actives,
- ii. Destruction of the forest by the heavy equipments like armored tanks,
- iii. Water pollution by chemical and others
- iv. Scaring away of foreigners and conservation experts
- v. Neglect of environments by government agencies that then engages in war prosecution,
- vi. Refugee problems to neighbouring countries and cities and it's consequent effect in their own environment like over-population, destruction of their forests, over-cultivation and grazing of their lands, social and cultural breakdown, economic cost on the host towns and countries etc.

From the discussions above, it can be clearly argued that conflicts indeed hinder development. Again as earlier exhaustively discussed, it is clear that despite the celebrated argument on the affect of dependency on Africa development, that some other basic things also inhibits the capabilities of the African countries to propel development on their own inspite of the enormous human and material resources available for that. Therefore, it could be right to say that among other things, the level of conflicts in the continent is also a major inhibition to the development.

X. Responding to Situations of Conflict

It has been widely accepted that one of the most potent ways of managing conflicting situation is by understanding and making use of the early warning signals (see SCA, 2003; Otite and Albert, 1999; UN, 2004). The early warning mechanisms are therefore widely regarded as serving an important role in conflict prevention but without early action, early warning is of little use (Nwanegbo, 2006). Hence the critical concern now is on following an early warning with effective action (UN, 2004:5). Such early response may involve diplomatic efforts, a peacekeeping deployment or a humanitarian intervention (if it is of international or involves bigger groups within a country, such that can attract international organization's attention). Others are peace talks, negotiators, government interventions and others, if it is between communities and some other smaller groups that cannot easily draw attentions of international bodies.

One thing that is pertinent is that conflict within human society is practically unavoidable. Issues relating to conflict prevention therefore are better seen as the ways to reduce conflicts and its impact by addressing those things that leads to conflict, making sure they are avoided and or designing measures to prevent escalation of latent conflicts. This can be done through solving those problems that creates anxiety and pressure and consequently frustration. Nwanegbo (2005) has identified certain basic causes of conflict and strategies for their resolution for Nigerian cases, and presented as follows;

Democratization:

Much of the causes of internal conflicts...in Africa (and in Nigeria) may be traced to the undemocratic character of the states. There is no gain saying that countries need to democratize the political system. As Obianyo (1997:11) asserts, any country that attempts to deny its citizens that singular opportunity of contributing towards the political development of their nation is doomed for persistent political instability and group conflicts. Nnoli (1998:18) contends that state violence accounts for the most important conflicts in Africa... and even those conflict that are associated with development, inevitably interface with state violence. Democracy goes beyond multi-party elections. It includes mutual tolerance and consensus building in the pursuit of common concerns. Hence Nwanegbo (2005a) contend that civilian regime does not necessarily mean democratic government. Unfortunately, Nnoli explains further, “the long period of military rule in Nigeria has induced a commandist and authoritarian culture guided by the belief that all matters are quick and effective action (also, See Adekanye, 1993). This is inimical to peaceful co-existence among individuals, groups, communities and zones. This co-existence must be nurtured by painstaking efforts at the involvement of the people in decision making at all levels of policy making. They should not be consumers of policy but also and more importantly, as authors of policies. There should be cultivation of an attitude of patient negotiation, mediation, trust, tolerance and faith in one another capable of directing the people’s energy into reaching consensus in all public affairs” (Uju, 1997:7-8; Otite, 1999). This, though as earlier said does not mean only multi-party election, but still free and fair election is the beginning of it all. That should be strived for. It enhances responsible government. Responsible government formed through democratic process will, in addition to providing basic necessities of life, also provide the necessary communication and mediation to arrive at the consensus (Nwanegbo, 2005a) and create opportunities for the realization and attainment of individual talents and abilities in Nigeria (See again Nwanegbo, 2005a).

Social Justice/Even Development:

Social injustice seems to be the basis of conflict in Nigeria. Social justice in the contest depicts making citizens to be adequately catered for by the Country with the resources that generates from them and their environment. For instance, letting the people from the Oil producing areas of the Country benefit from the largess from the crude oil that renders their Country-home un-inhabitable. It also includes equity or bridge in the gaps, in the resource ownership between the owners of means of production and the owners of labour, or better still, catering well enough for the producers. “If citizens are made to taste the fruit of their labour through harmonization of income and the provision of those amenities that make life worth-living, conflicts will be reduced: Give the man food; shelter, clothing, free or subsidized healthcare and other such amenities (with freedom of conscience) and his violent tendencies will be reduced (Nnoli, 1998:18).

The other aspect of this, which is encompassing is the equitable distribution of national resources through even development. Publicly owned resources (both material resources and or positions) have to be equitably shared so that no group in the system feels cheated. Any time any group feel alienated or relatively deprived, the tendency of stereotype and group conflicts becomes high. Previous study identifies the areas of conflictual tendencies in the Federal set-up as; appointments of key positions in other Federal and State government (and even local government) and secondly, distribution of social amenities. Okoye (1991:35) in agreement, explained further that these two areas are the sources of conflict in the Nigerian body politic. When balance in this area is achieved, ethnocentrism will be reduced in Nigeria, as multiplicity of ethnic group has never really been the problem but interethnic struggles.

Structural Repositioning:

The societies should be structurally posited in such a manner that those political behaviour patterns that encourage monopoly of power and resources should be administratively removed. In this case, the zoning formular in the Federal set-up should be managed better than it is being done now. This would go a long way towards enhancing equity in resource distributions.

Emphasis on Peaceful Settlement:

Peaceful settlement of problem through negotiations, judicial settlements, arbitrations etc. should be seen as more potent in bringing peaceful settlement. Wilmot and Hocker (1998:48-49) identified some of them as elemental but good ideas of dealing with conflicts. These ideas as presented by Otite (1999) includes “the

clarification of communication and the checking of perceptions which in turn invoke the following; speaking out what is in one's mind or heart, listening carefully, expressing strong feelings appropriately, remaining rational, asking questions, maintaining a spirit of give and take, avoiding harmful statements, asking directly what is going on, telling others one's opinion, looking for flexible "shades of gray" solutions, recognizing the power of initiating a co-operative move, identifying conflict patterns, and engaging in negotiations of agreements and settlements". He asserts clearly that appropriate communication skills and channels are crucial in conflict management. It should be adopted and used early enough to avoid the overt conflict itself before attempt at solution. Though still, it should be stated that, this could be possible if the earlier three measures have been put in place.

National Consciousness and Education:

Ignorance has also played a lot of roles in the actual situation of war and in the generation of conflicts. Most times, the combatants are drawn from the ignorant and uneducated ones by the bourgeoisie to fight and or cause problems in a system. Based on this, attempt should be made to embark on a consciousness exercise for the citizenry so as to educate them on the need to maintain peaceful co-existence with one another. As the members of the ruling class do not take part personally in these crisis and their children too, and as they go into generating crisis in the system when their personal interest is at stake, it then means that if the real combatants are made better aware of their positions, they would probably not be easily used any longer. For this, free and probably compulsory education at least to secondary level is suggested to maintain at least minimal consciousness among Nigerians.

XI. Conclusion

The work was guided by the interest to find out what the causes of internal conflicts in Africa are, the impacts and the general affect on the under-development nature of Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. To get these objectives achieved, some leading questions were asked to help enquiring into these areas. The work guided by the relative deprivation theory came up with findings that internal conflict and undemocratisations stalled the Nigerian development and indeed African development. Based on these, the paper made the suggestions in form of conflict resolution strategy that could put the African countries out of contentions and conflicts.

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