

A Review of Jos Plateau 2010 Inter-Religious Conflict and Its Conflict Resolution Mechanism

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Abstract

Jos, the capital of Plateau State, was a region known for peace, until the eruption of violence in 2001 which claimed the lives of many Christians and Muslims. The involvement of these two religious groups resulted in the 2010 Interreligious conflict. Many intervention efforts were launched by Plateau State government, including the creation of Plateau State Peace Building Agency, to create and facilitate the growth of peaceful coexistence between the inhabitants of the state. Also, the government has provided sustainable security measures that have prevented fresh outbreak of conflict. This study, therefore, examines the causes of the conflict, assesses the conflict resolution mechanisms and suggests ways of preventing reoccurrence of conflict in Plateau State.

Relevant literature dealing with conflict and religious conflicts alongside the history and causes of the 2010 Jos Inter-religious conflict was reviewed. The social identity and human needs theories are used to understand why people behave the way they do especially with regard to unmet human needs, which trigger behavioural change.

The study adopted descriptive research design, using both primary and secondary data collection. Primary data were

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gathered from direct and indirect parties to the 2010 conflict with the use of semi-structured open-ended interview. Secondary data were obtained from journals, books, newspapers and the internet. Data collected from the primary source were carefully examined and analysed using content analysis.

The data collected indicated that crises in the region were caused by the failure of the Nigerian government to address issues of unemployment and security of lives and properties. The result showed that the conflicts that have occurred in Jos were caused by politics and not religion. The findings further established that the government has not fully addressed the causes of the Jos crisis and this failure could lead to reoccurrence of conflict in the region. In view of this, for the government to make a change, provisions should be made for access to employment and education in Jos, Plateau State. Also, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) should strive to monitor ongoing projects to achieve the objective for which they are commissioned, notably attainment of peace in Jos City and Plateau State in entirety.

Key Words: Jos, Plateau, Inter-Religious Conflict, Conflict Resolution Mechanism

Introduction

People all over the world have various perspectives of religion. Many people ask questions such as: Why are there so many religions? How do I know which religion is right or wrong? Why did God not say the same thing to all religious people? Some believe theirs is better than others', thus making them look down on the religion of others. This attitude is the cause of religious conflicts all over the world (Grof & Smoker, n.d.). There are various religions in the world, such as Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Judaism; as well as other religions including many varieties of traditional, cultural, and nature-based religions, throughout the world. There are also an estimated billion people who do not belong to any particular

religion, either because they are atheists or agnostics or because they follow their own personal spiritual beliefs (Bhondekar, 2015).

Religious conflicts have existed for a very long time, especially during the spread of Christianity. The French wars of Religion refers to a period of prolonged war and unrest between Roman Catholics and Huguenots (Reformed/Calvinist Protestants) in the Kingdom of France between 1562 and 1598. It is estimated that three million people perished in this period whether from violence, famine or disease in what is considered the second deadliest religious war in European history (surpassed only by the thirty year war, which took eight million lives). Much of the conflict took place during the long regency of Queen Catherine de' Medici, widow of Henry II of France (Leone, 2003).

In the United States of America between 1835 and 1844 for example, there was a religious conflict as a result of a speaking tour by Lyman Beecher who spoke about the plot by the Catholics to take over the United States and impose Catholic rule. This conflict led to the introduction of the Martial law so as to end the violence associated with the conflict. One of the major religious conflicts broke out in the 1800s, while the early part of the 19th century was relatively quiet in terms of religious conflict in America. The religious conflict that stood out in these periods involved tensions between Catholics and Protestants, culminating in violence directed at Irish Catholic immigrants (Wong, 2002).

In Europe, religious conflicts date back to the 15th century, when the Protestant reformation began in Europe. Also, Asia has had its own share of religious conflicts as exemplified by anti-Muslim riots in Meikhtila, Myanmar on March 20-22, 2017 which left many buildings destroyed and thousands of Rohingya people displaced. The conflict claimed more than 40 lives, injured hundreds of others with houses, mosques and Islamic schools or *madrasah* burned down. (Wong, 2002).

Notably, Africa is a continent that has been plagued by religious conflicts in virtually all its regions, especially sub-Saharan Africa (Chabal & Patrick, 2009). Many conflicts in Africa are between Christians and Muslims. Islam and Christianity have a rocky background, spotted with several religious wars denoted as Jihads levied by Muslims for the sake of Islam, and Crusades by Christians. In Africa, many conflicts occur because Christians

and Muslims live close to each other, and either party lashes out to assert or defend itself when it feels oppressed. A case is the Muslim port of Mombasa in a predominantly-Christian Kenya. Relations have been spotty at best and have erupted into the conflict observable today (Elbadawi & Sambanis, 2000).

Nigeria, a sovereign state in West Africa, has also been embattled by several religious conflicts that have threatened the polity (Sampson, 2012). The country is divided into six geopolitical zones and has more than 500 ethnic groups that speak 521 different languages. It comprises 36 states plus the Federal Capital Territory (International Organisation for Migration, 2017). The country is further known for its diversity in terms of religion. It has three main religions: Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion. It has an estimated population of 185,989,640 according to the 2016 population census (Winter, 2007).

Nigeria is known for its series of ethnic, resource and religious conflicts. One of the earliest forms of religious conflicts in Nigeria occurred in the 1980s, when serious outbreaks of conflict between Christians and Muslims occurred in Kafancha in southern Kaduna State. The violence was propagated by extreme leaders who were able to rally young individuals who feared that the nation would not be able to protect their religious group (Ibrahim, 1987). Also, in 1991, the German evangelist Reinhard Bonnke attempted a crusade in Kano, causing a religious riot leading to the deaths of about a dozen people (Falola, 2014). Over the last decade, the political crisis over indigene's rights and political representation in Jos has developed into protracted communal conflict. Between 4,000 and 7,000 people, have been killed since late 2001, when the first major riot broke out in Jos. On the other hand, tensions between ethnic groups rooted in allocation of resources, electoral competition, fear of religious domination, and contested land rights have amalgamated into an explosive mix (Krause J. 2011).

The 2001 Jos riot claimed at least 1,000 lives in the city (Human Rights Watch, hereafter referred to as HRW, 2001). Subsequently, long-standing tension within smaller towns and villages in Plateau State has violently escalated. The killings only halted when the Federal Government declared a state of emergency in 2004, after about 700 people had been killed in an attack on the town of Yelwa in southern Plateau State (HRW 2005). Clashes

between Muslim and Christian youths rocked the city of Jos in 2008, leading to the death of at least 700 persons. The year 2010 is one of the worst on record, with more than 1,000 lives lost. The human cost of the violence was immense. The number of internally-displaced people since 2001 peaked in 2004, with up to 220,000 people displaced (IRIN 2005). After the 2008 riot, more than 10,000 were displaced, while violence in 2010 resulted in about 18,000 people fleeing the clashes (Integrated Regional Information Network, 2010). The study therefore, appraises the root causes of the 2010 Jos inter-religious conflict. It further discusses the structural and strategic causes of the conflict as well as, the conflict resolution mechanism used in addressing the crisis. In addition, an attempt is made to evaluate the extent to which the causes of the conflict, structural and strategic, have been addressed.

The study adopted historical documentary and interview method. Data were generated by studying official documents, policy briefs, newspapers, magazines, library materials and internet. Twenty respondents were interviewed cutting across: National Human Rights Commission, Plateau State Peace-Building Agency, representative of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), the Chief Imam of University of Jos, the Director-General of Centre for Peace Advancement in Nigeria (CEPAN), lecturer from the Peace and Conflict Studies Department, University of Jos, citizens from Jos Local Government and journalists from Radio Nigeria, Highland FM Station.

The Jos Conflict

The study area is Jos, the capital of Plateau State. Plateau State is the 12th largest state in Nigeria and is located approximately at the centre of the country (Umaru, 2003). Plateau State has a population of about 3.5 million people and 17 Local Government Areas. Ethnic groups in the state are **Afizere, Afo, Alago, Anaguta, Bada, Bassa, Berom, and Bokkos among others**. In all, they are 3.5 million people and speak about 40 languages (Blench, 2008). Jos, the capital of Plateau, has a population of 873,943, based on the 2006 census and it is located at an altitude of 1,217m (3,993 ft.) above sea level. Jos is an important mining site and a tourist destination in Nigeria (Krause & Jana 2011; Augustine 2013). It was formerly occupied by many indigenous groups who were mostly farmers.

Tin mining attracted Igbo, Yoruba and even Europeans among other nonindigenes to Jos (Adah, 2013).

Plateau State is located in the highlands of central Nigeria otherwise called the Middle Belt, a geopolitical term with a lot of ethno-religious connotations. Plateau State, has many features, which attract a large population and support various economic activities (Mohammed 2005). It is the discovery of tin and columbite on the plateau by the British that led to the conscription of labourers from all the provinces of northern Nigeria to work in the tin mines. The high fertility of the land equally attracted farmers from distant places to engage in the production of various crops. The climate on the plateau, the near temperate weather along with abundant water and pasture coupled by the absence of disease, led to the flocking of herders and the concentration of livestock reared by the Fulani in the area. The temperate climate of Jos plateau coupled with its natural tourism resources are known to have attracted Nigerians and foreigners alike to the plateau for vacation, permanent settlement or retirement. The location of Jos as a transport node served by an airport and rail link, to the north and south of the country as well as road transport network to different parts of the country facilitated commerce.

Plateau State, including its capital, Jos, is inhabited by both Christians and Muslims. While Christians are in the majority, the Muslims constitute a significant minority (HRW, 2001). It is home to several ethnic groups, which falls into two broad categories: those who consider themselves as indigenes, including the Berom, the Afizere and the Anaguta; and those who are termed non-indigenes or settlers, composed in large part of Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba and other ethnic groups. Some of the settlers, notably the Hausa, have been living in the area for several generations. Neither the indigenes nor the settlers have a single religion they adhere to, but Christianity tends to be the dominant religion among the indigenes, while Islam is the dominant religion among the settlers (HRW 2001).

Over the last decade, the political crisis over indigene's rights and political representation in Jos, capital of Plateau State, has developed into a protracted communal conflict affecting most parts of the state. An estimation of between 4,000 and 7,000 persons, have been killed since late 2001, when the first major riot broke out in Jos. Ten years later, only the heavy presence

of military and police forces ensures a fragile calm in the city. Tensions between ethnic groups rooted in allocation of resources, electoral competition, fears of religious domination, and contested land rights have amalgamated into an explosive mix. The presence of well-organised armed groups in rural areas, proliferation of weapons, and sharp rise in gun fatalities within Jos all point to the real risk of future large-scale (Krause, 2011).

Clashes between Muslim and Christian youths rocked the city of Jos in 2008, killing at least 700. From January 2010, the attacks became more frequent. Indigenes from the Berom ethnic group attacked Hausa- Fulani dominated villages in Bukuru, Jos. There are strong indications that this was not a spontaneous attack as Berom youths, armed with guns and machetes, were conveyed to Bukuru in Toyota Hi-Lux vehicles (Higazi, 2011). This led to violent clashes between rival groups (Ekpunobi & Ailemen, 2010). Places like Kuru, Jenta, Sabon-Gida, Kanar, and Gero, Timtim in Jos were destroyed almost completely. The attacks on all the above-mentioned places occurred simultaneously. The victims, ranging in age from months to 100 years, were brutally murdered. There have been allegations that the attacks were sponsored by politicians and the district heads. Most reports put the number of persons killed at over 200, with more than 700 seriously injured and about 10,000 displaced (HRW Report 2011). Subsequently, on Sunday, 7 March, 2010, over 300 Berom villagers were brutally murdered and their houses burnt down in a massive attack by Fulani Muslims. This attack nearly wiped out the villages of Dogo Nahauwa, Zot and Ratsat in Jos South LGA (Kalu 2011). Victims, mostly women and children, were macheted, stabbed and hacked to death (Higazi, 2011).

The few survivors were seriously wounded. Reprisal killings continued in Jos between March and December, 2010, culminating in a bomb attack on Christmas Eve that killed over 80 people and injured more than 120 people (Amnesty International, 2011; Umeha, 2010). The violent bloodshed as killings, maiming, disappearances, displacement and destruction of properties continued in 2011. Villages in and around Jos North Local Government Area were raided in commando-like operations by heavilyarmed attackers, leaving many dead and injured. Ninety-six persons were killed in reprisal attacks on both sides of the conflict in January 2011 (Gucas 2011).

Below is a table showing inter-religious conflict in Jos between 2001 and 2010.

S/N	NAME OF THE CRISIS	DATE	LOCATION	LOCAL GOVERNMENT	TIME COVERED	CASUALTY
1.	The 2001 Jos Crisis	September 7th 2001	Jos Plateau	Jos North Local Government Area	7th-17 th September 2001	1,000 deaths
2.	The Yelwa Crisis	February 4th, 2004	Yelwa Plateau State	Shendam Local Government Area	4th February-3 rd May 2004	Over 700 deaths
3	The 2008 Jos Crisis	November 28th 2008	Jos Plateau State	Jos North Local Government	28th-29th November 2008	761 deaths
4.	The 2010 Jos Crisis	January 17th 2010	Jos Plateau	Jos South Local Government	17th January-8th March 2010	About 1000 deaths

Table 1: Table Showing Inter-Religious Conflicts in Jos Plateau between Year 2001-2010

Causes of the Jos 2010 Inter-Religious Conflict

Findings show that one of the immediate causes of the conflict was the Jos North Local Government election. The contest was mainly between the Hausas comprising Muslims and the natives of Jos North who are predominantly Christians. The election was won by the People's Democratic Party (PDP) candidate, Timothy Gyang Buba; while All Nigerian People's Party (ANPP) candidate lost. Before the results were announced, supporters of ANPP decided to protest and this resulted in the riot of 2008 which spilled into 2010. The reason why the struggle over Jos North Local Government was ruthless is because the Jos North is an area in Plateau State that has the best economy because it has the main market and other very important structures that generate revenue for the state. Therefore, anyone, who controls that area, simply controls the revenue that comes

from there and this is what the natives want since the Hausas have a higher population in that area which will ensure they win and that is what the natives do not want to tolerate. This intolerance was part of what led to the riot in which many people from both parties lost their lives. The contest for that local government is therefore fierce.

Due to the 2008 conflict which was not fully resolved, the grievances of the past were brought into play especially by Christian indigenes many of whom were killed in the 2008 conflict. This is reflected as the Hausas were seriously killed during this conflict most especially in Gadabiu. The head of a Muslim Hausa man was put on a stake to serve as warnings to the rest and some of the other Hausa Muslims caught were also cannibalised by the youths. This shows that unforgiveness and hurts from the past conflict was one of the factors that fuelled the 2010 violence.

Dispute regarding ownership of land is another contributing factor. Many Beroms and other indigenes of Plateau State had sold their lands to the Hausa and Hausa-Fulani immigrants and it is believed that if you stay on a land for more than 10 or 15 years you have become an automatic citizen of that place. However, some of the indigenes, after several years, returned to reclaim the lands their forefathers sold to the Hausa-Fulani. The Hausa-Fulani, on their part, refused to vacate the land which they also claimed as theirs.

Religion is another major cause of the conflict mainly because it was a conflict between Christians and Muslims. As many churches were attacked by the Muslims during this period. Also, Christians revenged by killing Muslims who hid in mosques during the crisis. These killings were the major issues that triggered the war between these two religious groups.

Percentage Analysis of Respondents

S/N	Objectives	Percentage of Respondents (%)
1.	Identify the causes of conflict, using appropriate conflict analysis tools.	20 % of the respondents believe that the cause of the conflict is religious alone, while 15% say it is just political; 45% are of the view that the causes are both religious and political. 10% hold that the

		conflict is over land disputes, while the other 10% feel that the conflict is due to grievances from the 2008 conflict in which people took revenge for the damages they suffered and these damages include the deaths of loved ones and the destruction of properties that they had suffered to acquire.
2.	To identify the extent to which the causes of the conflict, structural and strategic, have been addressed.	70 % of the respondents are of the opinion that the causes of the conflict have been addressed both structurally and strategically especially by the Plateau State government and other bodies like Plateau State Peace Building Agency and National Human Rights Commission while 30% of the respondents feel that the causes of the conflict have not been properly addressed.
3.	To determine the conflict resolution strategies used in resolving the conflict.	40% say that the conflict resolution mechanism used by the government in resolving the conflict is mediation while another 40 % say that the government used police officials and soldiers in resolving the conflict, or better said, maintaining the peace experienced today.

Conflict Management Mechanism of the 2010 Jos Conflict

Conflict management is the process of reducing the negative and destructive capacity of a conflict through a number of measures and by working with and through the parties involved in that conflict. It covers the complete area of handling conflict positively at different stages, including those efforts made to prevent conflict, by being proactive. It encompasses conflict limitation, containment and litigation. At some other time, it may include conflict prevention. Conflict management is a term that admits the reality

that conflict is inevitable although not all conflicts can always be resolved. It is therefore expedient to regulate and manage such conflict (Best 2006:95).

Furthermore, conflict management includes all the efforts and interventions to limit, contain or regulate conflict. It also includes those activities and processes that aim to impact on the relations between individuals and groups. It extends to social relations, the inclusion of gender perspectives in conflict analysis and a search for transformation and resolution for a conflict or crisis situation (Best 2006:71). Conflict management seeks to promote the use of non-violent means to settle a conflict (Best 2006:101). Conflict management mechanism also entails structural conflict prevention. The identification of structural risk factors and a development of long-term prevention measures (Mutunga, 2006:370). Conflict management in essence assists to limit and avoid future violence by promoting positive behavioural changes in all the parties involved in a conflict.

Conflict management mechanisms are employed in situations where conflicts cannot be prevented. It is therefore used as measures to resolve conflicts. The nature of a conflict, the relationship between the disputing parties and the sensitivity of the issues involved are some of the factors that dictates the specific conflict management mechanism to be used in a particular conflict situation.

Scholars in the field of Peace and Conflict Studies are still generating ideas for managing conflict generally and religious conflict more specifically. This idea includes mediation, negotiation, arbitration, promotion of a culture of peace, litigation, sensitising people on the effects of religious violence and violence as a whole as well as the importance of promoting peace at all levels and at all time.

Dialogue is one of the primary components of conflict management and conflict resolution. It enables people to share their views and listen to differing opinions and views of the conflicting parties. It makes the disputing parties to see themselves as bargaining partners. It also creates an atmosphere of communication between disputing partners. It aims at problem solving and changes the situation from a confrontational one to a problem solving one. Dialogue, helps disputing parties to achieve a point of willingness that enables all the parties to explore options thereby shifting from the previous position they had taken (Fisher S., Ludin J., William S., Abdi D., Smith R., & Williams S. 2000).

Negotiation is one of the best measures used in the management of conflict and also for peaceful resolution of conflicts. The principle of fair play which involves the promotion of equality, justice and honesty; ability to listen attentively and proactively in order to understand each other's assumptions; ideas and intention, respect for each other, which is key in assisting the dialogue going on; finding a common ground and interest; being clear about the desired objectives so that both parties can be willing to shift ground and consider other alternatives; separating facts from fiction and emotion thereby agreeing on the basic set of realities that are directly relevant to the dispute; settlement of difference through clarification, problem solving, mediation or third party; ability to resist the temptation to use force most especially when there are unequal power ability in settling disputes; forgiving each other of past grievances; and ability to be ready to compromise for the sake of peace without sacrificing principles are some of the most important factors to consider in making use of negotiation as one of the key conflict management mechanism (United Nations Development Programme (ND)).

Furthermore, mediation can be chosen as one of the conflict management mechanism to be employed in inter-religious conflict. Mediation satisfies the need of the two disputing parties while preserving or strengthening the future relationship of the disputing sides. A mediation session is carried out through the intervention of a neutral third party with no power to impose a settlement, but rather assist the disputing parties to facilitate communication thereby ensuring that the disputing parties agree to a mutually acceptable solution.

Arbitration is another conflict management mechanism often used in settling conflict. A neutral third party called an arbitrator is assigned to assist in the settlement of the conflict. Parties to the conflict points out the grievances and the arbitrator gives a final binding decision as the solution to the dispute unless the disputing parties have agreed otherwise beforehand. This method saves time, money, preserves the relationship of the disputing parties, disputes are resolved privately and, in the terms most acceptable to the partners and confidentiality is highly respected (United Nations Development Programme).

Litigation, which involves taking a case to the court of law is another conflict management mechanism often used to settle conflict among disputing parties. It is the least preferred method of managing conflict as it increases the acrimony among the disputing parties and it ends in a winlose situation as one party goes home smiling as a result of wining the case while the other goes home sad as a result of the loss he has suffered in the course of the litigation. These conflict management mechanisms are sometimes used individually and at some other times, a combination of these methods is used (UNDP).

In the case of the 2010 Jos Plateau inter-religious conflict, multiple conflict management mechanisms were employed. Negotiation and mediation were made use of. Disputing parties were invited on several occasions for conflict resolution meetings which centres on finding out the causes of the problem and measures that can be employed to resolve the conflict. Facts finding approach was made use of by the committee set up by the government to look into the causes, effects and mechanisms for managing the conflict. The Plateau State Peace Building Agency was also set up by the state government to look into the root causes of the conflict and find ways of preventing a possible reoccurrence of the conflict. This task was carried out with the help of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civil liberty organisations, the National Human Rights Commission, Search for Common Ground and European Union (EU), the Nigerian Police, the Nigerian Military and the Nigerian Civil Defence Corps, as well as the various religious organisations in the state.

Furthermore, finding shows that the causes of the conflict had been properly addressed by government officials. Finding shows that the election in the Jos north region of Plateau State has been affected due to the fact that positions are shared almost equally between the two contending parties which are the Hausas and the natives of the land. In furtherance of this, the government created football matches that brought team spirit between the contending parties, especially between youths, which comprises of Christians and the Muslims in the region. The state government also worked with many NGOs in providing humanitarian relief to people affected by the conflict.

Also, the National Human Rights Commission has tried in resolving the conflict by working with the government and various NGOs. In addition, the state government established an organisation called the Plateau State Peace Building Agency. The agency in collaboration with the various NGOs and the National Human Rights Commission organises monthly meetings in addressing issues of conflict in Plateau State.

The Plateau State Peace Building Agency (PPBA) has contributed to finding a lasting solution to the Jos conflict by working in partnership with other agencies like the National Human Rights Commission, Search for Common Ground and European Union (EU). The agency also works in collaboration with police officials, the military, Civil Defence, and the Plateau State government by assisting in formulating policies and guidelines for ensuring durable peace. They also assist in facilitating communication and peaceful co-existence among the people.

Religions, namely Christianity and Islam, have continued to preach peace and peaceful co-existence. Specifically, Christian leaders preach brotherliness, forgiveness and oneness between Muslims and Christians. The Muslim clerics have preached the importance of education and the need to shun violence at all level and from all quarters.

Therefore, in order to determine the conflict resolution strategies used in resolving the conflict, mediation method was used in addressing the conflict issue, as a third-party intervention was used. Representatives of both parties to the conflict were invited for mediation sessions which included a neutral third party. The various stakeholders to the conflict were also identified and the interest, needs and position of the parties outlined. With this in place, the parties through the help of the neutral third party was able to fashion out a mutually acceptable solution that will ensure lasting peace as well as forestall a future occurrence of the problem.

The Nigerian military, the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps as well as other paramilitary forces were made use of in resolving the 2010 Jos conflict. Security operatives assisted in resolving the conflict by maintaining law and order in areas most affected by the conflict, especially the villages and other areas where conflict was likely to take place such as Jos main market and Gengere. Security in these volatile spots was reinforced to prevent further violence and future conflicts.

The Plateau state government also worked in partnership with the Plateau State Peace Building Agency in resolving the conflict and in building peace on the plateau. Findings shows that with the emergence of the Plateau State Peace Building Agency, peace has been maintained on the Plateau. The agency in partnership with the government has been able to fashion out ways of curbing the many incidences of violence and insecurity on the Plateau thereby further building peace in the Jos area.

Recommendations

Although the government of Plateau State was able to maintain law and order after the Jos 2010 inter-religious conflict and created an organisation responsible for peace building on the plateau, the underlying causes of the conflict still remains unsolved and, as a matter of fact, any little spark of violence in Jos may result in a fresh crisis. This is to say that if the underlying causes are not properly addressed, the conflict could re-emerge. Some of the underlining causes of the Jos 2010 inter-religious conflict includes: the election process of the Jos North Local Government Area, which remains unresolved till date, greedy politicians who instigate violence for selfish motives and some religious leaders who still preach violence rather than peace.

Also, there is a huge problem of poverty and unemployment in the region and Nigeria as a whole which has led to wide increase and deepening of poverty in the region alongside the spectre of unemployed youths who are paid peanuts to engage in violent acts of destruction, killings and looting of properties. Poverty in the region have impacted on the youths of the region who sees reasons to be part of the violence for sustenance, while unemployment has prompted some able-bodied youths into joining in the violence as a result of the resources they could acquire from looting, and from politicians who fund such violence. Another issue is that people whose properties and sources of livelihood were destroyed in prior crises were not adequately compensated as a result of which they still harbour grievances within them. One more reason is lack of education. Some children are deployed by their parents or mentors to go and beg for arms instead of sending them to school to receive appropriate education towards becoming useful citizens.

In addition, it is necessary for the Nigerian government to provide resources that will aid research in conflict management, peace building, and conflict prevention methods, so that eruption of conflict will be minimised. Also, the government should sponsor more new, ongoing and abandoned projects that relate to conflict management, peace building and conflict prevention.

The election process and sharing of power is another issue the government should tackle due to the fact that the imbalance in power sharing so far has caused substantial grievances which have led to considerable violence not just in Plateau State but also in Nigeria as a whole. Accordingly, the government is expected to generate new policies to change the existing power-sharing formula and uphold equality. Also, politicians who contest for political posts should be screened properly and their motives scrutinised.

Religious leaders should also try as much as possible to preach against violence and conflict because they play a vital role in inspiring, motivating and indoctrinating the people. They should also encourage the cultivation of a peace culture among the people and the government should deal with any religious leader caught preaching or teaching violence in order to have sustainable peace. This point is emphasised because many people believe that religion is the guiding force of their lives and whatever is preached by their religious leader is taken very seriously.

Government attention should focus on poverty and unemployment which has become a major problem in Nigeria. Poverty alleviation programmes should be created across the country for youths, while skilled and unskilled employment should be encouraged. Small scale industries should also be encouraged to thrive by creating conducive environment for their growth through creation and implementation of good government policies as well as creation of easy access to funds and loans, and ensuring that the needed infrastructure is made available.

People whose properties and sources of livelihoods were destroyed during past crises should be adequately compensated to facilitate their rehabilitation. Another major issue that the government should consider is the disturbing incidence of illiteracy and poor state of educational facilities especially in the northern part of the country where many children are engaged in begging on the streets instead of being sent to school. These children could easily be influenced and used as weapons of violence. It is

vital that such children are taken care of and given good education, so that they will know right from wrong and make good choices in life.

Finally, the government should institute peace education in school curriculum right from the elementary level, so that the children will be taught the importance of peace and how its absence can lead to negative outcome for them and the society.

Conclusion

The contemporary world is affected by a series of ethnic and political violence and conflicts. Many of these crises are hidden under the guise of religion, thus making them more difficult to analyse and understand. That is why it is very important for more people to learn about conflict resolution strategies in order to address the underlining issues in any crisis.

Religious crisis is a serious conflict situation that affects millions of people each year and it occurs all over the world, especially where two or more contradicting religions are found. Cases include the French wars of religion in Europe, the anti-Catholic violence in America and colonisation which has engendered religious conflicts in Africa.

It is important to know that the violence in the world, resulting from politics, ethnicity and religion can be prevented, if everyone could just put their differences aside and come to the realisation that peace is very important; and if we are to succeed at this, we have to be able to come up with ways of not allowing religion, politics, ethnicity and greed to influence us negatively so that the next generation will not suffer the same problems we are suffering today. Also, many youths should learn about peace and conflict resolution and it should even be part of school curriculum, right from the elementary level so that children will grow up knowing the importance of peace in our society.

The study of the Jos Plateau 2010 inter-religious conflict and its conflict resolution strategies is of great importance as it will assist in preventing the reoccurrence of conflict of the same nature in Nigeria and the world as a whole. The Jos 2010 inter-religious conflict, as a case study, indicates the consequences and effects of religious conflicts on members of the society as well as the socio-economic development of the affected area or community.

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