Peace and Human Security as Desiderata for Nigeria's Socio-Economic Development

Fan Akpan Fan
Nasarawa State University, Nigeria

Abstract

In Nigeria, three things are woven together: religion, politics and ethnicity and the three are clad with corruption, poverty and insecurity. Peace and human security are critical issues for development of any nation. In Nigeria, the issues of peace and security have occupied the centre stage, especially since her return to democratic rule in 1999. From then, till date, Nigeria has witnessed violent conflicts of unimaginable proportions arising mostly from religious intolerance at both intra and inter levels, inter-ethnic rivalries, feeling and claims of injustice, marginalization and inequity, political differences and development â€" related challenges. The alarming rate of poverty and youth unemployment in the country has some linkage with the recorded cases of armed robbery, kidnapping, thuggery, extortion, advanced fee fraud, oil bunkering, rape, murder and other crimes in the country. Most youth wings of the socio-cultural organizations in Nigeria have resorted to militant activities to press home their demands. Infact, before the granting of unconditional amnesty to the Niger Delta militants, the area was saturated with militant groups perpetuating crimes to press home their demands. The most challenging is the recent insurgency of the Boko Haram Islamic Sect, which has killed, maimed, bombed and destroyed lives and properties. In the face of these challenges, the adaptation of a lingua franca becomes imperative. This will enhance communication and create a common cultural sense of togetherness and collective ownership. Nigeria should fund peace research and provide good governance at all levels towards minimizing the divisive forces and upholding the unity of the polity. Through it, the rule of law will become a culture in the socio-political lives of the citizenry for an enduring polity.
Keywords: Conflicts; Causes; Consequences; Ethnic diversities; Peace education.

1. Introduction

Nigeria as a nation is an ethnic mosaic. There are over 450 ethnic groups scattered over the six geo-political zones in Nigeria: North-West, North Central, North East, South West, South South and South East (Egomo, 2011). The problem of mutual coexistence poses a great challenge. If you go to Lagos and you do understand *ekaro* (good morning) or Aba and you do not understand *diayi* (my friend) you are in trouble. If you are from Akwa-Ibom State resident at Calabar, and you offend an Efik man, he will shout at you *daha mike iso* (get away from here); *udionoke ete ndi eyen Efik?* (don't you know that I am an Efik son?); *yong state mbufo* (go back to your state); *state mbufo ikang ata?* (has your state been flattened in a conflagration). Even in some institutions, if you do not belong to a particular religion or speak a particular language or belong to the same social organization, you can be denied some benefits. You then wonder if you are a Nigerian singing the National Anthem and reciting the Pledge whenever an occasion demands. From East to West, North to South, the story is the same: one finds ethnocentrism/ethnicity at work.

Nigeria has enshrined in her Constitution some positive ideals or values as unity, loyalty, service, patriotism, and hard work designed for the progressive development, integration and survival of the nation. In actual fact these values have eluded us. People in Nigeria attach importance to concrete values like wealth, ownership of property: houses, cars, lands etc. and success is measured in terms of the acquisition of these concrete material possessions by individuals, no matter the means through which they are acquired in the society hence Mezieobi (1992) observed that the most disturbing factor in Nigeria's underdevelopment is Nigerians themselves who are largely bereft of positive values and attitude germane to effective national development.

It is the diversity of cultural patterns and the multiplicity of ethnic groups that have depicted the unity of the Nigerian Federation as "unity in diversity". Cultural diversity has characterized Nigeria with a sort of elusive unity. It tends to portray a conglomeration of individuals of many nationals whose first allegiance is to the ethnic group and not to the "nation". This has created the problem of ethnicity. Cultural ethnicity has engendered the problems of ethnocentrism, ethnic prejudices and stereotypes among Nigerians. it promotes discrimination, favouritism and nepotism. It has affected the patterns of social and economic life of Nigerians and, in particular, the body-politic of the Nigerian society (Fan, 2014). Golwa (2013) posits succinctly that Nigeria's ethnic, sectional and religious diversities ought to serve as source of national unity, cohesion and integration but unfortunately this has, over the years, constituted serious threat to peace, security and national development because the elites have always tended to manipulate these identities for their parochial interest. In his book *The Genesis of the Nigeria Civil War and The Theory of Fear*, Kirk-Greene (1975), wrote that the nature of interactions among the various ethnic, religious and

regional groupings in Nigeria was characterized by competitive struggle over scarce resources in the country thereby posing threats to peace and national security.

1.1. Social Conflicts in Nigeria: Etiology and Consequences

Conflict is generally seen as a clash between hostile or opposing elements, ideas or forces. It is a state of discord caused by the actual or perceived opposition of needs, values and interests thereby showing opposition or irreconcilability. Scholars have written extensively on the nature, causes and the impact of conflicts. Depending on the school of thought to which they represent, such explanations have tended to place alot of emphasis on one particular or a set of related theories. Francis (2011) looks at conflict as the pursuit of incompatible and particular interests and goals.

Conflict is a phenomenon that is an important part of human existence (Isard, 1992) and a natural part of human existence (Week, 1992). Even in families there are conflicts. Spouses do have conflicts over resource control, sex, the desired number of children; penetrating influences of in-laws, wastefulness, a husband staggering back home in the wee hours of the morning, drunk, or having carnal knowledge or defilement of a housemaid, keeping concubines or wife having an affair with her driver, steward, gardener, neighbour, colleague, boss or student. If the wife is a believer and the husband is not, he (the husband) would batter the wife over frequent church attendances.

Every conflict has its character. Specifically in Nigeria, sources of conflicts include:

i. Over dependence
ii. Fear of domination
iii. Variation in development
iv. Problem of resource allocation
v. Religious intolerance

(a) Over Dependence on Oil

Since the discovery of crude oil in Nigeria and the subsequent exportation of the commodity, virtually all other sectors of the economy have been neglected. Oil today seems to be the sole foreign exchange earner. The national economic life rotates around oil.

(b) Fear of Domination

The fear of domination is responsible for the agitation for the creation of more states and local government area.

(c) Variation in Development

Some parts of the country are not educationally developed. This affects the pattern of development. Today, some underdeveloped parts consider themselves marginalized. Writing on the situation in the Niger Delta, Whittington (2001) noted that the oil region in Nigeria seems to be stuck in a time warp, with little real change since oil was discovered 45 years ago.

Away from the main towns, there is no real development, no roads, no electricity, no running water and no telephone. Speaking in the same vein, Ladan (2013) laments that:

It is a paradox that Nigeria is a rich country (with a foreign reserve of over 40 bn dollars in 2007 which sharply dropped in 2011 to $33.5 bn dollars; $8.1 bn dollars excess crude account; where the total government budgetary allocation to Federal, State and Local Governments in 2010 stood at N5.8 trillion naira; youth literacy rate at 80.2% etc) inhabited by the poor. Her poverty profile in statistical figures according to recent reports indicates that Nigerian people live in one of the 20 poorest countries in the world. The national poverty trend which stood at 54.4% between 2004 and 2009, sharply rose in 2011 to 70%. 105 million of Nigerians are now living below the poverty line. Out of this 70% are the majority rural poor between the ages of 25-60 yrs. In terms of absolute poverty line by geo-political zone, the North-East has retained the title of the poorest zone in Nigeria since 1985, with the highest incidence of poverty (Ranging between 54.9% - 72.2%) followed by the North-West and North-Central. Further, with a Gini index of 50.6%, Nigeria is among the top 20 countries in the world with the widest gap between the rich and the poor. Hence, poverty in Nigeria is undoubtedly the face of the North. The 3 Northern zones put together constitute the poorest economy followed by the South-South. Included in this troubling reality is the double digit unemployment rate (from 10.9% in 2007 to 12.9% in 2009/10) with over 12 million unemployed youths, mostly educated, able-bodied and potentially productive (Ladan, 2013).

Such high incidence of poverty threatens national economic growth and development. Similarly, a double-digit unemployment rate, with particular reference to youths, in a rich country like Nigeria, is necessarily a potential source of social instability and a real threat to national security and democracy.

(d) Problem of Resource Control

Ibanga in Dada and Ndifon (2007) submits that within the context of the current contest between some States and the Federal Government of Nigeria, demands for resources control by states signifies the political legal authority by states to manage natural resources within their territories, in terms of defining the manner and mode of exploitation as well as utilization of proceeds accruing thereto.

Fayemi (2013) opines that everyday we run into problems that make it crystal clear to us that unless we do something about the *grundnorm* the law that guides all of our operations in Nigeria, we are not going to resolve the crisis of governance in our country. That is why you see us in court every now and again over

Sovereign Wealth Fund, over excess crude fund, over our relationship with the Federal Government because the Federal Government is not our supervisor. This kind of feeding-bottle federalism does not exist anywhere that I know (Fayemi, 2013).

Deepening poverty is already leading to mounting instability. The widespread unrest, turmoil and violence which is now afflicting an unprecedented number of countries is linked by one common thread of growing economic malaise, regardless of the ethnic and political guises it adopts. In Liberia, Rwanda, the Horn of Africa, poverty is the tinder which ignites the resentments and fears that all people and communities harbour (Savigny, 1990). Infact, the main source of conflict in human societies is the scarcity of the resources. One may conclude that Boko Haram menace in Nigeria today is a product of poverty, unemployment and marginalization. For a long time, the Niger Delta had no peace because of resource control problem as shown below:

Catalogue of Some Conflicts in Niger Delta Region from 2003 – 2008 Preceding the Granting of Amnesty to Repentant Militants.

1. January 15, 2003: Indigenes of Ohoro-Uwheru community in Ughelli North Local Council in Delta State were attacked by a detachment of soldiers from the joint security taskforce; "Operation Restore Hope".

2. March 21, 2003: The Security taskforce on patrol in Delta State had problem with youths on sea, and ten persons were killed and property worth millions of Naira was vandalized, including the Escravos ruler. Youth attacked the team with 17 speedboats at Uporola on the (Excravos creek, killing soldiers and one naval rating.

3. March 22, 2003: Youths struck at the Total Final Elf Tank Farm in Oponani village in Delta State and killed five soldiers and destroyed property worth billions of Naira.

4. May 2, 2003: Barely 24 hours after the State House of Assembly election in Delta State, youths brandishing Ak-47 Pump rifles and other light weapons attacked the naval ratings severely injured.

5. November 7, 2003: Eight Mobile Policemen were reportedly killed by youths of Otuan and Oporoma in Southern Ijaw Local Government of Bayelsa State.

6. 2003: At Irri, Isoko South Local Council in Delta State, a traditional ruler was alleged to have sold the right of the community to Agip Oil. This sparked off violence. At the end of the imbroglio, the palace of the traditional ruler, who took to his heels in the heat of the crisis, was destroyed among others.

7. April 2004: Five persons including two Americans were killed by militant youths. They were among nine people travelling in a boat along Benin River when they were attacked. The two American Expatriates were the staff of Chevron Texaco.

8. January 2004: Suspected Itsekiri militants invaded some communities in Okpe Kingdom in Delta State, killing 17 people and injuring three others.

9. April 14, 2004: Ijaw Youths attacked and killed four children including a 90-year community leader, Madam Mjebi Ewuruwo, in Koko Headquarters of Warri North Local Council, Delta State.

10. December 21, 2005: Explosion rocked Shell Pipeline in Niger State.

11. January 16, 2006: Fourteen soldiers were killed in Niger State Shootout along Nembe and Kula creek in Rivers State.

12. January 18, 2006: Soldiers, Bayelsa militants engaged in a gun battle.

13. January 6, 2008: Cult groups attacked Ogbogoro Council of Chiefs in Obio Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State, killing some of the chiefs over the control of waterfront supremacy.

14. January 12, 2008: Cult group attached Okporowo Ogabkiri Council of Chiefs in Emuoha Local Government Area of Rivers State over community policing programme, destroying property worth millions of Naira and manhandled some of the chiefs.

15. Tuesday May 26, 2009: The Nation Newspaper headlines declares: 11 day Clash between militants and Nigerian Army in Ogbaramaturu Kingdom, Delta State - 16 soldiers declared missing. (Aporarog in Weje and Ahkor (2010)).

(e) Religious Intolerance

Religious intolerance is a situation where members of one religious group are not able to accept ways of thinking and behaving which another group may have that are different from theirs. According to Abdu (2000), it is clear that the religion question has remained one of the most sensitive and volatile issues capable of consuming the country. Sometimes when it pops up it creates some level of insecurity among settler communities' states of origin and other safer places.

The socio-economic activities have been crippled through the six years of insurgency in Borno State, for instance. Crime drives business away from in-secured nation. Security and development are two fundamental requirements for creating any viable society in which individuals and communities thrive and actualize their dreams. Security and development are invaluable for producing an environment that allows investment, invention and market competition and stable environment is the context for generating development (Maku, 2012). Danladi (2010) puts it succinctly that:

The International Labour Organization (2004) has reported that all human beings need a sense of security to give a sense of belonging, a sense of stability and a sense of direction. People who lack basic security in themselves, in their families, in their work places and in their communities tend to become socially irresponsible. They tend to behave opportunistically and they tend to lose a sense of moderation. Moreover, periods and areas of mass insecurity have historically, always bred intolerance, extremism and violence (Danladi, 2010).

What should be done?

Two key concepts are relevant here: human security and peace. Human security means protection from the possibility of attack; protection from physical harm especially assassination. It entails taking preventive measures to reduce vulnerability and minimize risks and taking remedial action where prevention fails. In short, human security provides an enabling environment for human development. The following measures are now proffered:

(i)   Adopting peace education in the school curriculum. Peace education is the deliberate attempt to educate children and adults in the dynamics of conflict and the promotion of peace-making skills in homes, schools and communities throughout the world, using channels and instruments of socialization (Gumut, 2011). Egbinola (2015) opines that peace education is predicated on the assumption that teaching people about the tenets of inter-cultural understanding, tolerance of opposing views, non-violent approach to conflict resolution and related strategies for coping with diversities would usher in a new era of a just, egalitarian, equitable and peaceful world.

The following curriculum contents and goals of peace education are suggested:

(i)   Nigerian symbols e.g. The National Pledge, The National Anthem
(ii)   Human rights, justice, conflict, peace, liberty, wars, riots, dialogue.
(iii)   Sources of conflicts in Nigeria.
(iv)   Differences among various religions in Nigeria.
(v)   Why people live together
(vi)   Advantages of cooperation and active listening
(vii)   Cultural relativism
(viii)   Poverty and its effects on the common man
(ix)   Wealth. Disadvantages of get-rich-quick syndrome
(x)   Globalization as a source of conflict
(xi)   Disadvantages of corruption, dishonesty and greed.
(xii)   The need for equity and fair play in our body - politic.
(xiii)   Effects of gender discrimination.
(xiv)   Respect for human dignity and need for tolerance.
(xv)   The role of women in peacekeeping and gender equity.
(xvi)   Peer group mediation in the peace process.
(xvii)   Moral/civic education
(xviii) Importance of discipline
(xix)   Tolerance and forgiveness
(xx)   Democratic principles in leadership
(xxi)   Promotion of sustainable environment.
(xxii)   Problem solving including conflict prevention, conflict management and conflict resolution.

Peace education should have the following goals:

i.   Introducing the concept of human dignity and human rights with specific reference to such values as economic activity, political participation, ecological balance, and particularly the formative principles fundamental to international human rights standards.
ii.   The global ethics, gender issues and various aspects of cultural violence.
iii. Educating younger minds in the virtues of peace, the skills of conflict analysis and management.
iv.   Identification of conflicts and sources of conflicts.
v.   Bringing about rational awakening of humanistic, aesthetic and ethical values, which are preconditions for peace in individuals, family society, national and international life.

Harrison and Morrison in Apebende *et al.* (2010) have suggested the following aims of peace education:

a.   To address fears
b.   To provide information about security
c.   To appreciate the richness of concept of peace
d.   To understand war behaviours
e.   To develop inter-cultural understanding
f.   To provide future orientation
g.   To teach peace as a process
h.   To promote the concept of peace accompanied by social justice
i.   To stimulate respect for life
j.   To manage conflict and violent situation

Education has the highest ethical and moral responsibility in the promotion of conflict resolution in Nigerian society. This should come through the use of appropriate educational strategies for inculcating conflict resolution values in our educational curriculum. Teachers can use the lecture method, games, storytelling, values clarification, independent study or the discussion method. A teacher who wishes to plan and organize a discussion lesson to inculcate conflict resolution values would require a detailed lesson plan that involves:

➢   The teacher's choice of appropriate topic to be discussed in the class or make a list for the learner to choose from (e.g. finding solution to ethnic crisis in Jos or finding solution to land disputes in Nigeria).
➢   Teacher's introduction which would be based on the task that the class would be able to achieve.

➤ The teacher to prepare his or her introduction and check that the learners understand the task to be accomplished.

➤ The teacher to determine the direction for the lesson and know what to do while the learners are engaged in talking and discussing.

➤ The teacher at the end of the discussion asks them for the ideas discussed and think of the questions to ask.

➤ These should include determining the number of pupils to ask and to plan how best to summarize their best ideas. In this regard, some teachers could decide to draw a 'mind map' or listing the ideas expressed during classroom discussion.

➤ The teacher to ask himself after the lesson has been taught, how well the lesson went, and to determine what should be done differently next time (NTI in Amali (2010)).

(ii)   For the purpose of designing effective conflict prevention and peace building strategy, government needs to put in place the structure, requisite personnel and equipment for monitoring conflicts and transform existing conflict situations into enduring and sustainable peace.

(iii)   Medic a practitioners should be exposed to the importance and need for moderation, less sensationalism integrity and professionalism through continuing peace education, workshops and seminars aimed at sensitizing them to the national political objectives of building a united, strong and prosperous society in the context of diversity and pluralism.

(iv)   Criminal justice personnel should be trained on information gathering and exchange, research analysis and dissemination of information on terrorism and terrorist financing.

(v)   Government should address the root causes of youth involvement in violent crimes and ethno-religious violent conflicts.

(vi)   There is an urgent need for greater inter-agency collaboration and cooperation in law enforcement, intelligence gathering and exchange for effective prevention and control of terrorism and terrorist financing.

(vii)   The adoption of a lingua franca in Nigeria is now imperative. This will enhance communication and create a common cultural sense of togetherness and collective ownership.

(viii) The security agents are often ill-equipped, ill-motivated and sometimes entangled in the labyrinth of the politics of religion and other sectional fault lines. There is therefore the imperative need for professionalism in the law enforcement community and provision of necessary equipment and capacity building of law enforcement agents, in order to better equip them to discharge their responsibilities creditably.

2. Conclusion

The paper has identified various sources of conflicts in Nigeria. Questions of national cohesion and integration, competition over resource control and allocation, inequity and inclusiveness are key contending issues that have posed sustained challenge to peace and stability in Nigeria and suggests peace education as strategy to manage conflicts. Nigeria is a great nation. We must appreciate the resilience of our people and their resolve to succeed. The teaching of peace education is invaluable for it will go a long way in equipping young persons and youths with knowledge and skills that can help bring about peace in Nigeria through better understanding. Peace education is an attempt to respond to problems of conflict and violence on scales ranging from the global and national to the local and personal. It is about exploring ways of creating more just and sustainable features. These ways embrace the physical, emotional, intellectual and social growth of children within a framework deeply rooted in traditional human values. Based on the philosophy that teaches love, compassion, trust, fairness, cooperation and reverence for the human family and all life on our beautiful planet. Peace education is skill building, students are exposed to concepts of peace, conflict, violence and non-violence with their inherent values and problems. They gain formal knowledge of self and the environment they live in; and appreciate poverty, wealth and Nigeria as a whole. Nigerians should use the Kiswahili word Harambe - let us pull together - as their slogan. The time to do it is now.

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