**Research Article**

## Peace Building, Security, Sustainable Development: An Imperative Mechanism for Countering Violent Extremism in Nigeria

**Iwuala E. Zebulon*1, Emele Augustine C.2, & Ibekwe Faith T.3**

[1]National Institute for Nigerian Languages, Aba (Ninlan)

[2]Department of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution, University of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences (UAES), Umuagwo, Imo State

[3]Department of Igbo Language, Federal College of Education, Yola, Adamawa State

**Abstract:** Since the end of Second World War, rigorous approaches to the study of Peace and Conflict Resolution (PCR) emerged across the globe. Hence, institutions of higher learning around the globe began to develop an interest in the question of PCR. It is in this regard that PCR is researched and taught in a growing number of tertiary institutions and locations, although the course is being taught and researched for decades. It is often asked whether there is a PCR for Nigeria's tertiary institutions of learning especially with the current wave of violent extremism. This question keeps lingering among scholars, advocates and practitioners as there is currently a perceived disconnect between the theories of peace and conflict resolution in Nigeria as taught in the tertiary institutions and the realities on ground. This creates debates on the relevance of the discipline to the current security challenges Nigeria is facing. In addition this has deepened the frustration that despite several decades of teaching and researching peace and conflict resolution in Nigeria, it is so evident that Nigeria still remains one of the conflict ridden areas around the globe. This deficit therefore calls for a more robust approach to the understanding, teaching and learning of the course not only in the school environment but also across every location in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Peace, Conflict, Resolution, Extremism, Tertiary, Institution, Mechanism and Countering.

# INTRODUCTION

The founding of the United Nations (UN) after the Second World War has provided a stimulus for rigorous approaches to the study of peace and conflict resolution across the world.[1] It is in this regard that many universities and other institutions of higher learning around the world began to develop interest on the question of Peace and Conflict Resolution (PCR). As it has been over the years, there is a general consensus on the importance of studies of peace and conflict resolution amongst scholars from the range of disciplines, as well as from many influential policymakers around the globe. It is in this regard that PCR studies today is widely researched and taught in a large and growing number of institutions and locations.[2] With the success and challenges so far, it is not totally surprising the inclusion of the course PCR in all Nigerian universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, monotechnics and several other higher institutions of learning.[3]

In recent times, the world has witnessed waves of violent extremism that have taken lives of many innocent people either based on religious, ethnic or political grounds.[4] In 2014 alone, the Global Terrorism Index (2015) had shown that, Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Pakistan and Nigeria were home to 78 percent of the lives lost to terrorist attacks in the globe. In Nigeria, as a result of Boko Haram insurgency alone, over twenty thousand people have lost their lives especially in its North Eastern region across the country in every region, the failure to significantly address evident cases of farmers/pastoralist, political power struggle, corruption and inequality have further aggravated terrorism, cattle rustling, armed robbery, banditry political thuggery, agitations and kidnapping for ransom.

To address some of these security concerns, peace and conflict resolution as being taught in the tertiary institutions of learning across Nigeria therefore identities and analyses violent and nonviolent behaviours and the structural mechanism fuelling social, political and economic conflicts with a view towards understanding those processes which lead to a more desirable human condition in Nigeria. Peace and conflict resolution is an interdisciplinary field of study aimed at analyzing, preventing, de-escalating and solution providing to conflicts and violence by peaceful means by seeking success for all parties involved in any given conflicts.[5] With the current wave of violent extremism in Nigeria. This becomes more necessary as the alternative to peace instability, chaos, upheavals, violence and in extreme cases, full blown war. Hence, this work advances that individuals and Nigerian communities should pursue peace with varied degrees of attainment as religions uphold and cherish peace, culture promote peace. Nigerian society will only develop in peace, and

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**\*Corresponding Author:** Iwuala E. Zebulon

individuals in Nigeria can only prosper in peace. It should be noted that no society is devoid of violent and conflict, but the existence of peace in Nigeria remains a virtue that must be continually advanced.

The beauty of this work shall be revealed through these sub-topics/terms as it relate to Nigeria in particular. Peace, conflict, economically, violence and violent extremism, root causes of conflict and violence in Nigeria, conflict transformation and management for countering violent extremism in Nigeria and conclusion.

## Peace

Peace is regarded as "as the absence of war, fear, conflict, anxiety, suffering and violence and about peaceful co-existence.[6] Although this definition has captured elements of peace, it was criticized by scholars like Aminu for lacking the adequate concept of peace. To overcome this limitation Aminu thus defined peace as a "process involving activities that are directly linked to increasing development and reducing conflict, both within specific societies and in the wider international community". In this respect peace therefore connotes the absence of violence or war, the presence of justice, equality and development, the existence of rule of law, respect for human life and dignity and tolerance among and between people; maintenance of a balanced ecosphere and more importantly, having inner peace and wholeness. To add to this debate, Ibeanu, a renowned theorist provided three types of violence (direct, structural and cultural) to help understand the concept of peace across all ethnic groups in Nigeria.[7]

Consider direct violence according to Galtung as the physical, emotional and psychological aggression caused by a direct attack through fighting or war thereby resulting in to death, destruction of property and displacements of citizens among other consequences. He also sees structural violence as caused by an unjust structure not to be equated with an act of God which involves structures that cause human suffering and death which are quite avoidable if good governance exists. In his view cultural violence occurs as a result of the assumptions that bind one to structural violence. For instance, one may be indifferent toward the plight of the poor which create discrimination, injustice and suffering thereby leading to the absence of peace in the society. In addition, Galtung's positive and negative peace framework is the most widely used model by most scholars. While negative peace refers to the absence of direct violence, conflict and war at international, national, community and individual levels, positive peace refers to the absence of indirect and structural violence, inequality and injustice, unjust structures and policies and inner peace of individual levels.[8] Due to its comprehensiveness, this conception becomes the most widely used by peace and conflict researchers.

Cyrine Iwuanyanwu provides an understanding of peace which centers on increasing sustainable development and reducing conflict, both within ans outside societies. He further pointed out that despite the general knowledge of peace; there are variations in its meaning, especially through the lenses of philosophy, sociology and politics. According to a philosopher, peace "is a natural, God-given state of human existence without the corruptive tendencies to man". According to sociologists, peace refers to a condition of social harmony in which there are no social antagonisms among people or group in a given community. For the political scientists according to him also, peace is a political condition that makes justice possible in any given society thereby entailing political order. Similarly, cultures and civilization have different viewpoints of peace. For instance, in a society that is constantly perpetuated with violence and armed conflict, it will view peace as the absence of war and violence. In a political community governed by unjust policies, it may interpret peace with the presence of freedom and justice. In a society that is materially deprived or in poverty situation, it may perceive peace as equality, development and have the basic needs of life.[9]

Although several conceptions and models of peace have been advanced in which peace research might prosper. It should further be understood that peace is a natural social condition, and war is not. For peace scholars, students and advocates, such information is good enough for a rational group of decision makers to avoid conflict, violence or war. This is because, violence is considered morally sinful, and therefore non-violence which is virtuous should be cultivated in the society as advanced by a variety of religious tradition, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam.[10]

## Conflict

The definition of conflict like peace is also contentious. However, most scholars are of the opinion that conflict usually reflects a class of interest or goal between parties which may be individual or group of individuals, groups or states. Conflict according to most scholars occurs when two or more people engage in a struggle over values and claims to status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals.[11] Also, conflict emerges whenever one party perceives that one or more goals or purposes or means of achieving a good or preference is being threatened or hindered by the activities of one or more parties put together. In conflict, parties perceive or treat each other as a stumbling block that results in frustrating the other in attaining a set of goals, or even furthering one's interest through their attitudes, behaviours or actions. Generally, conflict has been considered an obstacle to progress, political stability, economic prosperity and overall socio-economic development of any society because of its destructive impact. This therefore means that conflict must be timely averted or managed properly as failure to do so will reflect a determined action or struggle over a goal, which may be overt or subtle; manifest or

imaginary. While it is not easy to classify conflicts in a categorical way, not all conflicts in Nigeria are of the same kind as can be seen from dimensions of ethnicity, religion, politics and economy.[12] In ethnic conflict, Nigeria is a country of many nations with hundreds of tribes and ethnic grouping. The relationships between for instance political parties in underdeveloped nation like Nigeria are likely to be more conflictual than those in advanced politics.[13] Given the social differences in Nigeria, the quest for power mostly depends on the existing nature of the relationship between those sectoral groups. It is therefore no wonder that the visibility and relevance of the Afenifere, the Ohaneze Ndigbo, the Arewa Consultative Forum, the Southern Leaders Forum and the Ijaw National Congress etc. each is articulating its own agenda for the ethnic groups they belong instead of the overall development of the country.[14] With regards to *political conflicts*, since the amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914, most incidents of political conflicts have been associated with leadership positions, political appointments, national population census, resource allocation and electoral process leading to election rigging, vote buying, corruption, the use of political thugs and other electoral malpractice as well as unfair sharing of political gains. In the electoral process, from 1999 to date political violence has continued to assume an alarming dimension, including assassinations and abduction, inter and intra-party conflicts, religious intolerance which created suspicion and acrimony leading to many communal and sectarian violence.[15] As further argues, those interested in retaining power or winning at all costs, and especially actors who were in control of the instrument of the state simply "fixed the result of the election they desired to win leading to protest. The reasons for such do or die politics is not farfetched from the fact, since the state is the major means of capital accumulation in Nigeria and considering the prevalence and ubiquity of poverty and dependence in the country, the struggle for the control of the state and its resources, take on a life-and-death struggle, simply put in Nigeria access to political power is seen as access to economic power.[16]

**Economical**

Looking at the Nigerian society and its environment, the quest for the control and distribution of economic resources is majorly the basis for many conflicts among the citizenry with the relationship between parties taking cues from this basis of consideration. It is in this similar view that liberal structural theorist such as Galtung see conflict as a phenomenon that is built in human societies according to how they are structured and organized. That is to say conflict emanates as a result of deep-rooted structural by dysfunction which looks into problems such as the inequality in the distribution of income, endemic corruption, injustice, poverty, illiteracy, high unemployment rate, hunger, disease, inflation, exploitation and tax havens on citizens, high rates at crimes, over population and general economic underdevelopment.[17] Whenever economic and political discrimination and lack of tolerance in plural societies are embedded in human relationships, conflict are bound to occur higher than the societies where opposite socio-economic relationships are established. All political economists thereby start by asking a common but a general question as to what are the reasons for poverty, hunger and general underdevelopment of Nigeria despite all its abundant natural and human endowment? As it can be observed, these system's dysfunctions involve deliberate policies and structures that cause human suffering and death which are quite avoidable if good government exist in the Nigerian societies.[18]

**Extremism Violence and Violent In Nigeria**

While conflict in most societies remains inevitable, it is the armed conflict that leads to violence. Violence is a state of tension which exists when one party perceives its goals, needs desires or expectations are being blocked by the other interested party. Violence in other words means any act of aggression and abuse which causes injury or harm to person, property and animals. Violence in recent years is on the increase in Nigeria from the Niger Delta militancy in the south to the ethno religious conflicts and later the Boko Haram insurgency and banditry in the North. People tend to cause problems/trouble when there interest is jeopardized, thereby causing unnecessary tension with the price of these conflicts been paid by those least responsible such as the youths, women and children. Since violence causes injury or harm to person, property and animals, it is usually destructive in behaviours and actions which can be divided into two forms as either random or coordinated.[19]

In Nigeria, the identification of certain recurrent drivers, which are common among a wide variety of different ethnic groups leading to radicalization and violent extremism. These include: lack of socio-economic opportunities, high rate of youth unemployment, extreme poverty gross inequality, marginalization of minority groups in politics, governance, administration, economy, culture and religion, poor governance associated with cases of corruption, impunity, violations of human, abuse of rule of law, unresolved conflict, and radicalization and uneven recruitments in vital sector of the Nigerian economy.[20]

In fact, Nigeria remains a country made up of two races pulling in opposite directions. There is the indigenous African race tilting towards westernized ideology and the Arab race, made up of the Fulanis, Hausas and Kanuris in favour of adopting the Arabian culture.

At independence in 1960, the impression was created that "all" Nigerians opted for liberal democracy as the national ideology. As the years progressed, it became clear that some citizens of the Arab stock were

more in favour of a system of rule of which an "important ingredient is the application of Muslim Law".

While paying lip service to democracy, many of the political, religious, traditional and military leaders of Nigeria most especially from the Muslim north were insidiously working to undermine democracy and promote sharia, which is based on Islam and is patterned after the Arabian culture, to which the north has been exposed to for hundreds of years.

Operating under the Islamic practice of "Tagiyya", which permits a Muslim to deceive an 'infidel' in order to gain the mastery over him, leaders of the Muslim north surreptitiously 'smuggled' Nigeria into OIC in 1986 and kept it out of public knowledge for ten years until 1996, when Sultan Dasuke confirmed to the Pope that Nigeria is a member of OIC.

The invasion of the nation by Islamic terrorism and the smuggling of sharia into the 1999 Constitution thereby creating a dual ideology for the nation, are reflections of the activities of some minded religious ethno extremist. Book haram, membership of Nigeria in OIC, Islam in African Organization, the D8 groups, as well as compromise of Section 10 of the constitution on separation of state and religion in Nigeria are all interwoven conspiracies to abolish liberal democracy in Nigeria by the religious drunken separatists and the intended action to declare sharia as the national ideology and the nation as an Islamic state.[21] The impact of extremist violence in Nigeria has been borne most heavily by the citizens of Nigeria. Most worrisome, as extremist violence continued, the Nigerian state prioritizes security measures thereby leading to diversion of major resources away from investments in socio-economic development.

Generally, the socio-economic implications and consequences of violent extremism in Nigeria whether it is the case of Boko Haram or other similar to it, violent extremism leads to different forms and types of terrorism (social, political, economic, religious environmental and cultural) with numbers of implications beyond immediate economic and security cost, responses and the management of internally displaced persons or refugees. The consequences of the violent extremism there: disrupts peace, law and order, disrupts economic activities and revenue generation, damage infrastructure and social amenities, reduce available land for agriculture and livestock rearing, threaten natural resources and ecosystem, scare away investors and development and partners, closure of schools.

In the last decade, armed conflict had assumed an unimaginable dimension with a profound threat to peace and human existence in Nigeria. The evidence of violent extremism in Nigeria are nothing but a human catastrophe. The interconnection between armed conflict and terrorism are so evident in Nigeria spearheaded by ISIS and Boko Haram (BH) in Nigeria, furthermore,

various armed groups have continued to undermine Nigerian security as evidence in the activities of the Niger Delta militant and the cattle rustlers where youth joined the armed group that has become a serious national, regional, and international threat. The Boko Haram insurgency alone had claimed more than twenty thousand lives so far. A special report of the United State Institute of Peace indicated that Boko Haram draws its members from disaffected youth, unemployed high school and university graduates and destitute children. Their terrorist activities have kicked citizens out of their homes and destroyed properties and communities worth billion of Dollars. These serious of attacks have further compounded the already existing socio-economic development challenges particularly in the North Eastern region of the country.[22]

The unemployment, illiteracy, weak family structures among others make or contribute to Nigerian youths being vulnerable to violent. Unsurprisingly, unemployment and poverty considered serious socio-economic challenges that are not only intricately interconnected but glaringly evident in both Northern Nigeria and other parts of the country. Similarly, wondering preachers thus capitalize on the existing situation by preaching an extreme version of religious teachings thereby conveying a narrative that government is weak and corrupt. It should however by noted that while Boko Haram insurgency remains at the centre of violent extremism in Nigeria, several other armed groups have perpetuated similar or worse acts of the years, there are reports of ethnic cleansing in Plateau, Benue, Taraba and Nassarawa States. Due to certain ethnic stereotype, Fulani or Hausa people were on several occasions attacked and killed simple because of their tribe. While similar reprisal attacks were also recorded in most cases, these armed groups motivated by politics or economy recruits and train youths for criminal activities such as killing, kidnapping, destruction of properties and suicide bombing.[23] With dismayed by the inaction of federal government of Nigeria to the carnage and destruction caused by the Fulani herdsmen against legitimate native land owners and farmers across the country. The most recent case occur in Agatu area of Benue State in February 2016 were over 300 Nigerians were allegedly massacred by the herdsmen and many communities were devastated in the current attacks. It is most shocking that till date, there has been no prosecution of any single man or individuals regarding to these marauders. The Fulani herdsmen have been murdering innocent Nigerians with impunity. The murderous escapades of this group has gained international notoriety to the extent that the group is now considered internationally as the fourth most dangerous terror organization in the world. It is sad to note that Boko Haram which is presently regarded as the world number one most dangerous terror organization and the Fulani herdsmen, considered the fourth are both operating in Nigeria. Meanwhile, the response of government to the menace of the Fulani herdsmen has to date been tipped and indifferent.[24]

## Root Causes of Conflict and Violence in Nigeria

Why do human clash? It may be two or more neighbours disagreeing over a river or a land. In a developing country like Nigeria, whatever a conflict's scale, the student of peace and conflict resolution seek to understand its nature and causes. Despite that fact that, there are several causes of violence in the Nigerian society but for the purpose of this paper, the most salient ones are briefly discussed.

### Indigenes/Settler Spectacle

It does not matter how long one might have stayed in a place or community once the person/individuals does not belong to the ethnic group within the territory then he/they are unfortunately regarded as settler not fit to enjoy certain rights and privileges in Nigeria. In most Nigerian communities, the said indigenes usually hold sway over political structures in their areas and the so called settles also who predominantly depend on the state resources as means of livelihood are usually treated as second class citizens and therefore a source of frequent and sometimes occasional conflict in their communities. Plateau State has become a classical example of this issue having recorded frequent clashes which have led to a lingering crisis of supremacy since the return of democracy in Nigeria in 1999. However, Plateau State is not an exception as there is a notable crisis of indigene and settlers across the country as evidenced in subsidize education, scholarship, employment quotas and administrations quota etc. These issued continued to generate tension and acrimonies in various Nigerian communities. Another area of concern between indigenes and settlers is the contention on the use and ownership of land and other resources which have resulted into violent crisis and conflict among many people and communities in the country.[25]

### Farmers/Pastoralists Spectacle

The conflict between farmers and pastoralist especially over land and water resources especially in the frontline states of Yobe, Borno, Adamawa, Plateau, Taraba, Sokoto, Zamfara, Katisina, Kebbi, Nassarawa, Benue etc have been occurring almost annually. These conflicts usually occur during rainy reason and at harvest time. While most pastoralists allege that most earlier cattle routes and grazing reserves are not converted to farmlands, farmers on the other had allege that pastoralist eases their animals in to farm lands at the slightest opportunity which causes them, the loss of products. Most worrisome is that the pastoralist who traverses the nation in search of grazing land for his animal is willing to sacrifice his life in defence of his herds as farmers are also protecting their hard laboured crops. Whereas grass for grazing is available during the rainy season, conflicts also occur during period of harvest, where pastoralist let their cattle enter farm lands and destroy crops and residue without the permission of the farmer, causing great loss to farmers. These clashes are usually with severe effects on the people and their social—economic condition of living.[26]

Historically, antecedents of such regular clashes in some communities particularly between the Fulani pastoralists and the local community farmers have its resultant consequences with an already stereotyped two groups as perceived or real enemies. In recent years, a new dimension is taking place in northern Nigeria with the phenomenon of cattle rustling. This is especially more frequent in Zamfara State in the North West region leading to violent overflow of killings and destruction of the armed militias. This challenge if not properly addressed may likely be very dangerous to handle in the future. While successes have been achieved in addressing the menace, it is not yet uhuwru.[27]

### Minority/Majority Tribe Issues

There are apprehensions in most part of Nigeria as some tribes feel marginalized and dominated by other tribes in terms of the economy, polity or another social way of life. The domination in this case refers to the advantageous position occupied by some ethnic group to the detriment of other groups in a given Nigerian society. This could be in form of denial in the distribution of national wealth, holding public offices, resources allocation, and opportunities and sharing of political power among the ethnic groups. Coupled with the failure of the government both at national and sub-national levels to provide means of livelihood, the minorities feel cheated, neglected and marginalized by the larger ethnic group. This undue domination of the smaller groups shows why ethnic ideology is appealing than other forms of mobilization as evidenced in the relevance of Afenifere, the Ohaneze Ndigbo, the Arewa Consultative Forum, the Southern Leaders Forum and the Ijaw National Congress, etc in national politics. Even at the sub-national politics, this domination is a serious conflict generating tools as evidenced in violent conflicts in many communities of Nigeria.

In Nigeria, unfortunately, ethnic consciousness is easily manipulated by politicians particularly because other identities are either weak or altogether absent. This clearly explains the tendency where most people do not feel they are part of the larger territorial unit created by the state power, because the state and the ruling elite do not give the minority a sense of belonging irrespective of ethnic origins, there whipping of ethnic sentiments. Some salient examples over the years in Nigeria include conflicts between Ife-Modakeke, Umuleri/Aguleri, Tiv and Jukun, Tiv/Idoma, Kataf versus Hausa, Hausa/Fulani versus the Sayawa. Similarly, the cases of Urhobo, Ijaw versus Itsekiri among numerous others are widely known all over Nigeria with each having its peculiarities.[28]

## RELIGIOUS DOMINATION/BELIEF

Even though Nigeria is a secular country, violent and non-violent conflicts in recent years are on the increase in Nigeria leading to ethno religious clashes between Muslims and Christians. Some of these cases have been recorded in Kaduna, Plateau, Nassarawa, Taraba and Bauchi States among others. It is evident that some unpatriotic politicians through their selfish activities are exploiting the religious sentiments of the citizens for their personal political gains. The so called claim by Boko Haram insurgents to impose sharia law in Northern Nigeria especially in the North Eastern States of Yobe, Adamawa and Borno through its violent campaigns have further created serious suspicion between Muslims and Christians with negative consequences on the already fragile national unity and development. This is unbearable as the country is roughly divided between the dominant Muslim north and the dominant Christian south with each group claiming hegemony. The relevance of religion in the Nigerian politics is also underlined by the fact that most Nigeria's ethnic boundaries tend to coincide with religion, only with the exception of the Yoruba ethnic group.

However, with the recent development and revelation as the Boko Haram insurgency unfold, it is no longer secret that some disgruntled Nigerian political classes who have nothing to offer to the masses and the nation in general hide under the banners of their religions to whip up religious support to achieve their political goals. The recent revelations and discover on the involvement of some controversial personalities in the Boko Haram crisis have further confirmed the suspicion of the intent of the whole crisis. This is further conformed in their utterances, actions and inactions as the group continued to unleash terror in the land and the kind of sentiments they enjoy from different religious groups in Nigeria. However, the resultant consequences of these conflict have always been paid by the least responsible especially youth, women and children that need to be addressed urgently.[29]

## PARTY SYSTEM AND POWER STRUGGLE

In Nigeria, looking at its political and economic environment, the quest to capture and control the distribution of power and resource is majorly the basis for the existence of most political parties. Therefore, each political party perceives any other party in the country as a potential competitor and therefore, as an opponent in the struggle for control of power thus employing different strategies and means leading to conflicts in the process. Banking on this, desperate politicians who wish to win elections (even if they are not qualified to win elections) mobilize unemployed youths to perpetrate various electoral crimes such as abductions and assassination of opponents and innocent victims, rigging of election results. This explains election period in Nigeria as a-matter-of-do-or-die or a matter-of-life-and-death.

Unfortunately, this kind of electoral politics which fosters the development of political party thuggery, armed banditry and assassination have of course, signaled serious dangers for the democratic and partisan politics in Nigeria over the years. This is more evident in the deaths of numerous civilians and several cases of high profile political assassinations with the major ones in the killing of Chief Bola Ige, Dr. Harry Marshall, Dr. Chuba Okadigbo, Chief Ogbonna Uche, Sa'adatu Rimi, Funsho Williams, Lamber Saturday Dogogo, Aminasoari Dikibo, Ayo Daramola, Modu Fannami Eiubio, Dipo Dina and several others.[30]

## Corruption and Inequality

Corruption is referred to as misuse of office for personal gains. It could be seen as an abuse of entrusted power for private gains. It is seen as lack of discipline, a diversion from the norm, appearance of bias and intention to subvert any influence by a public official receiving something to influence his/her decision. Despite the fact that, corruption has been considered as morally degrading, socially unacceptable and politically destructive, it has unfortunately over the years ate deep into most public and private organizations and individuals of Nigeria. The effects of corruption all over Nigerian society and state have led to inefficiency, injustice, inequality, intolerance thereby undermining the establishment of good governance, accountability and transparency by the political class who are supposed to be the arrow heads of solving Nigeria's problem. Indeed, the failure by the government to address this problem has created extremely rich and extremely poor classes in most Nigerian communities leading to series of conflict generating tools in such society with attendant consequences. Beyond this, it is summarized that the major causes of conflict in most Nigerian communities among others include:

- Self-identities rather than collective identities by the national citizens.
- Degeneration of individual and group moral values.
- Lack of respect for human rights of citizens by individuals and the government.
- Prevalence of poverty, hunger, diseases, illiteracy, unemployment, deprivations and other unfulfilled needs and
- Poor governance as manifested in corruption, mismanagement, leading to incompetence, inefficiency, impunity, injustice, failure to deliver basic services and overall insecurity.[31]

## Conflict Transformation for Countering Violent Extremism in Nigeria

Sometimes, a crisis may degenerate into a state of conflict where there are threats to human security, intense violence characterized by fighting, death, injury, large scale displacement population. In this situation, *Conflict Suppression* as an approach becomes necessary especially as the crisis might have reached an extreme situation. In a situation like this, an intervention is required by those who are more powerful such as the

state actors. This could be done through the use of coercive apparatus where it becomes necessary. The involvement of the military and the use of force in addressing the Boko Haram insurgency, Niger Delta militancy, cattle rustling are case in point. In line with this, conflict triangle works on the assumption that the best way to provide peace is to understand violence, its antithesis and how to address it. This reflects the normative aims of preventing, managing, limiting and overcoming extreme violent in the society as most conflict arises due to one party perceived that one or more goals or purpose or means of achieving a goals is been threatened or hindered or existence of injustice and lack of freedom.[32]

## CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

Approach has earlier been introduced in this work by Paul of the School of Peace Building and later developed by some scholars like Lederach have asserted that conflict transformation goes beyond conflict suppression and resolution. This is about building on longer standing relationships through a process of change in the perceptions and attitudes of the parties concerned. The aim of conflict transformation is to change the perception of the parties, their relationship and the conditions that created the conflict. Therefore, conflict transformation entails the coming into being of a new situation involving conflict issues, perceptions, relationships and communication patterns. As the conflict has become a permanent like threat and in most cases have revered development in Nigeria, it should adequately underscore the need for laying an important basis for the formulation of right values, behaviours and attitudes that will promote balanced personal, social, economic and political relation. Although the use of dialogue and negotiations has to come to some extent been fruitful yet the Nigerian polity has not been crisis free in the view of this trend, a need for a social economic and political reorientation of the populace cannot be overemphasized.

### Conflict Management

Conflict management entails the process of reducing the destructive capacity of conflict through a number of measures and approaches by engaging with the parties involved in that conflict. In most cases, conflict management is often used synonymously with "conflict regulation" which covers issues of handling conflicts at different stages. This also includes efforts made to prevent conflict through proactive measures thereby limiting, containing and litigating conflict. The usage of the term "conflict management" indicates the reality that conflict is inevitable. As it remains so, what practitioners need to do is to therefore regulate and manage it. In either case, management of conflict uses peaceful or non-violent methods which are available at individual, family, group, community and national levels divided into two broad categories: proactive or reactive methods.[33]

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION

This includes a variety of approaches aimed at terminating conflicts through the constructive solving of problems by Nigerians. It is distinct from management or transformation. By conflict resolution, the deeply rooted sources of conflict are expected to be addressed and resolved and the behaviour is no longer violent, nor are attitudes hostile any longer, while the structure of the conflict has been changed. Furthermore, at this level, the outcomes of the resolution are to be mutually acceptable by parties concerned for sustained peace. However, there are differences in the approach to conflict resolution in Nigeria depending on the culture and civilization of the people of such an ethnic group.

For instance, the African Traditional Dispute Resolution (ATDR) differs from the Western Alternative Dispute Resolution (WADR). Although in Nigeria, the approaches differ from one culture, community to another, most communities have traditional leaders known as Chiefs, Obis, Emirs, Obas and have some traditional powers conferred on them to solve disputes. On the other hand, the WADR promote the use of non-violent means to the conflict including grassroot community based activities through good governance, communication, collaboration, negotiation and mediation. It can be said that in principle conflict resolution connotes a sense of finality, where the parties are mutually satisfied with the outcome of the settlement and the conflicts resolved in a true sense. There are also other ways to resolve conflicts in Nigeria such as surrendering, running away, overpowering the opponent with violent acts, filing a law suit, etc.

### Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

Sometime referred to as simple as conflict resolution, grew out of the belief that there are better options to solve conflict than using violence or going to court over the years, the term ADR and conflict resolution are used somewhat interchangeably and refer to a wide range of processes that encouraged nonviolent dispute resolution outside the traditional court system. The idea is about the search for an application of "non-conventional" peaceful methods of settling the dispute and solving conflict situation using the least expensive methods and that satisfies both parties as well as to preserve and protect the relationship after settlement have been reached. This system was employed by the federal government to resolve a lingered issue with the Niger Delta militants that gave birth to the amnesty to the youths.

### Mediation – Arbitration

In this case, prior to the session, the disputing parties agree to try mediation first, but give neutral third party the authority to make a decision if medication is not successful. Also of the relevance is **Early Neutral Evaluation** which involves using a court-appointed attorney to review a case before it goes to trial. The attorney reviews the merits of the case and encourages the parties involved in the case of attempt resolution. If

there is no final resolution, the attorney then informs the disputants about how to proceed with litigation and gives an opinion on the likely outcome if the case goes to trial.

Another available approach in the Nigerian communities in the resolution of conflicts is the *Community Conferencing* which is a form of structured conversation involving members of a community (offenders, victims family, friends, etc) affected by the dispute or a crime. Using a script, the facilitator invites people to express how they were affected and how they wish to address the harm inflicted. Also, *collaborative law* which is a process for solving disputes in which the attorneys commit to reaching a settlement without using litigation. More importantly, is *Negotiated Rulemaking* considered as a collaborative process in which government agencies seek input from a variety of stakeholders before issuing a new rule. Politicians and politics in Nigeria hinged their problem resolution with offended members on this method. Finally, *Peer mediation* it involves young people act as mediators to help resolve disputes among their peers. In most cases, this has to do with age system more especially in Eastern part of Nigeria and in the middle belt regions of Nigeria.

# CONCLUSION

Nigeria is abundantly blessed with all kinds of resources that any nation could thrive on to be a major player in the globe. Nigeria is ranked 6th major oil producer in the globe and is endowed with the large domestic market. Although about 60% of Nigeria's population is youth with all their potentials, contemporary Nigeria has become a violent conflict ridden society with youths at the heart of this crisis. It appears that lack of proper management of resources and state power is at the root of violent extremism in most parts of Nigeria. An extreme disparity in the distribution of wealth among citizens is threatening social cohesion. Governance hardly responds to specific needs of the youth as their issues only fall across thematic public policy areas such as education, health and juvenile delinquency. The government thus does not have a specific structure in place for youth who are the major perpetrators and victims of these crises.

Worrisomely, with youth unemployment put at 38 percent placing the country with the highest record of youth unemployment in the African hemisphere the frustration of youth unemployment, social, political and economic exclusion, poverty, it breeds underdevelopment, violence, extremism and instability. It is therefore understood that people tend to cause trouble when there interest is jeopardized, thereby causing unnecessary tension. All these happened because people rush into violence without any proper analysis of the situation. Our political, religious, ethnic and traditional elites must adopt peace education and advocacy in conflict resolution which would enhance a lasting peace and promote peaceful coexistence in the society for social economic development.

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**\*Corresponding Author:** Iwuala E. Zebulon

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