

AN EVALUATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AND BUILD PEACE IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The paper evaluates the efforts of Government to prevent violence and build peace in Nigeria. It focuses on the approaches successive Governments in Nigeria have been deploying over the years to contain the menace of violence in the country. Despite the enormous resources successive Governments claim to have used in confronting violence over the years, pockets of violence still dot the nooks and crannies of the country. In attempts to contain the increasing level of violence in the country, state actors often emphasize the top-bottom approach involving the use of police and the military, which at best can only result in negative peace. The emphasis on the top-bottom approach makes positive peace elusive, the gap following the failure approach to arrest violence on a sustainable basis and entrench positive peace in the country, necessitates the need for non-state actors to step in, with a view to bridging the gap. This paper adopts a descriptive method in its study, as it concludes that greater attention has been paid to the use of security agents and top-bottom approach. It therefore, recommends a shift of emphasis to bottom-top approach which provides the grassroots and the Nigerian people the opportunity to own the process.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the years, successive Governments in Nigeria have made attempts to manage violent conflicts in the country. Of the various attempts, including court processes and panels of enquiry, the use of minimum and excessive force through the police and the military has enjoyed greater attention in managing violent conflict in the country. Given the understanding that it is difficult to achieve positive peace through violent means, one may not be surprised why positive peace has remained elusive in the country over the years. At best, what might be achievable through violent means is negative peace, this may account for why intermittent violent break out is often the experience even after government intervention.

Dialogue is one potent path to positive peace. Since the ushering in of what appeared to be stable democratic structures in Nigeria since 1999, Government attempted the idea of national dialogue setting twice with a view to addressing the grievances confronting the nation. This was critical especially considering that “democratic experience in Nigeria since 1999 has been tainted with political and communal violence” (Irene, 2017, 1). During the administration of former President Olusegun Obasanjo, National Political Reform Conference with about 398 delegates was inaugurated, on February 21, 2005 to address salient issues confronting the nation. As stated by Obasanjo, the conference was about designing the most appropriate and relevant institutional mechanisms for managing Nigerians diversity. The conference selected respected individuals as members, and had Justice Niki Tobi as chairman (Irene, 2015).

The South-South delegates from the oil-rich zone of Nigeria had demanded an irreducible minimum of 50% derivation, but agreed to however accept 25% derivation in the interim (Irene, 2014). This was not accepted especially by the delegates from the northern part of the country. The Conference recommended the raising of the derivation to 17 per cent, but was rejected by the Niger Delta delegates to the conference as they insisted on 25 per cent with a phased review to 50 per cent. This was not accepted by other delegates, and this fomented political polarisation along oil producing and non-oil producing lines. The National Political Reform Conference disintegrated following the walkout staged on June 14, 2005 by the South-South delegates as they stayed away from further proceedings over the contentious derivation principle, and this led to the eventual collapse of the Conference.

Also, former President Jonathan announced in the 2013 Independence Day nationwide broadcast to the nation, the willingness of his Government to convoke a national dialogue. As a follow up to this, Jonathan appointed a 13-member Presidential Advisory Committee on National Dialogue headed by former Senator Femi Ofurounmu. The panel was tasked to advise Government on the framework of a national dialogue by consulting widely with Nigerians. In March 2014, the Jonathan’s Government inaugurated a National Confab in an effort towards finding a lasting

solution to the mirage of problems confronting Nigeria. The National Dialogue setting under the chairmanship of Justice Idris Kutigi was initially designed to last for three months. A total of 492 delegates were nominated to the conference. These delegates were drawn from different parts of the country and represented various groups and affiliations in the country.

The decision to create the structure was borne out of the urgent need, on one hand to address the problem of violence and insecurity occasioned by the activities of the Boko Haram sect, and on the hand to address several other structural imbalances that have inflicted structural violence on Nigerians (Irene, 2015). Also, it was believed that “a credible and equitable revenue allocation formula represents a viable way of lessening the tension, agitation, and perception of unfairness, if not total disillusion in the Niger Delta”. In addition, “the implementation of a viable programme for rapid human development would be a lot easier to achieve with a revenue allocation formula that the people of the Niger Delta consider equitable and acceptable” (Niger Delta Human Development Report , 2006, 15). The confab wound down its activities in August 2014. The national dialogue setting submitted its final report to Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, but he could not implement the report before his tenure ended. He however handed over the report to President Buhari who succeeded him, but till date nothing has been done as regards the report.

The country is still faced with conflicts arising from structural imbalances and direct violence. The main contentious issues that have been generating grievances and conflicts which such report was expected to address include various cases of direct violence, rotational presidency, derivation principle/resources, control/fiscal federalism, devolution of powers and quota system policy among others (Irene, 2015).

This paper therefore seeks to investigate and evaluate the efforts of Government in Nigeria in violent conflict intervention with a view to identifying the gap(s) and recommends alternative approach robust in its capacity to entrench positive peace and a culture of peace in the country.

THE SOUTH-SOUTH (NIGER DELTA) EXPERIENCE

The first main attempt towards addressing the predicament and grievances of the Niger Delta people could be traced back to the establishment of the Willink Commission of Inquiry by the Colonial Government in 1957 to investigate the fears of the minority and how to allay those fears. In 1958, the Commission reported that the needs of those who live in the creeks and swamps of the Niger Delta are very different from those of the interior. The commission, in its conclusion, stated that “a feeling of neglect and a lack of understanding was widespread...” and further emphasised that “the area is poor, backward and neglected” (Niger Delta Human Development Report, 2006, 11).

Following the Willink Report, the post-independence Government created the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDB) in 1961. The body failed to address the problem of the region, as clearly stated in Willink Report. The failure led to the establishment of the Niger Delta Basin Development Authority (NDBDA) in 1976. The body did not only fail dismally, but even got entangled in organisational problems right from its inception as none of the appointees into the Board of the organisation was an indigene of the Niger Delta.

On ascending to power in 1979, former President Shehu Shagari created eleven River Basin Development Authorities (RBDA), among which included, the Niger River Basin Development Authority, the Anambra-Imo River Basin Development Authority, and the Benin-Owena River Basin Development Authority as well as the Cross River Basin Development Authority. The River Basin Authorities also had little impact, as those appointed onto the Board of the structures by the Federal Government, were Politicians who saw their positions as a window of opportunity to share, what they called the „national cake“ rather than committing their time to the substance of their appointments (Irene, 2015).

In what appeared like another façade of attempt, the Babangida led administration in July 1992, established the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC). The body was given “the statutory responsibility to receive and administer, in accordance with the confirmed ratio of oil production in each state, the monthly allocation of the Federation Account” (Niger Delta Human Development Report, 2006). This was meant to attend to the rehabilitation and development of mineral producing areas, as well as, to tackle the ecological problem following oil exploration in the area. Upon its creation, three per cent of the Federation Account was allocated to it, but this was however, raised to six per cent in 1995, and between 1993 and 1995 about 17.42 billion naira (over US \$135 million) got into the pulse of the commission.

However, like the previous bodies, OMPADEC could not make any meaningful impact in the Niger Delta region. It’s failure, according to the Chief Executive Director, was partly due to lack of data for planning purpose, lack of means to cope with swollen demands following years of physical neglect and deprivation of the region, including inadequate funding of the commission by the Government, further stating that the decree that established OMPADEC mandated it to receive three per cent of the Federation Account. Ironically, this was the three per cent it was receiving from the net revenue of the Federation Account. The commission which was characterised by profligacy and extravagancy winded up with abandoned projects as its legacy (Niger Delta Human Development Report, 2006).

Following the return to democratic regime in 1999 with former President Olusegun Obasanjo at the helm of affairs, the expectation of the Niger Delta people heightened with the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) by the Obasanjo regime, who in December 2000 inaugurated the NDDC Board. During the event,

Obasanjo stated that the body has the potential to proffer a lasting solution to the socio-economic plight of the region. In her quest to attain its mandate, the board immediately went ahead to identify her area of focus to include, the development of socio-physical infrastructures, technology, human development, economic/environmental remediation and stability as well as the pursuit of a peaceful environment that would allow tourism to thrive, including the offering of support to a buoyant culture (Niger Delta Human Development Report, 2006, 12). Furthermore, unlike other previous bodies, the NDDC came up with a master plan, as the body was structured to receive her funding support from the Federal Government, the Oil Companies in the region, Ecological Fund, and member states of the Niger Delta. However, between 2001 and 2004, the federal Government accounted for 78.03 per cent of the US \$341 million disbursed to the Commission.

Alas, like the story line of the previous bodies created by the government for the region, the NDDC soon began to bemoan funding problems, and also failed to meet the expectation and make a positive impression on the Niger Delta people. It was widely acclaimed that the local people never had any say on the composition of the body which only owed its loyalty to the Federal Government and the Oil Companies which created the structural violence in the region in the first place. This top-bottom approach to development planning and implementation was not able to offer a lasting solution to the region's predicament.

Sequel to his election, and eventual inauguration as President and Commander-in-Chief of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the late Umaru Yar'Adua enlisted the Niger Delta as one of the cardinal agenda's for his administration in 2007. In what seemed like working towards the realisation of his Government's plan for the region, the Umaru Yar'Adua administration in September 2008, created the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs to meet the infrastructural developmental needs, as well as promote community empowerment in the Niger Delta region. It can be recalled that corruption both in Government and in the various structures created by Government was one of the salient factors that led to failure of the organisation in meeting its target objectives. The continuous presence of violence in the region, despite aforementioned Government strategies, is a confirmation of what Piiparinen (2007, 355) reported as "consistency of the root causes of violent conflict in the context of democratic regime with a clear disconnection between policies and practice".

The late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's Government also came up with an Amnesty programme in 2009. The Government in its declaration predicated it's amnesty package for the militant Niger Delta youths on "on the willingness and readiness of the militants to give up all illegal arms in their possession, completely renounce militancy in all its ramifications unconditionally, and depose to an undertaking to this effect" (Nigerian Tribune, March, 14, 2012, 18). The amnesty programme, as it were, was designed to guarantee freedom from prosecution of the Niger Delta militants, and by October 2009, most of the key militia leaders

accepted the Government Amnesty offer (USIP Special Report, 2011: 2), which had as part of its package disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) process including a monthly stipend payment.

The amnesty programme, which was largely embraced by majority of the militants, lasted for two months, from August 6 to October 4, 2009 and the Government stated that there was no extension for the Amnesty programme, and that grave consequences awaited anybody who took to violence in the Niger Delta. This development resulted in what seemed like a transient cease-fire, thereby reducing the situation of direct violence in the region, but insecurity persisted. The Yar'Adua Government further consolidate its commitment to the transformation of the Niger Delta, created the Ministry for Niger Delta Development. The Ministry was saddled with onus to manage the development of the Niger Delta region (Irene, 2014).

While early progress appeared to have been made to reduce direct violence following the personal involvement of the late former President Umaru Yar'Adua, progress was however stalled as a result of the illness that took him to Saudi Arabia for treatment. During the six-month political logjam occasioned by his absence, "a presidential amnesty committee was set up, but all that could be said about the committee was its establishment of procedure to pay a monthly stipend of \$430 to the 20, 192 registered erstwhile Niger Delta militants (USIP Special Report, 2011, 2). Following the death of President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, President Jonathan who succeeded him continued with the Amnesty Programme.

The Senate, on the 30th July 2009 approved 10 billion naira for the committee implementing the Amnesty programme and each militant who surrendered, was bid to receive \$433, and by October 5, 2009, two months into the programme, an estimated 451 weapons, including AK-47s and rocket launchers were turned in. The militant groups were made to participate in the demobilization and reintegration processes through non-violence and a conflict resolution program. Some of them were also sent for training outside Nigeria. It was generally believed that not less than 10000 militants participated in the Niger Delta Amnesty Programme (USIP Special Report, 2011, 2).

Another attempt at confronting structural violence in the Niger Delta was seen in the dynamics and politics of revenue allocation. It could be recalled, that the issue of cross-subsidization i.e. the richer South would subsidize developmental endeavour in the poorer North, was at the root of the 1914 amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorate by Lord Lugard. However, the 1946 creation of the Philipson Fiscal Commission by the colonial administration could be regarded as the first efforts to define the basis and levels of sharing revenue in Nigeria by the component units or region in the country. The Commission proposed that the derivation principle should be adopted as basis for fiscal federalism. By this, sharing was to be based on the proportion each region contributed to the central Government. Hence, in the 1948 - 1949 and 1951-1952 fiscal years, derivation was the only criterion for revenue allocation, and such

derivation principle was maintained at 50 per cent between 1946 and 1960. In the arrangement, 50 per cent of minerals proceeds including oil was allocated to the source region, while 30 per cent went into a distribution pool for all regions to share, and 20 per cent went to the Federal Government (Niger Delta Human Development Report, 2006, 14).

The Petroleum Decree No. 51 of 1969, promulgated by former Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon, transferred the ownership and control of all petroleum resources in any land in Nigeria to the Federal Government, thereby denying individual, commodities, local and even state Government of ownership and control of any land containing minerals. Also, between 1969 and 1971, the Gowon Administration reduced from 50 to 45 per cent derivation for an oil producing state, and thus increased the Federal allocation by the 5 per cent, as the country was under the siege of civil war at that time.

The Obasanjo Military Government of 1976 to 1979 made the distinction between onshore and offshore proceeds, beefing up the Federal Government onshore proceeds share to 80 per cent, leaving only 20 per cent of the onshore proceed share to oil producing state, while all offshore proceeds went into distributional pool. The Government was also responsible for awarding a paltry one per cent to the oil producing state, which Alhaji Shehu Shagari Government, that succeeded Obasanjo Military Government, raised to 1.5 per cent, while Babangida Military Government increased it to three per cent in 1987, and this continued into Abacha Military Government that later set up the Constitutional Conference to resolve the country's political imbroglio at that time. The Constitutional conference recommended 13 per cent which was accepted by Abacha, though he could not implement it before his death. The Obasanjo led democratic government that came on board in 1999 however implement the 13 per cent derivative.

The Government has, over the years, used the military approach in the management of direct violence in the region. To this effect, the Government constituted a special military task force known as Joint Military Task Force (JTF) code named Operation Paulo Shield in the management of the violence in the Niger Delta. The use of JTF to engage the Niger Delta is in line with the long standing Government tradition on the use of violence means to address violence which never really results in positive peace but at best negative peace and as such the root causes of the problem are not addressed.

THE NORTH-EAST EXPERIENCE

Multi-dimensional approach involving carrots and sticks through the use of the force (military) and dialogue committees was adopted by Government in tackling the terrorist attacks by the Boko Haram terrorists. Government also employed court option, as it charged those arrested following their involvement in Boko Haram's insurgency to court. While the military continued their offences against the terrorists, Government, at

the same time, set up the Presidential Committee on Dialogue and Peaceful Resolution of Security Challenges in the North. The Committee at different occasions attempted to open up dialogue with some of the Boko Haram sect members. It also recommended that Government works out a scheme of compensation and rehabilitation for victims of the Boko Haram attacks (Irene, 2014). The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)-which is a government agency, has been playing key role in the resettlement of the displaced people (due to Boko Haram attacks), before their return to their communities.

It was believed that the two-pronged approach of enforcement and dialogue adopted by the Nigerian Government would make Boko Haram see reason. Unfortunately, it has not exactly turned out to be so, hence compelling the Government to take further steps to proscribe the Boko Haram organisation on June 4, 2013. Many Nigerians believe that only a comprehensive approach by the Nigerian Government to counter the terrorist group through a combination of law enforcement, political, and developmental efforts as well as military engagement, would help root out violent extremism in the country.

THE NORTH-CENTRAL EXPERIENCE

The north-central especially Kaduna is one of the “epicentres of ethno-religious violence” (Abdu (2002, 2) and farmers-herdsmen conflict. In its effort towards bringing an end to the conflict between Fulani herdsmen and the Tiv Farmers in Nasarawa and Benue states, a special peace meeting was put together by Benue state Governor – His Excellency Gabriel Suswan on the 30th of May 2012 in Benue State Nigeria. Those who attended the meeting according to Irene (2014) included the Sultan of Sokoto – Alhaji Saad Abubakar, the Tor Tiv, the Emir of Gombe and other traditional rulers of Benue and Nasarawa States extraction. There was also a delegation of the Nasarawa State Government, Fulani community in Benue, Fulani Cattle Breeding Association, Tiv Cultural Association in Taraba, and auxiliary Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi- Rt. Rev. William Avenyo and the Bishop of the Church of Nigeria Anglican Communion – Rt. Rev. Nathan Nyon.

At the meeting, the stakeholders resolved that a person that pilfers a Fulani cow should be treated as criminal. Also, warnings were handed over to the Fulani herdsmen, to refrain from taking laws into their hands by attacking the Tiv, and that they should rather report their cases or grievances to the host traditional ruler in the event of the Tiv breaching the directive, not to pilfer with their cows. Other decisions taking at the meeting as contained in the Daily Independent newspaper dated May 31, 2012 included:

- An immediate ceasefire call, and that both the Fulani herdsmen and the Tiv Farmers should demobilise their militias at the border areas, and that they should also stop carrying dangerous weapon

- An appeal that those who sustain or incur losses from both sides of the group during the clashes should endeavour to forget the past.
- That the traditional rulers from both sides should emphasise the use of dialogue, so as to create and foster better understanding of the issue at stake, as well as putting as utmost priority, the constitution of conflict resolution committees at all levels.
- Statements by the stakeholders in their communiqué, that both the Tiv and the Fulani must live in peace, and whoever breaches the peace should be handled as a common criminal and be so dealt with in accordance with the law of the land.

These resolutions were contained in the communiqué signed by Secretaries to both Nasarawa and Benue State Governments. As resolved in the meeting, a committee of three traditional rulers, with each representing the border areas of Nasarawa and Benue States was constituted in order to ensure the resolutions of the meeting were duly implemented.

THE SOUTH-EAST EXPERIENCE

Effort by Government towards the management of Aguleri and Umuleri violent conflicts dated back to the colonial era. The dispute between the neighbouring Aguleri and Umuleri communities was over a piece of land. The colonial administration employed the use of brutal force in addressing the conflict and in relating with the people (Irene, 2014). The colonial government applied force, absolutism and arbitrariness which could be seen in reaction to the peoples' perception of the government as a foreign one, which they believed lacked legitimacy notwithstanding several laws made by the colonial government. In line with the policy of unobstructive withdrawal, the colonial government also employed litigation as conflict management option for the protracted crisis between communities (Irene, 2014) as such, got the communities entangled in a cycle of litigations and counter-litigations.

Both the colonial and post-colonial Governments shared a common hallmark of confronting violence with violence. The use of security agents in the management of the conflict was a common approach to handling the conflicts by both the colonial and post-colonial governments. Like the colonial Government, the post-colonial Government often waited till violence broke out and then deployed policemen to quell the crisis. This was seen in the 1964, 1995 and 1999 clashes between the Aguleri and Umuleri. The policemen sent to manage the conflict were often ordered to shoot at sight (Irene, 2014). In the end, nothing was really done by the government to reconcile, re-integrate and build peace among the people. The post-colonial government like its colonial counterpart also resorted to the use of litigations.

The use of Judicial Commission of Inquiry was also readily visible in handling the dispute. Following the violent conflict that occurred in 1995, a Judiciary Commission of Inquiry was instituted by the then Military Governor of Anambra State. The Judicial Commission of Inquiry was given the mandate to investigate the crisis. The Commission had Justice Moses Nweje as Chairman.

The Commission's findings on the conflicts contained in the White Paper indicted Aguleri. The implementation of the recommendations contained in the White Paper was however forestalled following a change in leadership of the state. Colonel Mike Attah – the military Administrator who constituted the panel was replaced by Wing Commander Emmanuel Ukaegbu, who was not interested in implementing the White paper. Furthermore, the Aguleri community denounced the White paper and sought court injunction to restrain the government from implementing the White Paper.

These developments infuriated the Umuleris as they felt humiliated and this led to a reprisal attack on Aguleri in 1999. Following the 1999 violent conflict, the Chinwoke Mbadinuju led civilian Government that was in power then, again constituted a panel of inquiry with the mandate to investigate the conflicts. Unfortunately, Mbadinuju's Government, like his predecessor, did not act on the panel's recommendations.

THE SOUTH-WEST EXPERIENCE

Other neighbouring communities that were embattled in an age-old fratricidal war were Modakeke and Ife in the state of Osun. The relationship that existed between the Madakeke and the Ife people was at the beginning very cordial (Asiyanbola, 2007). According to Agbe (2001: 15), the people of Modakeke migrated at one point in time or the other to Ile-Ife from different locations especially Ibadan. Since then, the two ethnic groups have been leaving together as neighbours.

Early attempts at intervening in the conflicts could be traced to the traditional rulers of the communities. Ooni Abeweila first attempted in 1847 to resolve the crisis by settling the Modakeke in separate settlement, but this did not work because, according to Albert (2001) segregation rather than solve the problem of plural society often compounds it. Interventions by Governments at the state and federal levels were largely through the use of force and setting up Panels or Committees of Inquiry. Successive Governments used the Police to quell violence and manage the violent conflict. Former President Olusegun Obasanjo's Government that lasted from 1999 to 2007, however set up Peace Panel which was headed by Olabode George - a retired naval commodore. The Olabode George Peace Panel into Ife-Modakeke's conflicts recommended, among others, that a separate local government area be created for the Modakekes, in order to put to an end to the recurrent experience of bloodletting/shedding between the warring communities. The delay in the implementation of the Committee or Panel's Report, after months of coming up with the

recommendations, became another trigger for conflict in the community, as the Modakeke initiated move to create for itself a Local Government area as well as appointing a Chairman. The Government again used the Police to intervene. The Police dispelled the youths who were already gathering and throwing stones. Again, the Report of the Panel/Committee was never implemented by Government.

Also, prior to Olusegun Obasanjo's administration, the Abacha led military Government in 1996, went ahead to create a Local Government in the area, -Ife East Local Government with headquarters at Enu Owa. Unfortunately, the local government never functioned for even a day, as the action was greeted with crises following the violence orchestrated by youths and adults alike in Ife, which triggered reaction by the Modakeke. The creation of the Local Government which the Government had hoped would bring the conflict to an end, unfortunately, led to wanton destruction of lives and properties in the area.

HUMAN RIGHTS, VIOLATIONS, INVESTIGATION COMMISSION

Human rights abuse is another aspect of violence in Nigeria. Following his election as President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in 1999, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo on the 14th day of June 1999 announced a 7-person Commission. The Panel which was christened Human Rights Violations, Investigation Commission (aka Oputa Panel) was spearheaded by Justice Chukwudifor Oputa. The said Oputa Panel was charged with the responsibility to investigate human rights abuses in Nigeria since the last military handover to civilians.

The Panel submitted its interim Report to President Obasanjo on 21st of May 2002, while on 28th May 2002, the main report of the Panel was submitted to President Obasanjo in Abuja, Nigeria in 60 large boxes. However, the report of the panel never saw the light of the day as former military President, General Ibrahim Babangida, on the 3rd of June 2002 filed a suit at the Federal High Court, asking it "to stop President Olusegun Obasanjo from implementing the Report of the Oputa-led Human Rights Violation Investigation Commission". Former Director of Military Intelligence, Colonel Halilu Akilu and Brig. General Kunle Togun also joined in filing the suit. The defendants in the suit included, President Olusegun Obasanjo, Attorney General of the Federation and Justice Oputa and his Commission. Babangida, on the 3rd of February 2003 got a favourable judgement from the Supreme Court, stating that the Panel has no power to summon witnesses outside the Federal Capital Territory, and that the 1999 constitution made no provision for tribunals of Inquiry (Irene, 2014). The said judgement foreclosed the prospect of having the Report of the Panel released by the Federal Government.

POWER-SHARING APPROACH

Power-sharing, has been largely employed in the management of conflicts, especially ethnic related conflicts. This is occasioned by the fact that distributional issues of resources, political offices, employment, etc., have featured prominently at the root of most violent conflicts in Nigeria. Power-sharing is operational in three dimensions, vis-viz political, territorial and economic dimensions. While the political dimension is concerned with how political and bureaucratic offices are distributed, the territorial dimension is focused at exercising autonomy by different levels of government on the ground of federalism or in relation to regional autonomy. The economic dimension is basically centred on rules in connection to the distribution of economic resources, controlled by the State among ethnic groups (Irene, 2014).

The year 1979 marked the first major steps to enshrine power-sharing in the country's constitution, and since then, special and specific provisions have been made available in the constitution. The federal character principle is the most salient power-sharing arrangement in Nigeria's constitution. It is assumed to guarantee the representation of ethnic groups in political positions, appointment into public services, and the allocation of national resources. The manner in which resources accruing to the nation from oil exploration from the Niger Delta are allocated has been largely controversial.

Government has regularly adopted the use of mobile police, military, curfew, propaganda, judicial panel, compensations and punishment as its styles of managing violent conflict in Nigeria. Reports following the various Panels and Inquiries set up by Government to look into the various violent outbreaks are hardly implemented. Examples included, the Babalakin Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Bauchi State civil disturbances, the Karibi Whyte Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Kafanchan disturbances, Niki Tobi Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Plateau State disturbances, Justice Sankey Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Wase and Langtang disturbances, Justice Disu Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Plateau state disturbances, Prof. Tamuno Panel of Inquiry on National Security, and Justice Uwase's Electoral Reform Committee. The failure of the Nigerian Mobile Police to manage conflicts when conflicts erupt, have often led to the need for Government to deploy the military with instruction to shoot at sight. These developments often result in serious human rights violations and an escalation of violence (Ibeanu, 2006, 5). The imposition of a curfew and the use of propaganda by Government to douse public tension, are part of the regular strategies of the Nigerian Government for managing conflict in the country.

Furthermore, the judicial system is characterized with delays in justice dispensing. The foot-dragger approach to handling cases in courts, and the delays in arraigning of accused persons in courts, have not only led to delayed justice, but also contributed in overcrowding the Nigerian prisons. The current practices in Government strategies for managing conflicts in Nigeria, partly aligns with Black's theory. It has been argued according to the theory that:

... the status of nations within the world-system at a particular time is correlated with the primary strategy they use for conflict management and ... the strategy used may affect the nations' subsequent rank (Borg, 1992: 262).

The Thomas-Kilmann model, which centred on the dimensions of assertiveness and cooperativeness, is connected to the above. While assertiveness is committed to the satisfaction of personal concerns, cooperativeness on the other hand is focused at satisfying collective concerns. Both dimensions – i.e. assertive and cooperative dimensions, jointly result in methods of conflict management described by avoidance, competition, compromise, accommodation and collaboration. The assertive and cooperative dimensions are both low in avoidance, hence resulting in failure to manage violent conflicts. Accommodation has more of cooperation than assertiveness, which results in partial management of violent conflicts, while competition is richer in assertiveness than cooperation, as such, often characterized by the indiscriminate application of power by a group, at the expense of the other, in conflict management processes. Both the assertive and cooperative dimensions are low in compromise and collaboration, and are respectively intermediate, resulting in concessions and a desirable outcome in the management of conflict (Irene, 2014).

Following the aforementioned theoretical postulations, the conflict management styles of the Nigerian Government, therefore involves the use of accommodation, avoidance and competition approaches (Irene, 2014). Generally, the effort of the government in managing violent conflict has yielded no appreciable outcome, even as she consistently deploys coercive methods that dismiss local concerns. In sum, it is important, at this juncture, to recall USAID's argument in 2005 regarding the capacities of the Nigerian government to manage conflicts, which according to it, is weak.

Generally, the institutional arrangement for managing conflicts since the inception of democracy in 1999, can be classified into, the human rights approach, the multi-cultural approach, and the power sharing approach. While the human rights approach is concerned with the enactment of the bill of rights in the constitution with its attendance guarantee of assurance of equality, freedom and non-discrimination so as to allay the fears of ethnic minority groups as well as to reduce discrimination against them as contained in chapter 3 section 41-54 of the Bill of Rights in Nigeria's constitution, the multicultural approach is focused on the issue of ethnicity. The mechanism handles ethnicity through attempts designed at separating the State from the stronghold of a specific ethnic nationality, in addition to the recognition of the cultural rights of minority groups as reflected in language and educational policies in Nigeria. However, this approach is not so deep-rooted in Nigeria, due to the fact that distributive questions (besides religious issues) rather than

cultural issues are the key drivers of tensions in Nigeria, hence opening channels to the concept of power-sharing.

In all, the commonest and most visible approach in managing violent conflicts in Nigeria by government is the use of the police, military and other security agents.

CONCLUSION

Nigerian Government indeed has not appeared in any form to be folding its arm but has over the years, been seen confronting one violence or the other in different parts of the country. The challenge however has been the approach. It cannot be denied that greater emphasis has been placed in the use of the security agents such as the Police and the Military over and above other approaches involving the use of panels of inquiries, committees and commissions as well as national dialogue settings in managing violent conflicts in the country. The process of any venture is as important as the outcome, and just like a corrupt process leads to corrupt outcome, so a violent process begets an outcome devoid of positive peace. This is partly the reason why the search for a lasting positive peace has remained elusive over the years in the country.

The top-bottom approach is often celebrated in Government cycle, and has over the years been largely deployed in tackling violent menace in the country. It is an approach that offers the ownership of the process to Government. There is however the need for Government to promote the use of bottom-top approach that offers the ownership of the process to the grassroots and the people in general. This approach is rich in nonviolence and it is robust in the use of dialogue, as well as defines a more reliable pathway to positive peace. One way to achieve this, is for government to promote the creation of infrastructures for peace of various kinds (such as local peace committees, peace clubs, etc.) communities in Nigeria. Just like government often earmarks huge budget to the Police and Military defence every year, Government should similarly earmark huge budget for civilian defence, peacemaking and various nonviolent approaches robust in the use of dialogue.

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