

African Liberation and Its Continued Relevance to Nigeria's Foreign Policy

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Abstract: This paper examines African Liberation and its continued relevance to Nigeria's foreign policy. It reveals that the total, cultural, social, economic and political liberation of Africa is one of the fundamental objectives of Nigeria's foreign policy since her independence in 1960 till date. In upholding the foregoing foreign policy objective, Nigeria committed moral, material and financial assistance to various liberation movements in some African countries still under any form of colonization or foreign domination. Nigeria was also the brains behind the formations of OAU in 1963 and ECOWAS in 1975 which also served as veritable platforms for Nigeria to further struggle for the liberation of these countries, such as Namibia, Angola, Zimbabwe etc. This sacrifice and commitment made by the Nigerian government resulted to liberate them from their former colonies. Equally, Nigeria also gave financial and technical support to these newly independent (liberated) African countries to take-off. It concludes that Nigeria has played and will continue to play the role of a big brother in the African continent.

Keywords: Liberation, Foreign Policy, Commitment, Movements, Committee

Introduction

In the words of Bukarambe (2000:117-119), Nigeria's policy towards African liberation revolved around four related strategies. The first is the pursuit of direct ties with the liberation movements recognized by the Organization of African Union (OAU) Liberation Committee. The OAU conditionally served the purpose of keeping Nigeria's policies in line with agreed African positions, while the direct ties facilitated the channelling of additional resources to the liberation movements. In April, 1976, the South West African Peoples' Organisation (SWAPO) became the first liberation movement to be permitted to open offices in Nigeria. Therefore, the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) of South Africa followed. The presence of the representatives of the various movements enabled easier co-ordination of direct assistance which usually involved scholarships; relief materials for those displaced living in refugee camps in the neighbouring countries; support items for the guerilla cadre; and generally financial support for their worldwide operations.

The second strategy involved the mobilization of the Nigerian public in support of the whole doctrine of African Liberation which by extension, also spills over to the concept of African unity. Given that apartheid and the organized racism that defined settler colonialism was an emotional issue with all Africans, successive Nigerian governments habitually employed rhetorics that cut a chord with the general public. Such strategies of rousing public sentiments

also served the additional purpose of popularizing the government of the day. To this end, the 1970s saw the establishment of the National Committee Against Apartheid (NACAP) and the Southern Africa Relief Fund (SARF) at the behest of the federal government. Principally, NACAP was intended to be the instrument for mobilizing and sustaining public attention, while SARF aimed at drawing direct individual participation by raising voluntary financial and material donations. The processes were then disbursed to the various liberation movements and the affected civilian population living outside their respective countries. Scholarships were also awarded.

Nigeria's third strategy was to engage the foreign powers (usually Western) that were seen as the allies and protectors of the white minority government. There were points of specific reference: Britain was held responsible for Zimbabwe (Rhodesia); Portugal was responsible for Angola, Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde, and all the major Western powers combined (eg, United States, Britain, France, Germany) for the persistent defiance of the white minority requires.

And there were genuine complications as well; these same powers were also Nigeria's main trading partners and creditors such that confronting them over anti-colonialism involved the risks of damaging or else threatening hard national political and economic interests. Furthermore, there was the reality of the Cold War and the East-West rivalry which routinely clouded the judgment of these countries. Still, Nigeria tried to assert itself even within these constraints. There were symbolic high points such as defying the United States to recognize MPLA government in Angola in November, 1975,

and the nationalization of British Petroleum (BP) in 1977. And then there was the persistent stream of harsh rhetoric denouncing these powers at every turn and forum. Finally, Nigeria's fourth approach was the grant of instant material support for the newly emerging government as they grappled with their circumstances.

A Nation's level of involvement in various international issues is often the expression of its general orientation towards the rest of the world. By orientation here, we mean a nation's general attitudes and commitments towards the external environment, its fundamental strategy for accomplishing its domestic and external objectives or interests and aspirations. A nation's general strategy results from a series of cumulative decisions made in an effort to adjust objectives, values and interests to some conditions and characteristics of the domestic and external environments. Accordingly, the foreign policy of a nation-state has to do with the preservation of its independence and security, and secondly, with the pursuit and protection of its economic interests.

Foreign policy is the aspect of a national policy that pertains to the external environment, and involves the enunciation of principles and equally indicates a country's position on major international issues-that is to say that, foreign policy is concerned with substance and content of external relations (Abia, 2000:80-81). Foreign policy has been conceptualized differently by different scholars. According to Abagen and Tyona

(2019:66), foreign policy is the promotion and protection of a country's national interest in the international arena. Equally, W. Wallace sees foreign policy as a high diplomacy, as concerned primarily with other states, with international stability and the rules of the international system, and with the promotion of the national interest through the cultivation of good relations with other governments and the negotiation and maintenance of international agreements (cited in Abia, 2000).

There are wide ranges of foreign policy objectives pursued by the Nigerian government in respect to geographic area. According to Section 19 of the 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, states that:

The State (Nigeria) shall promote African unity, as well as total political, economic, social and cultural liberation of Africa and all other forms of international cooperation conducive of the consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect and friendship among all peoples and states, and shall combat racial discrimination in all its manifestations.

Therefore, this paper examines African liberation and its continued relevance to Nigeria's foreign policy. In doing this, the paper is divided into three sections, the introduction which is currently running, Nigeria's foreign policy and African liberation, and draws a conclusion.

Nigeria's Foreign Policy and African Liberation

Nigeria, at the attainment of her independence in 1960, spelt her foreign policy towards her African neighbours in four principles viz:

- a) The principle of Sovereign equality of all African States.
- b) The principle of respect for the independence, Sovereignty and territorial integrity of every African State.
- c) The principle of non-interference in domestic affairs of other African States.
- d) The principle of commitment to functional cooperation as a means of promoting African unity (Mbachu, 2011:1996).

Balewa's commitment towards the emancipation of all African territories under foreign domination, and the eradication of racial discrimination, came as an additional principle of Nigeria's policy towards Africa. The nation's commitment to this principle has varied according to regimes. All the same, it has come to the observation of critics that successive Nigerian governments have abided by the above principles strongly. Again, Balewa's role as a brother's keeper in African matters manifested shortly after independence. It became the most overt conflict between Nigeria and a Western power, when France persisted in testing atomic weapons in the Algerian Sahara. After several warnings, the Balewa government suddenly severed diplomatic relations with Paris on January 5, 1961. Nigeria imposed a complete embargo on all French goods and gave the French Ambassador forty-eight hours to leave Lagos (Mbachu, 2011:96-97).

Nigeria came of age when the internal chaos of the former Belgian Congo was ripest. In his 1960 foreign policy address, Prime Minister Balewa declared his

knowledge of the fact that Africa was changing every day. His address further asserts:

The good developments thrive with the bad ones, and that Africa was troubled by the signs of the ideological war between the great powers of the world creeping into Africa. Among other things, he stated: we shall persuade the African leaders to take serious note of this distressing trend... so that we may all find a way to unite our efforts in preventing Africans from becoming an area of crisis and world tensions (Mbachu, 2011:97).

Nigeria's activities in African international relations generally was geared towards the promotion of African unity and solidarity, the strength of commitment to the elimination of colonialism and racism in Africa, and the fostering of economic cooperation (Aluko, 1981:24). Therefore, as stated by Abagen and Tyona (2018:283), Nigeria's commitment to further promote the central tenets of her foreign policy objectives was in the forefront of the establishment of a continental body and a regional body that is, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) formed in May, 1963 and was transformed in 2003 to become the African Union (AU) as well as the formation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1975.

Importantly, under the Balewa government, Nigeria had already been concerned with African unity, she did seemingly been content if her stand was supported by a majority of OAU member states, especially by those belonging to the former Monrovia group. Sometimes indeed it would appear that she was unperturbed to find herself opposed even by a majority of OAU members. For example,

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Nigeria was almost alone in opposing the exclusion of Moise Tshombe, the then Congolese Prime Minister from the OAU summit in Cairo in 1964. On a number of further occasions in 1964-1965, she continued to support the Tshombe government, even going so far as to defend the American-Belgian rescue operation in the Congo (Zaire) when this was attacked by twenty-two Afro-Asia countries in the Security Council of the United Nations. Nigeria has begun to play a much more vigorous part in the task of eliminating colonialism and racism on the African continent. Under the Balewa government this part was largely limited to a modest contribution to the Special Fund of the OAU Liberation Committee and to giving moral support to Liberation Movements. But, since late 1968, when the involvement of Portugal, South Africa and Rhodesia on the side of the Biafrans became evident, Nigeria has been advocating and increase in the contributions made by all African States to the Special Fund of the Liberation Committee. In February, 1969, the Nigerian spokesman at the Council of Ministers in Addis Ababa said that, his government was ready to grant 'additional funds' to the Liberation Movements, apart from its regular contribution (Aluko, 1981:24-26).

In June, 1971, Dr. Okoi Arikpo, the Nigerian Foreign Minister, severely criticized the budget of about £1 million approved for the Liberation Committee for its work during 1971-1972. He described it as 'a pathetically paltry budget... which would cover not more than a day's expenditure for a moderate army. It seems reasonable to suggest that

it was this type of appeal, backed by the OAU secretariat and the enthusiasm of King Hassan of Morocco who promised to make a personal contribution of \$1 million, that made the Rabat summit decide to increase by fifty percent members' contributions to the Special Fund of the Liberation Committee. Apart from her contributions to the Special Fund, which before the Rabat increases amounted to about £84,000 a year and later became 'some £126,000, Nigeria has since 1968 (according to Dr Arikpo) been providing direct bilateral assistance to freedom fighters, supplying trucks and other types of military hardware, medical supplies, clothing and food. Leaders of freedom movements have been invited to visit Nigeria, among them, Amiicar Cabral, the leader of the PAIGC (African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau), Oliver Tambo of the African National Congress of South Africa, and the Reverend Abel Muzorewa of the African National Council of Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). Another feature of Nigeria's intensified concern to speed up the total de-colonization of Africa has been the promotion of regional defence pacts. These are linked to the proposal for what Dr Arikpo called 'an African task force' which would help to defend African countries in the front line of colonialist or racist offenses, as well as assisting in the liberation struggle. The idea of a regional defence pact was strongly supported by the OAU Defence Committee (under Nigerian Chairmanship from 1970-1971) and by the secretariat in Addis Ababa. Other Nigerian initiatives included the proposal that the OAU should give specific African countries the responsibility for liberating particular colonial territories, and General Gowon's demand in June 1971 that within the next three years, one colonial territory should be liberated by the OAU (Aluko, 1981:26-27).

The origin of foreign policy radicalism can be located in the open declaration by General Murtala Muhammed that Nigeria would henceforth make Africa the cornerstone of its external relations, a rhetoric that was immediately backed up by the spirit recognition of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) faction in the Angolan struggle for self-determination. This unilateral action, in violation of previously agreed OAU position, was in response to intelligence reports that apartheid South African troops were already deep inside Angola fighting on the side of Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). One of the three guerrilla factions engaged in the struggle for control of the newly independent country. The Muhammed government's swift action received widespread endorsement from Nigerians who saw their country beginning to take the lead as they had expected it to be doing since independence. General Muhammed exuded the confidence of a sure-footed leader who had mastery of the intricate politics of African affairs and was willing to do whatever it would take to make Nigeria the continental *primus inter pares* that its nationals had always dreamt of long before their country gained independence (Fawole, 2003:90-91).

The General Murtala Muhammed regime's policy thrusts were also aided by the booming oil-based economy that it inherited from its predecessor. Nigeria was already, by the mid-1970s, Africa's richest country and Africa's most prominent member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), a major crude oil supplier to the United

States, and a country with enough liquidity not only to refuse external aid, but at the same time dole out largess to other less-endowed African countries. As of 1975 when the Muhammed regime came into power, Nigeria's overall standing in Africa was quite impressive. It had 17.5 percent of Africa's total population, and 22 percent of Sub-Saharan Africa's, with the implication that one in every four black African was a Nigerian. Economically, it had 16.3 percent of Africa's total GNP and 23.6 percent of Sub-Saharan Africa's. Added to this demographic superiority and a booming economy was a large standing Army of 270,000 men, which constituted 66.9 percent of the entire Armed Forces of Sub-Saharan Africa. Its annual defence expenditure of \$977 million in 1975 was 42.7 percent of the total defence appropriations for the whole of Sub-Saharan Africa. This curious combination of vital statistics and the occurrence of significant African issues of the era made Muhammed/Obasanjo tenure a period of intense and activist foreign policy pursuits (Fawole, 2003:92-93).

Fawole further stressed that the opportunity to act on the Zimbabwean struggle came in the mid-1970s when the OAU sought to bring together the two principal liberation movements, that is, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), and the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU) as the Patriotic Front alliance to co-ordinate their resistance to white minority rule. Prior to this rather novel OAU initiative, Nigeria had always favoured the formation of coalitions, especially in multi-ethnic societies, as a sure way to prevent a situation whereby certain sections would have and use power to the exclusion of others and thus engender domestic rancor and instability. But Nigeria's

favourable disposition towards a coordinated approach came for reappraisal when the white minority regime of Prime Minister Ian Smith unilaterally decided to select a few local leaders (especially Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole, Bishop Abel Muzorewa and Chief Jeremiah Chirau) and sought to transfer 'power' to them in a dubious internal settlement that excluded the major nationalist groups. Nigeria had no choice but to set up its support for the ZANU/ZAPU Patriotic Front, whose guerrillas were intensifying the war of liberation. It should be remarkable that there was evidence of Britain's complicity in this dubious arrangement which not have given independence to the people.

Since Nigeria had done everything to persuade Britain of the unacceptability of the internal settlement to no avail, the Obasanjo regime took the most dramatic step of nationalizing the assets of British Petroleum (BP) company in Nigeria. Announced on July 31, 1979, the eve of the commonwealth summit scheduled for Lusaka, Zambia, the action had intended dramatic effect of arm twisting the British government of Margaret Thatcher from recognizing the dubious internal political settlement that excluded the main guerrilla factions that had engaged in the liberation war since the 1960s. The import of the nationalization inhered in the fact that BP was at the time the largest British investment in Nigeria and possibly the whole of Africa. And coming on the heels of the previous nationalization of British-owned Barclays Bank and Standard Bank, and deliberate discrimination against British

firms in the award of government contracts, the British were unmistakably put on notice that Nigeria was willing to employ economic measures to achieve its objectives of African liberation and eradication of racism. There was also no doubt that the timing was deliberately chosen for good effect. And the British government got the message loud and clear that its plans to recognize the illegal internal settlement in Zimbabwe would be resisted by all means (Fawole, 2003:107-108). Thus, the Obasanjo economic action on the British hastened the Lancaster Conference that ushered in true independence for Zimbabwe in 1980.

From all manifested indications, Africa was the centre-piece of Shagari's Nigeria foreign policy and received priority attention. While speaking at a dinner at the Nigerian Institutes of International Affairs in 1982, the first Executive President of Nigeria, Shehu Shagari articulated what he called our principal objectives in dealing with fellow African States:

- (a) The strengthening of African solidarity through continental and regional organizations and institutions like the OAU, ECOWAS, and the ADB.
- (b) The promotion of peace and stability on the African continent and security in our sub-region, by re-emphasizing our commitment to the principles of respect for the provisions of the OAU Charter, especially those relating to the inviolability of inherited frontiers, sovereign equality and territorial integrity of all countries, and peaceful accommodation and settlement of all disputes without foreign interference;
- (c) To support the rights of people to self determination and freedom from

colonial and foreign subjugation and for all authentic national liberation movements in their struggle for independence, and (d) To give unalloyed support for all efforts to destroy the obnoxious apartheid system, racial bigotry and prejudice (Ate and Akinterinwa, 1990).

The foregoing principles or objectives of Nigeria's foreign policy are the same with that of Balewa and succeeding military regimes. The Shagari's Nigeria foreign policy objectives toward Africa is simply a restatement of Nigeria's foreign policy thrust since independence in 1960.

The Shagari regime during a review of its foreign policy stated that Nigeria has declared that the continent of Africa was no longer open to colonization. By its geographical position, size, population, economic potentials and resources, Nigeria is left with no option but to play a crucial role in the liberation of South Africa. In fact, the decolonization of Mozambique and Angola, racism in South Africa and imperialism in Zimbabwe and Namibia, still constitute the most potent threats against international peace and security in Southern Africa. For the above reason the Shagari administration contributed immensely to the fund of the OAU Liberation Committee, and also gave considerable financial assistance on bilateral basis to African Liberation Movements.

Equally, in keeping with Nigerian dynamic foreign policy and its fervent commitment to the freedom of the

suffering masses in Southern Africa, the Federal Government sponsored and launched the South African Relief Fund (SARF) in Nigeria. The establishment of the fund stemmed from the view that West African States cannot be free until the entire continent is liberated from the evils of colonialism, apartheid and racism. Since the relief fund was launched, donations in cash have been received voluntarily from civil servants in the Federal and State public services, corporations and parastatals, voluntary organizations, businessmen, institutions of learning through out the country and other well wishers. More than seven million Naira collected by the National Committee on Apartheid and the first consignment of relief materials consisting of blankets, adult boots, children sandals and some large quantities of brown canvas for adults have been sent by Nigeria to South Africa as relief under the Shagari administration (Mbachu, 2011:146-147).

General Muhammadu Buhari overthrew the Shagari administration in a military coup in December, 1983, and became Head of State of Nigeria. To Fawole (2003:138-140), in the furtherance of the anti-apartheid objectives, the Buhari government continued to give financial assistance to the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) while insisting on the unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and all other jailed anti-apartheid activists. The platforms of the OAU, the UN, Commonwealth and the Non aligned Movement were effectively utilized in the campaigns to further isolate South Africa. One other significant African problem that got prominent attention and nearly caused a split of the OAU was the lingering problem in former Western Sahara. In line with its

support for African liberation and independence, Nigeria suddenly recognized the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) against the objections of Morocco and its supporters. Morocco has laid claim and forcibly held on to the territory since the Spanish left the country in 1970s to the chagrin of the OAU and the international community, especially after the World Court declaration that Morocco had no rights to lay claims to the territory. For Nigeria, therefore, the case of the Western Sahara was a straightforward case of self-determination.

Gambari (1989), Nigeria could not continue to recognize Morocco's illegal claim to the territory in the face of the overwhelming desire of the people for self-determination expressed through their liberation movement, POLISARIO, as well as their declaration in February, 1976 of Western Sahara as the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic. But it had always been Morocco's greed and arrogance that had prevented genuine independence for the people of Western Sahara. Its intransigence had also almost wrecked the OAU because of the split in its ranks over whether to support Morocco or SADR. Sensing that Nigeria could no longer continue its fence-sitting in the face of overwhelming cry for self-determination, the Buhari government decided to rescue the OAU from imminent collapse by announcing its recognition of the SADR on November 11, 1984 at the 20th OAU Summit in Addis Ababa. Therefore, Nigeria's bold action permitted SADR to take its seat at the summit. Morocco, feeling humiliated by Nigeria's action, staged a walkout at the

summit. The bold and assertive recognition not only won greater recognition and acceptance for the SADR and saved the OAU from Morocco's perpetual blackmail, but it also received great endorsement from the generality of Nigerians.

Generally, on the African level, Nigeria recorded impressive performance befitting its acclaimed leadership status and in the tradition of previous military regimes. Its accomplishments were however most prominent in the West Africa sub-region where the country had always held undisputed sway. Nonetheless, it also made some significant impact at the continental level outside its immediate geopolitical environment. For example, its continental sway was evident when General Babangida was elected Chairman of the OAU for the 1991-92 session, during which events of epic proportions took place in African politics. This election, the second time for the country in the history of the continental organization, was in recognition of the breadth of Nigeria's reach and the esteem in which it was held by its peers. In the first instance, his dogged commitment to the decolonization of Africa led to an intensification of the process of the independence of Namibia, Africa's last colony. Namibia became independent in 1989, crowing Nigeria's efforts. The regime had no problems implementing Nigeria's existing principle concerning the question of independence for all African States (Fawole, 2003:164).

In addition, according to Fawole (2003:164 - 165) it was in the same Babangida tenure that last changes were taking place in South Africa. The racist regime of President Fredrick de Klerk had reached the conclusion that apartheid could no longer be continued

and he needed a way out of the logjam. Nigeria was there to offer a helping hand nudge de Klerk on the path of dismantling the evil apartheid system. The efforts led to the unbanning of the African National Congress, the Pan-Africanist Congress and other liberation movements that had fought apartheid for decades, and the release of Nelson Mandela, Walter Sizulu, a host of the other freedom fighters jailed by the apartheid system. In the process de Klerk was even allowed to visit Nigeria, the first by any South African leader. Not only were changes occurring in South Africa, but, also Nigeria was there every inch of the way to help the process. While there was a general thaw in the icy relationship, diplomatic ties were not established between the two countries. Nigeria waited cautiously until irreversible and convincing changes had taken place before such a vital step could be taken. South Africa eventually dismantled all the ramparts of apartheid and held the first ever multi-racial democratic elections that led to Mandela becoming President of the country in 1994, not long after Babangida left office. It was not until then that the first ever exchange of Ambassadors between erstwhile moral enemies took place.

Conclusion

This paper looks at African liberation and its continued relevance to Nigeria's foreign policy. It sees Nigeria's commitment towards a strong Afro-centric posture in foreign policy since, she gained independence in 1960. Nigeria played a big brother role in the African

continent in liberating other African countries from colonialism and racism, which is one of the fundamental objectives of her foreign policy. When Nigeria became an independent nation, her founding fathers and elites agreed that Nigeria's independence was incomplete, if other African countries were still under colonial rule or governed by the white minority supremacists. Therefore, Nigeria was solidly behind and actively supported the liberation struggle in some African countries, such as Angola, Zimbabwe, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Namibia and the apartheid South Africa. In doing this, Nigeria committed both financial and technical assistance.

In promoting Africa unity and solidarity as well as fostering of economic cooperation, therefore, Nigeria played a pivotal role in the coming into being of a continental and sub-regional body, that is, the OAU and ECOWAS. These platforms, the OAU and ECOWAS were also effectively utilized by Nigeria to further campaign for the liberation of some of the African countries still under colonization or dominated by white supremacists. This efforts and commitments made by Nigeria resulted to the independence of the above named counties. Again, even after their independence, Nigeria gave them financial support. Thus, Nigeria became a key player in international affairs and politics.

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Between Prophets and Political Scientists: Reversing the Marginalized Role of Political Scientists in Election Forecasting in Nigeria

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Abstract: In Nigeria, there have emerged a trend of unscientific predictions of electoral outcomes, mostly, attributed or rooted in divine, transcendental, sacred or mysterious exposition whereby at every round of elections, certain prophets reel out prophetic declarations of prospective winner or/and loser of the elections without any form of data collection and analysis. Unfortunately, this spiritualization of electoral outcome has seemingly stampeded the evolution of a vibrant public opinion polls culture that should naturally be spearheaded by Political Scientists, in order to advocate for the entrenchment of the science of forecasting in the electoral process to engender objectivity and reliability of predictions. However, this is not the case in Nigeria. Far more dangerous is that these prophetic declarations are made amid tensed political atmosphere sufficient to threaten the democratic process and consolidation in the country. It is in this regard therefore, that this paper critically examines this phenomenon and put forth ways Political Scientists can reassert their voice in the electoral process in Nigeria by making use of opinion polls to forecast electoral outcomes. Also, the paper is a wake-up call for the professional body of Political Scientists in the country to assume its rightful place in the electoral process and to nip in the bud these personalist-prophetic declarations-which most times clash with each other and are capable of threatening Nigeria's democratic process.

Keywords: Democracy, Election, Opinion Polls, Political Scientists, Prophets.

Introduction

Since the transition to democracy in 1999 till date, the Nigerian democratic space is constantly inundated especially during electoral periods with prophetic declarations pertaining to electoral outcomes (Burgess, 2015). Given the fact that religion occupies a central position in Nigerian society and that majority of Nigerians hold their religious leaders in high esteem even far above secular leaders (Obadare, 2006), to the extent that their views on social issues are held as being sacred (Ilo, n.d.). It is important to clarify the term prophets as used in this paper. It is essentially not restricted to a particular religious group. As the case of concern in this paper have shown that the attempt at spiritualizing elections in Nigeria cut across all belief systems; whether Christianity, Islam, traditional religions or even Eastern practiced religions in Nigeria. Hence, prophets are used to denote or represent any individual agency purportedly claiming to espouse a spiritual dimension of physical reality, which, in our case has to do with election, ascribed to a transcendent supreme being. These religious leaders in their varying degrees of attraction now assume larger than life figures making ceaseless and unverifiable predictions and utterances on elections without recourse to any systematic and scientific methods. In fact, during electioneering periods, the Nigerian media is awash with various oracular statements without any form of rigour or sophistication by this pastors, imams and spiritualists predicting the outcomes of elections.

Moreover, the dynamics and manifestation of the above phenomenon

within the Nigerian state holds dire consequences. First, it threatens the survival or continuous existence of democracy in Nigeria and this is rooted on the fact that the Nigerian state is a hot bed of conflicts that are mostly of religious colouration (Lenshie and Akipu, 2014). Hence, such prophetic utterances devoid of scientific methodology and not anchored on any theoretical framework especially when made during electioneering period can ignite or incite people to violence (Ikem, et al, 2020). For instance, the 2011 post electoral conflicts that claimed the lives of many innocent Nigerians and led to the destruction of properties worth millions of Naira is largely not unconnected with religious statements made in the course of the elections (Orji and Uzodi, 2012).

Secondly, the incessant pronouncements of these religious clerics on electoral outcomes which have become the norm have relegated political scientists to the murky waters of oblivion in the Nigerian political space. In Western democracies, government, think tanks, media organizations, politicians, among others to conduct survey and opinion polls on elections, routinely employ political scientists. As a result, well-informed and grounded assumptions containing valid conclusions and projections on the trajectory of elections are made, which are rarely false; thereby, contributing to the growth and

development of the discipline (Erikson and Tedin, 2015). Yet, the reverse is the case in Nigeria because political scientists in Nigeria have been pushed to the margin of electoral forecasting. In fact, Nigerian politicians have turned their attention to Clerics for insights on possible electoral victory or defeat (Burgess, 2015; Nigerian Catholic Reporter, 2020). This situation erodes the importance of political

scientists and their possible contribution to the development of the Nigerian state. Hence, it is against this backdrop, that this paper seeks to interrogate the nexus between electoral prophetism and the marginalized role of political science in Nigeria. To achieve this task, apart from this introduction, the paper is divided into three sections, the first section attempts to investigate the nexus between elections and political scientists arguing that it is the major task of political scientists to understand the dynamics, trajectory and manifestations of elections in the world today. The second section dwelt on the role of prophets in elections in Nigeria demonstrating how they have become a *Tour du Force* in electoral matters in Nigeria, which does not augur well for the discipline of political science and holds grave danger for the survival of democracy in Nigeria. The third section of the paper concerns itself with making a case for the taking over of electoral forecasting from prophets by political scientists in Nigeria while the last section focuses on conclusion and recommendation.

Elections and Political Scientists

There is an intellectual agreement among scholars, stakeholders and think tanks that election remains the principal mainstay of democracy. While it is also widely accepted, that democracy is much more than periodic elections, nevertheless, the importance of elections in any democratic process cannot be exaggerated (Omotola, 2007). Hence, it has always been at the core of academic interrogation (Freedom House, 2011; Huntington, 1993). Defining election, Agbaje & Adejumobi (2006), notes that it

is a viable mechanism for consummating representative government and facilitating leadership succession. In addition, it promotes political accountability, citizens' participation and gives voice and power to the people. It is against this backdrop that Aiyedogbon and Omotola (2012) argues that periodic, competitive and participatory (free and fair) elections constitute the cardinal pillar of democratic political systems, hence, elections that fall short of those ingredients of democratic standards undermine processes of democratic consolidation.

To this end, high premium is placed on who wins elections in any state. This has led to rich out pouring of scholarship on electoral forecasting (Lock and Gelman, 2010). Political Science in particular has also contributed to the study and understanding of who wins elections, using sophisticated models and tools to predict electoral outcomes (Walther, 2015). In recent times, electoral forecasting remains one of the chief concerns of political scientists worldwide. Electoral forecasting entails the declaration of the outcomes of the elections before it happens (Lewis-Beck & Stegmaie, 2014). Explaining further, Lewis-Beck (2005, p.145) posits that:

(Electoral) Forecasting aims to tell of events (electoral outcomes) before they happen. It differs from prediction in that it looks to the future, whereas prediction may not (as in a successful reconstruction of some past outcome). Further, (Electoral) forecasting differs from explanation, having the goal of predicting an outcome, rather than the goal of theorizing about outcomes.

In addition, Lewis-Beck & Stegmaie, (2014) observes that there are two broad methods to

electoral forecasting which are pre-scientific methods and scientific methods. They argued that scientific methods, which consist of the use of polls, models and markets, have helped in the forecasting of electoral outcomes more than pre-scientific methods, which is made of hunches, guess work and emotions. While the former (scientific models of electoral forecasting) have become an enduring feature of elections in the United States (since the 1930 when George Gallup opened his firm on electoral forecasting) and other advanced democracies in the West, the latter (pre-scientific models of electoral forecasting) has become entrenched in many incipient democracies in the world today.

Surprisingly, since Nigeria returned to democratic practice in 1999, political scientists in Nigeria unlike what is obtainable in more advanced democracies (Walther, 2015) have relegated the science and art of electoral forecasting to the backdrop. Political scientists in Nigeria while focusing on electoral systems and party politics have pushed forecast to the margins of electoral studies. No doubt, electoral forecasting is an under-researched area in electoral studies in Nigeria. This lacuna coupled with the importance of religion and respect for religious leaders even far above political leaders has made them assume a presumably “self-appointed role” of predicting electoral outcomes (Abati, 2018). It therefore has opened a thriving and flourishing enterprise for “men of God” of the different religious extraction to make declarations on electoral outcomes such that politicians now consult these prophets rather than

political scientists. Religious leaders who claim to have heard ‘from above’ the outcomes of the elections constantly inundate the democratic space especially during electioneering period of pre-scientific forecast of winners and losers of elections.

Prophets and Elections in Nigeria

There exists a thin line between religion and politics that make the both inseparable. Therefore, largely we cannot talk about religion without including politics. However, this strong link was initially lost to scholars in the West, who belief that with modernization and subsequent political development, religion will largely decline (Ellis & Ter Haar, 2008). Hence, over a long period, particularly with the historical occurrence of the industrial revolution and subsequent evolution of the social sciences, religion came to enjoy a marginalized role (Fox, 2015). Great thinkers such as Auguste Comte, Emile Durkhiem, Max Weber and Karl Marx among others gave and entrenched the foundation for scientific inquiry in the social sciences. Consequently, religion which was deem as unscientific and bias, did not receive necessary attention as to its role in certain critical moments of historical period. While this line of thought ran through the eighteenth to twentieth centuries, secularists in the west began to talk about the death of religion, hence, giving way to a post-religious world.

Further buttressing this secularist theory of a post religious society, where western scholars who opine that modernization will eliminate primordial tendencies such as ethnicity and religion to the extent that their political roles will become insignificant (Fox, 2018). Especially, between 1950s and 1960s, Modernization theorists began to encourage the third world countries to embrace and

follow western-centric development agenda in order to come out of underdevelopment, which had been primarily blamed on traditional and primordial affiliations (Ellis & Haar, 2008). Despite the pessimistic thinking towards religion, it has however experienced a comeback that secularists and other pessimists combine have arguably rethink the critical role and relevance of religion (Fox, 2015). At the international level, the rise in insecurity perpetrated by Islamic fundamentalists, ethno-religious conflicts and the tendentious projection of the clash of civilization thesis propagated by Samuel Huntington, has incentivized the need for more focused inquiry into the role religion play in politics, security, foreign policy, democratization and elections (Fox, 2001; Mead, 2006; Warner & Walker, 2011; Grzymala-Busse, 2016).

In the case of developing democracies like Nigeria, there has been considerable influence of religion in almost everything. In particular, with regard to politics in Nigeria, enough studies have established the influential role religion play- that is, pointing to its elitist manipulative tendencies (Maduagwu, 2016), hegemonic struggle (Kukah, 1993), means to capture state power (Obianyo, 2010), strategy for electoral mobilization and legitimization (Ezeibe, & Ikeanyibe, 2017), while also hinting on its integrative role in the country. Yet the polemics that follow the study of religion and politics is seemingly not settled. While some see religion as an anti-democratic consolidation force, with its ease of manipulation, others view it as a binding force which coherence enable

integration (Lenshie and Akpu, 2014).

In this regard, religion has come to be recognized as a tangible force in Nigerian politics, Ayantayo (2009) noted that the public space is increasingly becoming religiously defined, sustained and justified. In like manner, politics and elections have therefore become spiritualized. Interestingly, in the area of election, Ayantayo (2009) observed that the impression has been created in Nigeria to denote that for any candidate to be successful in any election; huge reliance is placed on divine intervention or divine help, manipulation and inducement. And to a large extent, that which make for a robust political outing and mobilization are mainly if not totally disregarded with the hope that as long as the electoral victory is spiritually discerned to favour a candidate, such matter is presumed to be settled. And going into an election therefore may just be a ceremonial event. Perhaps, this is the reason why the notions of “divine call” or “divine mandate” claims by politicians have become a popular rhetoric during elections. And anything done within this period seem to revolve around this claims, including seeking for affirmation by spiritual leaders, whether from the Christian fold, Islamic imams, traditionalists as well as any other spiritualist that may claim access or insight to the spiritual configuration of the moment. In capturing this properly, Ayantayo (2009) aptly remarked that:

Spiritualization of electoral process connotes the act of taking into spiritual or supernatural realm, thereby creating an impression that success in election is independent of wisdom, foresightedness, logical plan, widespread political tour and good campaign, adequate political logistics, and people oriented

political manifestoes but by divine intervention or divine help, manipulation and inducement (p.101)

Thus, politicians in Nigeria in their bid to secure electoral victory must necessarily consult with someone claiming to possess the adequate access and insight into the spiritual realm to validate their hope of being elected. Kalu (2008) collaborated this point when he notes “Politicians will hire traditional rainmakers to scatter opponents’ political rallies with heavy rains. Primal religiosity is employed in electoral pranks instead of using hostile advertisements” (p.204). On his part, Abati (2018) opine that election in Nigeria is not only a do-or-die battle on the physical plane, it is spiritual war. This unconventional manifestation of political culture may not be unusual since there is a high premium placed on the possession of state power, which equally defines the material security of its possessor. Thus, any political contest notably, electoral competition in post-colonial state like Nigeria, is organically linked to the process of primitive accumulation (Onuoha, et al, 2020), which consequently make politics a do-or-die affair. As Ake (1996, p.8) rightly stated, “Our politics is not a lawful competition to select those to manage our common concerns but a fight to capture and privatize an enormous power resource”. Strictly speaking, it is a fiercely contested terrain where legitimacy norm gives way to the norm of expediency. In this kind of situation therefore, it may not be unusual for certain political actors to resort to diabolical practices. Kalu (2008) notes that ethnic secret cult groups over time

emerged as core instruments of political mobilization in Nigeria. And as ethnic competition intensified, communities resorted to these mobilization systems.

Further collaborating this, Ayantayo (2009) also states that;

The impression the public and politicians do have is that electoral issues are better settled spiritually thorough (sic) prayers, manipulation of angelic beings and the use of magic than making appeals to political wizardry. Some candidates practically demonstrated this by boasting that if certain groups of people or individuals refused to vote for them, then, some natural objects like stones, pebbles and leaves would for them in their stead. Counting on this, some politicians did express their much reliance on the power of prayer or magic to win election. This also goes with the use of charm, magic and occultic powers to either threaten political opponents to withdraw in election contest or at times to threaten electorates not to vote for candidates of their choice, even after they might have been convinced of the need to do so, going by the content of political manifestoes such party or individuals might have presented to the populace during campaigns. Some equally used magic to hypnotized voters to vote for them or for a particular party against the party the initially had in mind. Though we do not have statistical data at hand to practically demonstrate the degree at which the religious methods above had

worked or are working, we cannot deny the fact they are issues during election periods in Nigeria, and that they negate the spirit of democracy (p.101).

No doubt, these practices pose serious threat to democracy and the evolution and sustenance of a well-fine-tuned political culture in Nigeria. Giving an insider view, former presidential spokesman, Reuben Abati disclosed that three elements are inevitable for elections to be won in Nigeria, these include need for spiritualists, thugs and money (Abati, 2018). More worrisome is the general perception that politics is evil, and that only those whose hands are stained can succeed (Meyer, 1995). Arguably, this view seem to resonate among certain segments of Nigerians, and therefore, encouraged apathy for politics. No doubt, this situation later spur a political engagement theology from Christian leaders who maintain that Nigeria must be delivered from the power of darkness and their agents in power through prayer to be able to prophetically launch her into her destiny. Corroborating this point, Meyer (1998) observed in her study of Ghana's political process that political leaders blame the immorality of power responsible for the country's misfortunes on the use of occultic powers. This view may arguably represent majority of public held sentiment about politics in Nigeria, because, since this democratic dispensation, Christians of all suasions have resorted partly to spiritual warfare as means of political engagement in order to improve the society (Burgess, 2015). Burgess (2015) notes that spiritual tools like prayer and prophecy both become potent and inevitable means for

Pentecostals political discourse as well as political engagement.

Given the large congregations these religious leaders oversee and their widely acclaimed influence, politicians increasingly seek their counsel and spiritual endorsement for their election as a divinely approved endeavour. While some of these religious leaders have maintained discretionary distance from appearing partisan, others have the "image of themselves as kingmakers of the country, just like the papacy in medieval Europe" (Ihejirika, 2012, p.190). Hence, at every turn of elections in Nigeria, there are plethora of prophetic declarations released to the public apparently to signal those presumably divinely approved to lead the country (see **Table 1**). These prophetic declarations of electoral outcomes have explicitly made the presence of these religious leaders in the public space widely acknowledged. This has consequently attracted droves of politicians seeking to know their fate in an election. Sensing the deleterious electoral consequences this might have on democracy, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) sent a note of warning prior to the 2019 general elections that "Politicians must avoid going to seek the outcome of election from priests and pastors" (Nigerian Catholic Reporter, 2020), rather Nigerians should judge contestants by the quality of their tract records not prophecy.

Also, it is important to note that some fringe groups which had been oblivious have joined the fray of prophetic projection. These include the Witches and Wizard Association of Nigeria, and Guru Maharaji among others, who use other diabolical medium. These groups lay claim to the secularity of the Nigerian state, maintaining that it is not only

Christianity and Islam that constitute the religious configuration of the country (Ajayi, 2016). We may therefore conclude that the projection of prophetic revelations in the public space by acclaimed prophets or spiritualists, broadly interpreted is the quest to assume a public prophetic role in steering the direction of the state and its governance (Burgess, 2015). As a result, therefore, the spiritualized entrenchment of electoral forecasting in Nigeria, explicitly demonstrate the tendentious attempt to capture the public space and perhaps increase the political leverage of these various groups. While political scientists may not be blamed for the spiritualization of the electoral process given our socio-cultural context, however, they must take responsibility for the entrenchment of spiritualize forecast of elections.

The unfortunately account of fringe groups rising to prominence in electoral forecasting in Nigeria raises serious concerns about the presence and activities of political scientists in the country. In fact, ruminating on the conspicuous absence and the pathetic state of political scientists during elections, Prof. Ayo Olukotun wrote a critical piece titled: Elections: Where are our Political Scientists? Lamenting the seemingly marginalized although apparently self-inflicted damage political scientists are confronted with which further undermine their contribution to public issues. This is despite the plethora of problems that are currently plaguing the country that should require both the professional and disciplinary perspectives of political scientists, unfortunately, are largely lacking. More regrettably, is that during

election circles in Nigeria, the voices of prophets, acclaimed spiritualists are mostly heard than those of political scientists. What can be done therefore to remedy and reverse this trend? Because if left to continue, there may eventually be unforeseen consequences given the tensed atmosphere elections are conducted in Nigeria.

Reversing the Marginalized role of Political Scientists: Need for Associational Assertion

With regard to election matters, there are fundamental issues, which have made the critical role of political scientists important on the one hand, and on the other, exposes the precipitating factor that might be partly held responsible for the prominence of so-called prophets. And this is the seemingly suspicion that attends the activities of the Independence National Electoral Commission (INEC) and subsequent loss of confidence on the electoral body to conduct free and fair elections. Actually, both partisan parties and neutral parties have always questioned elections conducted since this democratic dispensation by the Electoral umpire. And in Nigeria, there seem to be more belief on religious leaders than the political leaders (Obadare, 2006). This can be blamed on systemic institutional weakness.

As stated earlier, the array of national problems almost threatening the survival of Nigeria today, no doubt, requires the role of political scientists in proffering solutions. The field of political science is concerned with power and power relations in a polity (Olaopa, 2015). As Ayo (2015) succinctly put it, the discipline is primarily focused on the study of politics, political processes, political institutions as well as political behavior. Therefore, it is within the province of political

science to bring to bear its disciplinary perspectives and associational vibrancy rooted in its methodological and analytical frameworks to tackle critical issues facing the country. Furthermore, Olaopa (2015) notes that:

If the political scientist is concerned with the question and the consequences of who gets what, when, and how, then we immediately see how political science constitutes a veritable disciplinary contribution to the ongoing process of understanding and transforming Nigeria and her national project. Nigeria, in all her plural complexities, constitutes a real theatre for political analysis.

It therefore brings to the fore the need for the scientific and the methodological tools and procedures in political science to proffer objective research and policy related matters in general, but more particularly, in the electoral process. Nigerian political scientists need their voice to be heard in the political discourse and happenings in the country. Pathetically, the full extent of involvement of political scientists in election related activities seem to be only on television shows as public analyst; or as ad-hoc electoral officers, mostly on individual basis. Yet, there are serious need for analysis guided by scientific objectivity for feasible models and paradigms that could steer efforts in understanding the trajectory, trend and pattern of pre and post-election

issues in Nigeria. In fact, in Nigeria, the unbiased and well-informed scientific aspect of political science that enable objective models that can forecast elections by its ability to predict political behaviour is critical at this moment. In doing so, attendant uncertainty of post-election tension that has always characterized Nigeria's elections might be douse to certain degree (Fridy, 2016) Apart from the annual national conference of the Nigerian Political Science Association (NPSA), where papers are presented with seemingly limited impact on policy issues, should not be the case. As noted earlier, the disciplinary perspectives and associational vibrancy and sophistication should be brought to bear on matters of national importance such as election. Unfortunately, the NPSA has been in comatose condition and as a result, its impact not felt (Olaopa, 2015). It is only of recent that appreciable attempt is being made to resuscitate and reinvigorate the association.

Therefore, to reverse the NPSA's marginalized role, the annual conferences whether at the national or regional level should not just be a talk shop, rather, appropriate steps to be taken to push for consideration and possible implementation of its communiques. Moreover, election cycles should be a time to reel out a non-partisan and scientifically conducted research as regards the outlook of the election and other matters that may arise therefrom by the Nigerian Political Science Association (NPSA).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper has attempted to interrogate the place of political scientists and prophets as

regards electoral forecasting in Nigeria. It argues that political scientists in Nigeria have been pushed to the margin in the science of electoral forecasting. A practice, which has been readily taken up by religious leaders since the return to democracy in Nigeria. Politicians who rely upon their proclamations to legitimize the prospect of seeking an elective office routinely consult these acclaimed prophets. Nevertheless, this practice holds dire consequences for the survival of democracy given the nature and character of the Nigerian state as well as the continuous relevance of the discipline of political science. To this end, the paper advances a call to arms by political scientists in Nigeria and its associational bodies to redeem electoral forecasting from the clutches of prophets in Nigeria. To achieve this intellectual redemption, the following must be done:

- Encouragement of research into electoral forecasting by political scientists and associational bodies. A chair, an award or research center can be created for investigating and entrenching the concept of electoral forecasting in Nigeria.

- Funding of research in electoral forecasting by associational bodies and other interested stakeholders. A fixed amount should be mapped out to fund groups who are genuinely keen on electoral forecasting by the associational bodies and stakeholders such as the Independent National Electoral Commission.
- Also, if the Nigerian Bar Association can be ascribed an election observatory role, no less should be accorded the Nigerian Political Science Association (NPSA) as the professional body which remit covers election studies. Doing this will properly integrate the body in the scheme of things in making Nigeria's electoral process better effective, robust and vibrant.

Table 1: Some Prophecies Prior to the 2019 Presidential Election.

S/n	Name	Remark	Source
1	Prophet Temitope Aduroja	the 2019 presidential poll “is going to shock many people. The incumbent President (Buhari) will have no choice but to accept defeat.	Jesusegun Alagbe (2020) ‘Gone with the wind: 2019 prophecies that were wide of the mark’, https://punchng.com/gone-with-the-wind-2019-prophecies-that-were-wide-of-the-mark/
2	Prophet Wale Olagunju	God said it would take his own intervention for the present government to survive total defeat by the Peoples Democratic Party. God said Buhari had become a disappointment in his sight and he (God) had sought and found a man after his heart to replace him	Ibid
3	Prophet Okechukwu Daniel Udoka	God told me that any man that would want to stop Atiku from entering will go down and might not witness Atiku’s celebration of victory... When the election was going on, it was not favouring APC. I saw a different thing altogether. It was not free and fair.	The Nation (March 2, 2019) ‘Seer who goofed’, https://thenationonline.net/seers-who-goofed/
4	Prophet Ekong Ituen	Let me start by telling Nigerians that election result will spring surprises, but in my revelation, it has been established that President Muhammadu Buhari of All Progressives Congress (APC) will win the 2019 presidential election	Olakunle Olafioye (2019). ‘Presidential poll: The clerics and their prophecies’, https://www.sunnewsonline.com/presidential-poll-the-clerics-and-their-prophecies/
5	Prophet Joshua TB	The election will be closely contested between the two leading political parties but I see Muhammadu Buhari winning	Fikayo, 2019, ‘Buhari vs Atiku: How TB Joshua, Mbaka, Iginla, other’s Prophecies on 2019 Presidential election came to pass’, https://dailypost.ng/2019/02/27/buhari-vs-atiku-tb-joshua-mbaka-iginla-others-prophecies-2019-presidential-election-came-pass/

- 6 Pastor Samuel Akinbodunse Please Nigerians warn Buhari that he is going beyond his boundary. That the Lord said his tenure is once and not twice. If not, he will not see the election o...if he made (makes) a mistake to campaign for elections, before they vote, he will die. Adeniyi G. & Omogbolagun T. March 3 2019, 'Failed Prophecies on Buhari, Atiku Presidential Poll Contest', <https://www.punchng.com/failed-prophecies-on-buhari-atiku-presidential-poll-contest/>
- 7 Apostle Chris Omatsola President Muhammadu Buhari is God's mandate for 2019. God said he is giving President Buhari another opportunity to make history Ibid

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An Analysis of the Nexus Between Civil Society Organizations and Good Governance in Nigeria

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Abstract: This paper analyzes the nexus between civil society organizations and good governance in Nigeria. The paper predicates its analysis on some propositions extracted from the structural functional theory. On methodology, the paper relies substantially on secondary method of data collection which it analyzes using content analysis. The paper argues that civil society organizations as pillars of democracy have the capacity to deepen democracy and accordingly help to bring about good governance in Nigeria. By their origin and functions, civil society organizations are always better placed to apply pressure on the government and demand for policies and actions that foster democracy, development and good governance. However, the paper also reveals that civil society organizations in Nigeria are faced with numerous challenges, problems and constraints that impede or hinder their ability towards playing their good governance roles effectively. The paper therefore, recommends among other things that all concerned persons and bodies in the country should come together to help rescue civil society groups from their acute constraints and weaknesses and accordingly empower them with more efficient and effective facilities, resources, skills and methods of operations.

Keywords: Civil Society Organizations, Democracy, Development, Good Governance, Good Governance Deficits, Governance.

Introduction

Nigeria transitioned to democratic rule on May 29, 1999 after over three decades of military rule. Democracy is a system of government, which enables a people to freely choose an effective, honest, transparent and accountable government. It is a philosophy of government in which sovereign power is vested in the people and exercised directly or indirectly through a system of representation that involves periodic elections. Ideally, the practice of democracy should generate or facilitate opportunities for good governance, development and social progress. In fact, democratic governance should not only facilitate good governance but should also generate powerful processes of social and societal transformation. The restoration of democracy in the country on May 29, 1999 has however not helped in the attainment of the ideals of good governance in terms of observance of the principle of justice to all on equal footing by the relevant authorities, efficiency in public administration; development oriented budgeting and curbing corruption in our national life. The foregoing problems are all traceable to poor governance and political leadership deficiencies. Bad or poor governance has indeed become the major challenge and source of Nigeria's socio-economic crisis since the advent of the current fourth republic.

This paper is of the conviction that civil society organizations as pillars of democracy have the capacity to deepen democracy and accordingly help to bring about good governance in the country.

According to Nwachukwu (2008), by their origin and functions, civil society organizations are always better placed to apply pressure on the government and demand for policies that foster democracy, development and good governance. In addition, they are always better positioned in making sure that elections are open and transparent and demanding for reforms in institutions such as the judiciary, legislature, executive, police, local government, etc. Paffenholz and Spurk (2006), had also argued similarly that vibrant civil society groups are considered today as precondition to go beyond "formal" democracies, to achieve long lasting attitude changes and to overcome resistance by undemocratic leaders and elites. According to them also, an active civil society groups are widely accepted as critical to boost the accountability of governments towards their citizens, to strengthen public policy decisions and to increase the effectiveness of development interventions. The central argument of this paper therefore is that civil society organizations have the capacity to deepen democracy and accordingly help to bring about good governance in Nigeria.

Given the foregoing background and for easy of understanding, this paper is divided into eight sections. Section 1 is the introduction. Section 2 is the theoretical framework. Section 3 is the methodology. Section 4 and section 5 are the conceptual discourses on civil society organizations and good governance respectively. Section 6 explores good governance deficits in Nigeria while section 7 examines the nexus between civil society organizations and good governance in Nigeria. Section 8 is the conclusion and recommendations.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopted structural functional theory as its theoretical framework. Structural functional theory, which is also known as structural functionalism, originated in the sphere of social anthropology in the writings of Radcliffe-Brown and Bronislaw Malinowski. Talcott Parsons, Robert Merton and Marion Levy later developed it in the field of sociology. Gabriel Almond and his associates developed it into a tool of political analysis in political science. Structural functionalism is a derivative of the general systems theory. Just like the systems theory, structural functional theory is also concerned with the phenomenon of system maintenance and regulation.

The structural functional theory emphasizes the role of structures and functions in understanding the political processes and the conditions under which structures can perform and the functions could be fulfilled. The basic theoretical proposition of structural functional theory therefore is that all systems exist to perform functions through their structures. A structure is a pattern of behavior that has become a standard feature of a social system. Structures are arrangement within the system that carry out the functions, which could be from the system. Eminue (2001:90), defines a structure as “any human organization that can do things and have an effect on human beings and other human organization – a family, a public corporation, a court, a bureau, a legislature, etc”. A function on the other hand denotes the impact of a structure on another structure and the

interrelationships among various structures. Marion Levy (cited in Eminue, 2001:89), defines a function as a “condition or state of affairs resultant from the operation of a structure through time”. Function relates to the activity of a structure and its external effects. One can see from the foregoing that structural functionalism revolves around two main concepts namely, structures and functions; and it is based on this that Varma (1983), raised three basic questions: (1) What basic functions are performance in a given political system? (2) By what structures? (3) Under what conditions? He emphasizes that while functions deal with the consequences of patterns of actions, structures have to do with arrangements within the systems that actually perform the functions.

According to Almond and Powell (1966), the basic assumptions of structural functionalism are as follows:

1. That the society is a single inter-connected system in which each of its elements performs a specific function and whose basic goal is the maintenance of the systemic equilibrium;
2. That the society, being a system as a whole consists of its numerous parts, which are inter-related;
3. That the dominant tendency of the social system is towards stability, which is maintained by its own in-built mechanism;
4. That the system’s ability to resolve internal conflicts is usually an admitted fact;
5. That changes in the system are natural, but they are neither sudden nor revolutionary, but are always gradual and adaptive as well as adjustable;
6. That the system has its own structure, with its own aims principles and functions.

Structural functional theory is considered more apt and appropriate in this paper because of its utility and analytical strength in providing explanations for the interactive effects of certain elements and their consequences on other elements within the same political system. In other words, the role of civil society organizations in helping to bring about good governance in Nigeria can rightly be explained and analyzed in the light of the structural functional theory. The major proposition of structural functionalism is that all systems have parts (structures) that can be identified and which behave (function) in a coordinated and interdependent manner to achieve the objectives intended for them by the society in order to maintain systemic equilibrium, stability and development. As such, civil society organizations are put in place or formed to perform certain functions arising from societal demands to ensure functional and operational stability and progress of the system.

Methodology

The data that was used for this study was generated from secondary sources using documentary method. Accordingly, textbooks, journals, periodicals, monographs, seminars and conference papers, unpublished research works, newspapers and magazines, internet materials, etc, constituted the sources of data for the study. Thus, relevant data and information were collated from the foregoing sources and studied.

The secondary data that were generated in the course of this study were analyzed using content analysis. Content analysis has to do with the rigorous analysis and

examination of written records and documents in a critical, analytical, descriptive and explanatory manner so as to make generalizations and meaning from such written records and documents. According to Kerlinger (1977), content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic, quantitative and qualitative description of the manifest content of communication. The central objective of content analysis is to convert recorded data or information into data, which can be treated in a scientific manner so that a body of knowledge may be built up. Content analysis as a method of analyzing qualitative data was used in this study to examine the nexus between civil society organizations and good governance in Nigeria.

Civil Society Organizations

There is no commonly agreed definition of civil society organizations. Attempts at defining or explaining the concept of civil society organizations have been very difficult and ambiguous. Merkel and Lauth (cited in Paffenholz and Spurk, 2006), define civil society organizations as the “arena of voluntary, uncoerced collective actions around shared interests, purposes and values”(p.2). Hall (1995), defines it as “an opposite of despotism, a space in which social groups could exist and move, something which exemplified and would ensure softer, more tolerable conditions of existence”(p.1). Bayart (1986), sees it “as society in relation with the state ... in so far as it is in confrontation with the state, or more precisely as the process by which society seeks to breach and counteract the simultaneous totalization unleashed by the state”(p.111). For Diamond (1996), civil society organization is the “realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, self-

supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by the legal order or set of shared rules ... It involves citizens acting collectively in a public sphere to express their interest, passions and ideas, exchange information, achieve mutual goals, make demands on the state, and hold state officials accountable. It is an intermediary entity standing between the private sphere and the state” (p.5). Schmitter (1997), defines it as “a set or system of self-organized intermediary groups that:

1. Are relatively independent of both public authorities and private units of production that is, of firms and families.
2. Are capable of deliberating about and taking collective actions in defense or promotion of their interest or passions.
3. Do not seek to replace either the state agents or private producers or to accept responsibility for governing the polity as a whole; and
4. Agree to act within pre-established rules or in a civil nature that is conveying mutual respect”(p.240).

For Osaghae (1998), civil society organizations refers to “the formal and informal organizations, including social movements, which occupy the non-state sphere of public realm and functions in one or more of the following ways: articulating and promoting the interests of diverse groups within society with a view to devising ways in which conflicting interests and differences can be accommodated and resolved; defending individual and collective rights as well as

popular sovereignty against intrusions by the state and other powerful groups, including foreign interests; mediating relations between the state and the larger society; setting the rules or norms governing the state and society and upholding accountability of those in government; serving as the ultimate check to state power and its abuse; serving as the engine-room of private and local capital; and performing shadow state functions” (pp.19-20). Anheier and List (2005), define civil society as “the sum of institutions, organizations and individuals located between the family, the state and the market in which people associate voluntarily to advance common interests ”(p.54). They noted that the end of the cold war saw an increase in inter-state conflicts thus making civil society organizations to start pushing or advocating for good governance, democratization, conflict prevention, management and resolution. Civil society organizations according to Oshita (2007), encompass the business sector, academic institutions, clan and kinship circles, consumer advocates, community development initiatives, environmental movements, ethnic lobbies, faith-based organizations, human rights groups, labour unions, community-based organizations, peace movements, etc. He thus sees it as a space where voluntary associations deliberately seek to shape the rules that govern one or the other aspects of social life. According to the London School of Economics Centre for Civil Society (cited in Konteh, 2006), examples of civil society organizations are “Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs), peoples’ organizations, community-based organizations, civic clubs, trade unions, gender organizations, cultural and religious

groups, charities, social and sports clubs, cooperatives, environmental groups, professional associations, the academia, policy institutions, consumers/consumer organizations, the media, citizens' militia and organized religion"(p.273).

From all the foregoing definitions and explanations, one thing is now clear and that is the fact that civil society is the arena of organized social life. It is constituted by an array and complex network of associational groups that intervene in social, economic and political process, but are not overtly interested in the capture of political power (Adejumobi, 2005). Civil society organizations therefore play different roles in different contexts, situations and culture. In other words, civil society organizations intervene in different ways. They advocate and take action primarily for social progress, development and the public interest. This is why Konteh (2006), writes that civil society organizations play a leading role in the promotion of good governance, poverty alleviation, education, health, infrastructural development, promotion and defense of human rights, peace building and conflict prevention.

Good Governance

The concept of governance is broad and subject to varying interpretations. The World Bank (1992), defines governance as "the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development"(p.1). Ikpi (cited in Eminue, 2005), sees governance as "the total ability to organize, synthesize and direct the various actions of the working

parts of a government machinery in order for such a government to perform meaningfully, creditably and acceptably ..." (pp.133-134). For Ogundiya (2010), governance is the process that is employed to achieve the noble end of the state. He further states that governance is better conceived from Harold Lasswell's traditional definition of politics as who gets what, when, and how. Thus, governance has a lot to do with the allocation of values in the society, which largely, is political in nature (Ndukwe et al, 2018). The UNDP (2006), defines governance as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences. This definition indicates that for governance to exist there has to be the interplay of a country and its citizens in a relationship. In that relationship, governance attains a reality, in this case in the form of a political entity (that is, the state) to exercise power by organizing and administering its functions through relevant establishments. This process brings to the foreground the role of procedures, actions and entities that make it possible for citizens to communicate concerns, exercise rights, undertake responsibilities and arbitrate disputes (Waema, 2011). One can see from all the foregoing that governance simply refers to the way and manner power and authority are exercised by the government vis-à-vis the management and development of a country. However, the international community and development scholars no longer talk merely of 'governance' but of 'good governance'.

Defining the concept of good governance can

be difficult and problematic. This is because the concept has different definitions and interpretations depending on who is defining or describing it. Atake and Dodo (2010), defines good governance as the making and implementation of policies that will affect positively on citizens of a country. Babatope and Oladipopo (2010), see it as “the promotion of the wishes and aspirations of the majority by the leadership and the strict adherence to transparency, accountability and the rule of law by the leadership”(p.188). Odock (cited in George-Genyi, 2013), defines it as “a system of government based on good leadership, respect for the rule of law and due process, accountability of the political leadership to the electorate as well as transparency in the operation of government”(p.57). For the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2002), the defining properties of good governance include, among other things the fact that it is participatory, transparent and accountable. It is also effective and equitable. In addition, it promotes the rule of law fairly and ensures that the voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making over the allocation of development resources. In addition, political, social and economic priorities are based on broad consensus among the three stakeholders – the state, the private sector and civil society. According to the UNDP, the concept of good governance has these attributes or characteristics:

- (i) Adoption of a participatory approach, (ii) Transparency and openness,
- (ii) (iii) Accountability by assuming responsibilities for actions, (iv) Effectiveness, equity and

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fairness, (v)

Endorsement of the rule of law, (vi) openness in decision-making, (vii) Formulation of national agenda through consensus between the state, the private sector and the civil society, all of which serve as stakeholders in governance.

According to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (UNESCAP, 2013), for governance to be termed ‘good’, it must be participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, information sharing, capable of managing conflicts, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, and follows the rule of law. It also assumes that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into consideration, and that the voices of the most vulnerable in the society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of the people. The UNESCAP identified eight major characteristics of good governance as: (i) participatory, (ii) consensus oriented, (iii) accountable, (iv) transparent, (v) responsive, (vi) effective and efficient, (vii) equitable and inclusive, (viii) follows the rule of law. One can see from all the foregoing that the definition, interpretation and characteristics of good governance changes according to the institution and persons defining it. This might be the reason why Ladi (2008), posits that the concept of good governance has today taken the toga of a ‘container concept’ that encompasses a category of growing list of principles.

From all the foregoing definitions and interpretations of good governance, one can now summarize good governance as the process whereby public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources in

an effective and transparent manner so as to guarantee the realization of human rights. Good governance accomplishes this in a manner essentially free of abuse and corruption, and with due regard for the rule of law. Good governance therefore, ensures the rule of law, promotes due process, improves efficiency, facilitates accountability, tackles corruption, salutes excellence, insists on productivity, and delivers high quality services to the people. It also places great emphasis on pragmatic strategies for achieving positive and cost-effective results in public administration. Thus, good governance is about effective and transparent leadership that produces results, which together transform the socio-economic conditions of a nation (Gana, 2006). In most developing countries today, the concept of good governance has taken root as part of the conditions imposed by donor institutions before providing development assistance. The concept is also part of a wider public sector reform programme that is often externally driven through the World Bank and other donor institutions. Good governance is therefore high on Africa's development agenda.

Good Governance Deficits in Nigeria

Nigeria transitioned to democratic rule on May 29, 1999 after over three decades of military dictatorship. The restoration of democracy in the country till date has not helped much in the attainment of the ideals of good governance. The operators of the three organs of government viz the executive, the legislature and the judiciary have left much to be desired in terms of the provision of good governance in the country.

The executive arm of government is always readily identified with the government. The executive is the organ, which is responsible for implementing the policies, programmes and decisions of government with immediate and direct effect on the lives and activities of the people. The executive arm of government is therefore supposed to make good governance its hallmark. However, since 1999, the executive arm of government appears to be the worst culprit in the area of good governance deficits in the country. Since the advent of the Fourth Republic, the executive (especially the Presidents and some Governors) have been excessively absent from governance. This can be better appreciated if we understand the enormous powers that are given to the President and Governors under the 1999 constitution such that their absence from office usually puts governance on sabbatical. Leadership vacuum or excessive absenteeism from governance characterized governance under Olusegun Obasanjo administration (1999 – 2007) whereby the former President travelled out of the country ninety-three (93) times and spent three hundred and forty (340) days abroad in his first three years. This was different from the three hundred and fifty four (354) days he spent or utilized to visit the thirty six (36) states of the federation. Similarly, two governors from the South-south and the North-west zones of Nigeria were governing their states from foreign western capitals (Adeosun, 2012).

The epileptic and lackadaisical functioning of the executive arm in terms of absenteeism continued under President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua administration. For about six months before he died, President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua was no longer conscious and was therefore unable to handle the

governance of the country at the federal level while his inner cabinet turned him to a meal ticket and were "... prepared to run the country aground for as long as their own position was guaranteed and their meal ticket was not allowed to go in peace" (Fasan, 2013). It is on record that the Late President Yar'Adua left Nigeria on health ground and spent one hundred and nine days (109) outside the country on medical check-ups (Anyanwu et al, 2010) and on each occasion refused or failed to hand over power to the then incumbent Vice-President, Goodluck Jonathan, as stipulated in section 145 of the 1999 constitution. Similarly, in early 2017, President Muhammadu Buhari traveled out of the country for three months because of an undisclosed ailment. Even though he handed over power to Vice President Yemi Osinbajo, government remained largely in limbo given the long absence of the President and amid the nations' serious economic recession in decades (Ayodeji, 2018).

Under President Muhammadu Buhari's administration, good governance deficits also manifested in the delay in the appointment of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation and Ministers. It took President Muhammadu Buhari six (6) months before Ministers with different portfolios could be appointed. According to Udo (2015), the foregoing situation weakened the day-to-day running of the different Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) while coordination and implementation of government policies and programmes came to a standstill.

Still on good governance deficits on the part of the executive arm, Ayodeji (2018),

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observes that the performances of many of the past and present Governors, Ministers, MDAs, police and other security agencies that are supposed to be the foot soldiers in the policy implementation of the President are failing in their statutory functions. Aside dwindling federal revenue allocations to states due to economic downturn, many of the states in Nigeria have not been alive to their statutory responsibilities to their citizens via the mismanagement of public funds. Worried by the huge debt owed workers across the states in Nigeria, President Muhammadu Buhari, on separate occasions, provided funds for state Governors to settle accumulation of salaries and pensions arrears through bailout funds and Paris club refund. However, mismanagement of these funds arising from governance deficits is still noticeable in many of these states. Based on the personal observation of this writer; and printed daily and social media reports, it is evident that many public service workers and pensioners are yet to have their backlog of salaries and pension cleared in many states of the federation.

The foregoing anomalies can be traced to the problem of corruption. Corruption is obviously a major cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabric of the nation. All the three arms of government and other state institutions are immersed in corruption such that corruption has now become a norm in the Fourth Republic (Ogundiya, 2012; Salihu and Bakare, 2018). The executive arm of government because of the visible and enormous resources at their disposal appears to be the worst culprit in corrupt practices in the country. Some instances or examples will suffice here. There were reports of how President Olusegun Obasanjo, in a bid to install his preferred candidate as the Senate President, initiated the Fourth Republic

National Assembly into corrupt practices from the first day of its inauguration in 1999 (Ameh, 2016; Odum, 2018). President Olusegun Obasanjo also received donations, contributions and/or gifts from private organizations and individuals against the stipulations of the constitution to build his personal library while still in office. This was clearly an abuse of official position to further private interests. In another vein, a Senate Committee pronounced his Vice-President, Atiku Abubakar, guilty of corrupt enrichment. The Senate Committee said that Atiku Abubakar diverted the sum of US\$ 145 for his personal use (Salihu and Bakare, 2018). Apart from the above, President Olusegun Obasanjo's daughter, Iyabo Obasanjo-Bello, a former Senator of the Federal Republic was involved in two separate scandals. In December 2007, Iyabo Obasanjo-Bello was involved in a contract scandal amounting to N3.5billion involving her and an Australian firm. According to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Senator used her mother's maiden name, Akinlawon to hide her identity in the contract (The Punch, March 19, 2008). Senator Iyabo Obasanjo-Bello was again involved in another financial scandal of mismanagement of funds in the Ministry of Health. Iyabo Obasanjo-Bello was later arraigned in court over N300 million unspent budget scam (This Day, August 6, 2008). Evidently, Olusegun Obasanjo's tenure witnessed various forms of political/electoral corruption and these must have led Balarabe Musa to say, "no government can be more corrupt than the government of Obasanjo" (cited

in Olorode, 2016, p.85).

Apart from the problem of corruption, President Olusegun Obasanjo was also known to be authoritarian and dictatorial in governing the country. His deployment of military troops to attack Odi village in Bayelsa state and Zaki-Ibiam in Benue state which resulted in the murdering of innocent citizens readily comes to mind. His unconstitutional withholding of Lagos state local government funds is also a case in point. His refusal to pay deserving states the 13 percent derivation fund is also another case in point. The foregoing infractions among others were some of the reasons why the House of Representatives under the leadership of Ghali Umar Na'Abah attempted to impeach him on August 13, 2002. President Goodluck Jonathan's administration just like that of Obasanjo also recorded some corrupt activities and impunities, which according to Bakare (2015), "threw the country to the most downward depth of corruption" (p.182). The fuel subsidy scam according to Odum (2018), remains one of the most recurring cases of corruption associated with that period. And just as Obasanjo got donations from private organizations and individuals to build his personal library while still in office, Olorode (2016), points out that Jonathan also received donation of a church in his hometown of Otuoke. Clearly, the sixteen collective years (1999 – 2015) of the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) as the party in power were riddled with cases of unbridled corruption. Ogali (2014), draws attention to the reports that highlighted few aspects of the corrupt practices, which indicated that a total of \$182 billion was stolen from Nigeria and laundered offshore between 2000 and 2009 as well as the N3.655 trillion that was fraudulently shared by the subsidy thieves between 2000 and 2011.

The current administration of President Muhammadu Buhari has also witnessed some acts of corruption. The first issue that caught people's attention was the distortions and padding that attended the 2016 budget - the first annual budget prepared under President Buhari's presidency. Others are the scandal relating to the claim that the Presidential Initiative on the North East (PINE) spent N270 million on clearing of grass; the issue of the two houses worth \$1.5 million that the Chief of Army Staff, Lt. General Buratai, purchased overseas; the government's inability to follow up with the Halliburton scandal, which the American government had already prosecuted from their end; inability of the government to unravel the real owner(s) of the over \$43 million found in Ikoyi apartment; FOREX subsidy scam, etc (Odum, 2018).

At the state level, the former Governor of Delta State, James Ibori, was arrested on 129-count charge by the EFCC of laundering over N9.1 billion. Another notable case of alleged corrupt practice was by Orji Uzor Kalu, the former Governor of Abia state. He was accused of using his loot of N3.1 billion to fund Slok Airline and two banks in the Gambia and Sierra Leone. He also owned some houses in the UK and USA (Ademola, 2011). Another ex-Governor Diepreye Alamieyeseigha of Bayelsa state pleaded guilty before a Nigerian court to charges of corruption, money laundering brought against him by the EFCC, and he was subsequently sentenced to two years in prison. The former Governor of Jigawa state, Saminu Turaki was accused of spending N36 millions of public funds to acquire oil blocks from the Federal

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Government. Ex-Governor Jolly Nyame of Taraba state was charged with stealing N1.6 billion belonging to the state. Former Governor Chimaroke Nnamani of Enugu State and two of his former Commissioners, Peter Mba and Spine Ejiofor were charged of corruption and money laundering by the EFCC. He was indicted by the EFCC for stealing close to N6 billion from the treasury of Enugu State, proceeds with which he bought 172 houses and invested in several businesses that are now confiscated by the EFCC through a court order. Some other former Governors charged for various financial crimes are Edo state Lucky Igbinedion, Ekiti State Ayo Fayose, Rivers State Peter Odili, Imo State Ikedi Ohakim, Benue State Gabriel Suswan, etc. One can see from all the foregoing that majority of the successive Nigerian leaders (executives) since 1999 have one way or the other been guilty of and complicit in institutionalizing corruption in the country. It is in view of the corruption and mismanagement that had characterized Nigeria and which has plunged the country into economic misery that Nuhu Ribadu, the Former EFCC Chairman said that the over \$400 billion that had been looted from the Nigerian treasury by the leaders is "six times the total value of resources committed to rebuilding Western Europe after the second World War" (Ademola, 2011).

Achieving good governance in Nigeria is also a function of a vibrant, active and effective legislature. This is because the legislature performs an important role in assembling, assessing and articulating the people's views, needs, expectations and aspirations within the context of national development. The legislature is the most representative of the three organs of government as it is composed of elected representatives of the Nigerian

people. Indeed, the legislature constitutes the hub or chief organ of popular government anywhere in the world today. Much as the legislature is indispensable in the democratic process, one expects that the legislative institution in Nigeria will at all-time strive to meet up with the high expectations reposed on it by the constitution by performing its sacred duties diligently. However, the scorecard of the Nigerian legislature since 1999 till date vis-à-vis good governance has been abysmally poor. Some instances will suffice here.

According to Saliu and Bakare (2018), the legislature in Nigeria has continued to make headlines in the national dailies mostly for negative reasons. These range from issues of excessive politicking and needless confrontations with the executive to corrupt-related behaviours, thus immersing the institution into the mud of negative public perception. Aside the fact that State Assemblies have been reduced to rubber stamp by state Governors; some members of the National Assembly have over time been enmeshed in scandals and corruption. For example, former Speaker of the House of Representative, Salisu Buhari committed forgery and perjury regarding the falsification of the certificate he claimed and tendered (The Punch, August 9, 2000). There were also allegations of perjury, financial impropriety, among others, levied against the former Senate President, Evans Enwerem, which eventually led to his impeachment on November 18, 1999 after the Senate was convinced of the allegations (Tell, August 9, 1999). Chuba Okadigbo who succeeded Evans Enwerem as Senate

President was also impeached barely a year in office, for corrupt practices which included spending N75 million to buy Sallah rams for some Senators (The News, April 4, 2005). There was also an allegation of bribery levied against former Senate President, Adolphus Wabara, and other Principal officers of the Senate by the then President, Olusegun Obasanjo, in a nationwide broadcast. Obasanjo revealed through the broadcast that the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) found out through their investigation that the then Minister for Education, Professor Fabian Osuji raised the sum of N55 million to bribe Senate President Adolphus Wabara and some other members of the Senate and House of Representatives so as to influence the Ministry of Education's financial appropriation in the 2005 budget (Obasanjo, 2005). This led to the resignation of Adolphus Wabara as the Senate President and the dismissal of Fabian Osuji as Education Minister by President Olusegun Obasanjo.

In the House of Representatives, former Speaker of the House, Mrs. Patricia Olubunmi Ette was forced to resign after she soiled her hands in conducting the legislative affairs of the House by unlawfully spending the sum of N620 million in upgrading her official residence and awarded the contracts to her friends and associates (Dare, 2015). She also embarked on an outrageous spending extravaganza in the United States of America to celebrate her 54th birthday with a huge retinue of aids (Ajayi, 2007). Aside all the foregoing, there are other scandals and corruption cases that are yet to be resolved in the National Assembly. These include various vehicle purchase scandals; the Maina's N195 billion pension scam involving Senator Aloysius Etuk; the kerosene subsidy scam;

Esai Dangabar's police pension fund fraud involving members of the Senate joint committees on Establishment and Public Service Matters and State and Local Government Affairs; Stella Oduah's N255 million armoured car scandal; the missing N20 billion oil money; and the Farouk Lawan's \$620,000 bribe from Femi Otedola in the fuel subsidy scam, among others (Adams, 2015; Saliu and Bakare, 2018).

Indeed, the lists of corruption cases, scandals, misdeeds and financial impropriety of members of the National Assembly are many and have continued to characterize the activities of both chambers thus supporting the general belief among Nigerians that they are averse to good governance. According to Saliu and Bakare (2018), the instances of corruption activities are too enormous that the institution has become synonymous to 'house of corruption'. Accordingly, several people at one time or the other refer to the National Assembly as a den of thieves and self-centered people. For example, Former President Olusegun Obasanjo once described the National Assembly as "an assemblage of thieves and rogues". Earlier, Olaoye (2015), had referred to Nigerian legislators as 'legislathieves', as a result of the practice of self-appropriation of allowances such as furniture, wardrobe, newspaper, with outrageous amount and the secrecy surrounding the exact remunerations of the lawmakers. Indeed, Nigerian legislators have continued to intensify and institutionalize the culture of secrecy and high cost of governance vis-à-vis their alleged jumbo salaries, allowances

and funds for constituency projects. Till date, controversy continues to trail the salaries, allowances and funds for constituency projects of national lawmakers. There are wide allegations that Nigerian lawmakers earn far more than what the Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC), an organization solely saddled with the responsibility of fixing the emoluments of public servants in Nigeria, allocated to them. This entails earning self-appropriated salaries and allowances outside the purview of their official pay. According to Saliu and Bakare (2018), despite public outcry and the press triggering the Freedom of Information Act in this regard, the National Assembly remains adamant to public declaration of the actual entitlements of each member. The refusal to publicly declare their legislative pay is a sign that they are earning more than the legally appropriated entitlements (Mahmud, 2017). The foregoing clearly depicts high level of insensitivity and irresponsiveness to the plight of Nigerians and is obviously at variance with the ideals of good governance. It is clearly as a result of the foregoing too that the public perception of the National Assembly as a corrupt institution since the inception of the Fourth Republic has refused to abate. According to Egburonu, et al (2017), the National Assembly is seen as a conduit pipe through which public funds is siphoned, especially under the banner of constituency project fund and extraneous allowances that are shrouded in secrecy despite public outcry for the institution's finances to be made public.

Another issue that usually generates concerns among Nigerians vis-à-vis the National Assembly is their attitude towards the budget making process. Since the advent of the

Fourth Republic, the Nigerian lawmakers are known for their habitual delay in the passage of the Appropriation Bills. It takes an average of four to five months for the National Assembly to pass Appropriation Bill, making the budget year to be delayed by close to five months into the new fiscal year; an action which the executive usually decried (Ehikioya, 2019a). According to Saliu and Bakare (2018), for instance, the 2019 Appropriation Bill was passed and assented to by President Muhammadu Buhari on May 27, 2019 eating into the fiscal year by 5 months. Though the executive usually errs by failing to preset the Bill in record time to give the lawmakers the ample time to legislate on it, much of the blame is usually put on the legislature. Apart from the issue of time, there is also the allegation by the executive that the lawmakers usually insert projects secretly into the budget without the knowledge of the executive. This is one of the issues that led to the much publicized budget padding allegation in 2016 by House member Abdulmumin Jubrin which eventually led to his suspension for 180 legislative days by the Yakubu Dogara led House of Representatives. Budget padding is a dishonest practice whereby some unauthorized items and or huge amount of money is or are inserted into the budget for selfish reasons. This unwholesome practice, which is obviously at variance with the principles of good governance, is said to be a norm now in the National Assembly. According to Senator Babajide Omowore, lawmakers usually pad budgets to suit their interest because budgets usually come to lawmakers padded and lawmakers further pad the

Appropriation Bill in continuation of the corrupt practice (Omowore cited in Falodi, 2016). The 2019 budget also witnessed similar fate of padding. This was made known to the public when President Muhammadu Buhari grudgingly signed the 2019 budget into law after noting his displeasure on how the National Assembly inserted N90.33 billion new projects into the budget without the knowledge of the executive and claiming that the act would disrupt the efficient implementation of his policies (Ehikioya, 2019b).

It is obvious from all the foregoing that the list of corrupt practices, misdeeds, scandals and financial impropriety of the National Assembly since the advent of the present Fourth Republic are legion thus confirming a conviction among Nigerians that Nigerian lawmakers are anti good governance. This is why Akomolede and Akomolede (2012), averred that the financial irresponsibility of the National Assembly and the virtually lack of decorum in which their businesses are being handled turns them to law breakers and tarnishes their image such that it has left much to be desired regarding their good governance supportive roles. Similarly, Asa and Ikudehinbu (2014), have observed that "... the National Assembly has failed to utilize its enormous power to ease the economic and social hardship confronting the people of this country... except ... devising ways for their pecuniary benefits" (p.7). We cannot but also agree with Saliu and Bakare (2018), who concluded that despite some positive contributions, which the National Assembly has brought to Nigeria's democratic experience since 1999, the perceived negative input outweighs its positive thus the institution is believed to have failed Nigerians.

The judiciary, which is the third arm of government in Nigeria, also has some critical and vital role to play in bringing about good governance in the country. The judiciary is supposed to serve as guard of the guardian so as to ensure good governance. However, the lackluster and poor performance of the judiciary just like the executive and the legislature has also contributed to good governance deficits in the country. Writing under the caption, “Justice for Sale: The Corruption of the Judiciary”, Newswatch, June 27, 2005 avers that corruption has eaten deep into the judiciary thus eroding its role as the last hope of the common man for justice. Also, the Punch Newspaper May 5, 2005, in its editorial said that:

Graft has become a major threat to the basic democratic principle of equality before the law. Justice is often awarded to the highest bidder in many of the nation’s lower courts, as granting ex-parte motion has become cash and carry affair. Corrupt judges whose palm has been grease, brazenly granted prayers, which plaintiffs did not even ask for.

In fact, some of the people in charge of law adjudication in Nigeria are flagrantly undermining their duties and positions through corrupt practices and incompetence (Ayodeji and Odukoya, 2014). A survey conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNIDOC) in 2017 showed inter alia that the judiciary was considered the second most corrupt institution by Nigerians behind the police which was considered to be the most corrupt institution in the country (NBS,

2017; Okakwu, 2017).

It is because of the foregoing that some judges have been axed by the government for corrupt practices and other acts of misconduct. Some of them are Wilson Egbo-Egbo of the Abuja High Court, Stanley Nnaji of the Enugu High Court, Okwuchukwu Opene and D. A. Adeniji of the Enugu Court of Appeal, Isaiah Olakanmi, former Chief Judge of Oyo State and Matilda Adamu, Chairman of the Akwa-Ibom Electoral Petition Tribunal in the 2003 general elections and her colleagues A. T. Ahura and A. Elelegwa (Nwachukwu, 2006). Others are Justices Adeniyi Ademola of the Abuja Division of the Federal High Court and Olusegun O. Tokode of the Benin Division of the Federal High Court who were retired and dismissed respectively (Adetayo, 2018). Also Justices such as Ofili-Ajumogobia, H. A. Nganjiwa and Agbadu James Fishim are currently under trial for corruption related offenses (Gbadamosi cited in Ayodeji, 2018). Apart from corrupt practices and misconduct in law adjudication in the country, the institution of the judiciary is also being challenged by factors such as delays in court proceedings, abuse of court processes, abuse of rule of law, culture of self-help, among others.

One can see from all the foregoing that the operators of the three arms of government have not done much vis-à-vis the attainment of the ideals of good governance in Nigeria since 1999. Their good governance deficits has rather manifested and continued to manifest in different forms and guises. Obviously the operators of these three arms of government see their positions in government as an avenue for primitive accumulation of wealth. Underscoring the unfolding governance deficits in Nigeria, Kesselman, et

al (2018), observes that, “democratization in Nigeria - 18 years after the exit of the military from power - has yet to produce effective accountable governance” (p.512). Similarly, in what appeared to be an admittance of good governance deficits in the country, Vice President Yemi Osinbajo agrees that all the three tiers of government, the executive, the legislature and the judiciary are corrupt and their performances have not only left much to be desired but have also affected governance negatively in Nigeria (Ojomoyela, 2016). Obadan (2001), was right when he argues that bad governance as typified in the tendency to divert public resources for private gain; mismanagement and misallocation of public resources; failure to establish a predictable framework for law and government behavior that is conducive to development; arbitrary rules and regulations which impede the functioning of markets and encouragement of rent seeking; setting priorities that are inconsistent with development, etc, is hostile to economic and national development. In such circumstances, he argues further that the authority of governments over their people tends to be progressively eroded and governance becomes eroded by systemic corruption and lack of accountability and transparency. All these provide opportunities for the well-connected elites and interest groups in the society to corner for themselves a sizeable proportion of the society’s resources at the expense of the masses. Obviously, the above descriptions symbolically represent the nature of Nigeria’s Fourth Republic.

Civil Society Organizations and Good Governance in Nigeria

The concept of civil society organizations assumed more significance with the end of the cold war in the late 1980s and early 1990s as a means to improve governance and democratization. As the cold war ended, there was the need to set good governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights as priority objectives in development across the world. Thus a vibrant civil society was considered as an important pillar for establishing and sustaining of democratization efforts. This is why almost all international donors today usually mention civil society as an important factor to influence decisions of the state before providing development assistance. International donor institutions usually highlight civil society responsibility for a democratic state and its dynamic role in pushing for social, economic and political change (DFID, 2001a; DFID, 2001b; DFID, 2005; USAID, 2005).

Civil society organizations are relatively new in Nigeria and Africa as a whole especially when compared with those in developed democracies of Europe and America. However, it has emerged as a very important concept in the democratization process in Africa. Civil society has been defined not only as the engine of democracy in Nigeria and elsewhere, but also as equally crucial to the vitality of the state (Eminue, 2001; Kukah, 2003; Nwachukwu, 2006; Nwachukwu 2008; Nwachukwu, 2017). This is why Chazan (1996), says that the nurturing of civil society is widely perceived as the most effective means of controlling repeated abuses of state power, holding rulers accountable to their citizens and establishing the foundation of durable democratic government.

As we saw in the preceding section, Nigeria's democracy has continued to witness repeated abuses of state power that has manifested in different forms and guises such as reckless misrule and behavior by elected officials, corrupt practices and abuse of office by public officials, lack of respect for the rule of law and due process, lack of political accountability and transparency, electoral malpractices and coercive politics, lack of popular participation, political violence, financial impropriety, etc. Democratic institutions in Nigeria such as the executive, legislature, judiciary, etc, exist only in form but not in content. Most elected representatives and political office holders still exhibit authoritarian and dictatorial tendencies while carrying out state matters. Such representatives instead of genuinely representing their people and constituencies will rather pay attention to their parochial selfish interests and that of their close supporters. In fact, the political environment is increasingly playing down on the political roles of the people thereby making them irrelevant in a system they are supposed to be sovereign. This is the main reason why the people are continuously finding it difficult to hold their representatives and political office holders accountable and answerable to them. Since democracy is all about the people, it is understood that any distortion on the role(s) they are supposed to play invariably translates to distortion on democracy itself.

However, civil society groups have the potentials to apply pressure on the government and demand for policies that foster democracy, development and good

governance. Also, they are always better positioned in making sure that elections are open and transparent and demanding for reforms in institutions such as the judiciary, legislature, executive, police, local government, etc. In other words, civil society organizations can positively and genuinely contribute to the deepening of democracy and accordingly help to bring about good governance in Nigeria by entrenching and legitimizing political institutions, processes and the culture of democracy as well as by contesting, de-legitimizing and opposing authoritarian, undemocratic and uncivil practices and dispositions (Jega, 2007).

It is well known that civil society organizations have provided services and direction to the Nigerian people for many years in the country. Their activities were manifest during authoritarian military regimes. It is on record that civil society groups played an important role in the ouster of military rule in the country and in bringing about democratic rule on May 29th, 1999. Civil society organizations such as Campaign for Democracy (CD), Civil Liberties Organizations (CLO), Committee for the Defense of Human Rights (CDHR), Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), and many others used various means and strategies to fight military dictatorship. Having played this significant role in bringing about democracy in 1999, civil society groups should not rest on their oars but should rather work conscientiously hard to ensure that the much-desired task of deepening democracy vis-à-vis the provision of good governance is achieved in Nigeria. This means that they must double their efforts in this regard. Being able to do all these according to Jega (2007), requires "confronting enormous challenges

and surmounting them. Challenges associated with changing entrenched attitudes, behaviors and mind sets engendered under authoritarian rule; challenges relating to ensuring that institutions evolve and discharge their functions creditably; and challenges pertaining to ensuring that the in-built processes are transparent, effective and capable of yielding credible and acceptable results” (p.248).

Since the advent of the Fourth Republic in 1999, civil society groups have intervened in different ways such as anti-corruption crusade, good governance advocacy, budget tracking, political reform advocacy, voter education, election observation, campaign finance monitoring, electoral reform advocacy, etc, in order to deepen Nigeria’s democracy and accordingly bring about good governance. Despite the good intentions of civil society organizations in this regard, it is regrettable to note that the citizens are yet to enjoy the dividends of good governance from their leaders. But this does not mean that civil society organizations have not recorded some successes in their different interventions.

For example, civil society groups have intervened in the area of anti-corruption crusade in the country. The negative impact of corruption on democracy, good governance and development is well documented in extant literature. Successive government in Nigeria particularly in the present Fourth Republic have made concerted efforts to tackle corruption in the country but the malaise remains endemic and intractable. Civil society groups have intervened in

different ways in order to contribute to the anti-corruption crusade. The Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) is a major civil society organization that has been working very hard in the area of anti-corruption crusade. According to Olukotun (2018), the SERAP, which was founded in 2004, has been very visible in public advocacy especially in the area of anti-corruption. It succeeded in securing court judgment in respect of the stoppage of public officials earning double pay in the form of pensions, as well as being currently on the payroll. This led to the then Senate President, Bukola Saraki, for example, forfeiting his pension from the Kwara State Government where he was a governor. Similarly, the signing of the Freedom of Information Act into law by former President Goodluck Jonathan on May 28th, 2011, after about a decade of consistent and fearless struggle and advocacy by civil society groups such as Civil Liberties Organizations, Media Rights Agenda and the Nigerian Union of Journalists, is one of the achievements of civil society organizations in Nigeria. The Freedom of Information Act was expected to consolidate the existing legal laws established over the years to help curb corruption, bad governance, create accountable and transparent government and contribute to empowering Nigerian citizens to exert some degree of control over the actions of their leaders and monitor the use of public resources (Dode, 2016; Egugbo, 2018).

Also, civil society organizations have over the years intervened to ensure that the rule of law guides the activities of the Nigerian government. This is in realization of the fact that the rule of law is the bastion of democracy and good governance. According to Egugbo (2018), when the death of former

President Umar Musa Yar'Adua almost created a constitutional crisis in Nigeria because of the political controversy that surrounded his death, it was civil society organizations led by Save Nigeria Group (SNG) that occupied Abuja in protest to ensure that the then Vice President, Goodluck Jonathan, was made acting President and eventually the President of the country in 2010. The National Assembly had to invoke the doctrine of necessity that helped them to elevate the then Vice President to Acting President. In a similar vein, the Save Nigeria Group (SNG) led other civil society organizations such as Democratic Social Movement (DSM), Joint Action Forum (JAF), Maryland I (MI), and the Campaign for Restoration of National Dignity (CARND), etc, in the anti-fuel subsidy removal protest in Abuja in January 2012. Their protest or demonstration made the government to reverse the deregulation policy and returned to the status quo regime of fixing pump price, which was put at 97 Naira per liter.

Civil society groups have also played tremendous and active role in the area of elections, election monitoring and voters' education and have from time to time expressed their opinion about the conduct of elections in the country. This is because of the fact that election is one of the most important mechanisms for the realization of the objectives of democracy and good governance. Civil society groups such as the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), Human Rights Watch (HRW), CLEEN Foundation (CF), West Africa Network for Peace Building (WANEP), International Foundation for

Election Systems (IFES), etc, have over the years intervened in voter education and election monitoring in the country. For example, the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), which is a consortium of domestic election observer groups reported that the elections of 2007 "were seriously marred by egregious irregularities and malpractices to the extent of not only compromising the integrity of the ballot in many states, but also calling into question the reliability and validity of the result declared by INEC (cited in Egugbo, 2018,p. 224). It is all obvious that the various reports of civil society groups particularly in the area of elections have helped to sensitize the voters as well as help the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the government to carry out some electoral reforms for the improvement of the electoral system in the country.

It is important to state now that the extent to which civil society groups can contribute to the task of helping to bring about good governance in Nigeria is related to the extent to which they (civil society) practice democracy internally. In other words, civil society organizations should have a democratic political culture while their activities and practices must be based on democratic conduct and ideals. Also, civil society groups must transcend ethnic and religious chauvinism or bigotry and uphold the values of patriotism, civility, rule of law, due process, tolerance, compromise, accountability and transparency, etc. All these they must do so as to help in the task of deepening Nigeria's democracy vis-à-vis good governance as well as helping the country to actualize her development objectives. Diamond (1996), has provided some advantages or benefits of an organized

civil society vis-à-vis democracy and good governance in the following context:

- i. An organized civil society serves as a watchdog to check the excesses of government, to expose and curtail or put a stop to human rights violation, abuse of the rule of law and infringements of constitutional provision.
- ii. Civil society organizations can supplement the role of political parties in stimulating political participation, increasing the political efficacy and skill of democratic citizens, and promoting an appreciation of the obligations as well as the right of democratic citizenship.
- iii. Civil society is considered as a crucial arena for the development of other democratic attributes such as tolerance, moderation, a willingness to compromise, and respect for opposing viewpoints which are better experienced in organizational participation in civil society.
- iv. It serves to enhance the bargaining power of interest groups and provides inclusive mechanisms for them through the articulation, aggregation and representation of their interests.
- v. Participation in civil society organizations will cut across and weaken long-standing regional, religious, ethnic or partisan cleavages and thus create a new type of citizenship in which individuals will more likely associate with different types of people with divergent political

interest and opinions. It thus provides alternative for negotiation and compromise in a multi-faceted society.

- vi. It helps in recruiting and training new political leaders, not only in technical and administrative skills but also in normative standards of public accountability and transparency. As time goes on, members of the civil society organizations gain skills and confidence that will qualify them for service in government or party politics.
- vii. Civil society organizations also disseminate information, thus helping citizens to collectively pursue and defend their interests and values. It thus provides citizens useful information about government activities that do not depend on what government says it is doing. By contradicting the official story, civil society organizations make it more difficult for government to cover up repression and abuse of power (pp.5-17).

The foregoing analysis by Larry Diamond surely provides civil society groups in Nigeria with variety of ways by which they can contribute to good governance in the country. For example, it is obvious that Nigeria's democracy lacks the legal and bureaucratic means to check corruption but the civil society with its free, robust and inquisitive institutions and mechanisms has the capacity for pressing for institutional reforms, which can fill that gap. This is why Eminiue (2001), says that "civil society groups provide the basis for limiting state power and provides society with the most effective means of exercising control over democratic institutions. They also curtail the excesses of

the state by holding back the state's propensity towards tyranny and oppression" (p.157).

Just like Larry Diamond, Wole Soyinka (cited in Onah, 2007), articulates the various contributions he believes civil society organizations should be able to make to good governance in Nigeria in the following context:

- i. Through their engagements, civil society organizations should add value to peoples' participation in the nation's democratic process. They should be at the forefront of constitutional reform, protection and review process, and of policy and legislative reform that empower citizens and consolidate Nigeria's democracy.
- ii. They should be able to provide a voice for the participation of citizens in issues of national resource allocation and distribution. According to Soyinka, they should also engage in the budget process, particularly gender parity advocacy, to ensure equitable allocation of national resources. They should also undertake civil education in the area of human rights, electoral processes and gender equality.
- iii. An increased role of civil society organizations should be able to enhance governance through the greater participation of actors other than the government in support of the public good, the rule of law, transparent processes and citizen's participation in public affairs (pp.10-11).

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Despite all the foregoing positive nexus between civil society groups and good governance in Nigeria, it is pertinent to point out here that civil society organizations in Nigeria are faced with numerous challenges, problems and constraints that impede or hinder their ability towards playing their good governance roles effectively. According to Konteh (2006), most of the challenges of civil society organizations are because of the controversy over their identity, legitimacy and mandate. The very definition of what constitutes civil society is a major challenge. Critics of civil society organizations often question the moral authority civil society organizations have to represent the voiceless since they are not elected. Similarly, the very nature of their formation makes them only accountable to their financiers. Elected government officials are therefore often at pains in accepting criticisms from such 'self-styled' organizations and individuals. This is because government officials see themselves as having the only authentic legal authority and mandate to represent their people. Some people do not even see civil society organizations as representing their interest.

In addition, many civil society actors show uncivil behaviour and preach hatred against other groups. Also, civil society organizations sometimes engage in unhealthy competition for access to resources and for promoting their different agenda. This has contributed to the fragmentation of civil society groups to the extent that they rarely undertake collective actions. This shows a clear lack of coordination among civil society groups (Nwachukwu, 2018). The following are therefore some of the challenges, problems and limitations civil society groups face in making their best contributions towards deepening democracy for good governance in Nigeria:

Inadequacy of operational equipment and infrastructure.

- ii. Lack of specialized skills and qualified personnel.
- iii. Poor and inadequate funding.
- iv. Inadequate ideological base and poor internal management.
- v. Over-concentration in urban centres and thus the lack of a rural constituency.
- vi. Wastage or inefficient use of resources.
- vii. Dissipation of energy through unnecessary duplication of efforts and petty quarrels and rivalries.
- viii. Problem of lack of coordination and unity between and amongst civil society organizations.
- ix. Tendency to avoid partnership and opting for the do-it-alone attitude.
- x. Lack of sensitivity to the plural nature of Nigeria, and the impact of prolonged military rule on ethno-regional and religious divisions.
- xi. Crass opportunism and narrow mindedness of members of civil society organizations.
- xii. Lack of internal democracy and transparency.
- xiii. Infiltration of civil society organizations by the government (Nandole, 2003; Jega, 2007; Egugbo, 2018).

If civil society organizations in Nigeria are to continue playing an active role in deepening Nigeria's democracy vis-à-vis good governance, all hands must be on deck to overcome the challenges and problems discussed and outlined above.

According to Jega (2007), strengthening the capacity of civil society groups could entail the following:

- i. Acquisition of basic facilities and equipment, which are necessary for organizational efficiency, effectiveness and measurable output.
- ii. Promotion of increased and focused networking among civil society organizations.
- iii. Training of cadres in grassroots mobilization and advocacy.
- iv. Training of cadres for acquisition of leadership and good governance skills.
- v. Promotion of collaborative joint programmes of advocacy and mobilization.
- vi. Diversification of sources of funding through creative revenue generational activities.
- vii. Need to coordinate and control the civil society phenomenon in order to reduce excessive reliance on foreign grants (pp.255-256).

Also, Utomi (cited in Nwachukwu, 2008), has articulated the tools and resources required for effective civil society organizations participation in good governance and development. His postulations, which are no doubt relevant to our discourse here, are as follows:

- i. Comprehensive, effective and supportive civil society organization policy.
- ii. Facilitative regulatory framework.
- iii. Adequate technical and infrastructural capacity.
- iv. Impeccable research, advocacy, management, evaluation and dissemination skills.
- v. Extensive and effective inter-state networks, as well as intra-civil society organization partnership.

- vi. Suitable and effective institutional framework for self-regulation, partnerships and national, regional and international consultations (pp.221-222).

deepen her democracy vis-à-vis good governance. To do all these effectively, civil society groups need to undergo a process of internal democratic renewals and accordingly build structures that can effectively and promptly respond to state institutions.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper has attempted an analysis of the nexus between civil society organizations and good governance in Nigeria. It is obvious from all indications that democratic institutions such as the executive, legislature and the judiciary are not working optimally in Nigeria and this has had adverse effects on good governance in the country. Considering the fact that democracy has not taken its full shape in the country and bearing in mind that members of the political class alone are incapable of deepening Nigeria's democracy, this paper argues that civil society groups have important roles to play in bringing about good governance in the country. It is our view here that because civil society groups in the country have not organized themselves in vibrant and effective manner that the Nigerian state is experiencing the impact of governance in different negative ways. In other words, civil society groups have not been able to respond adequately to the challenges expected of them in enriching good governance in the country. There is therefore, the urgent need for the organs and institutions of civil society to re-order their priorities and rise up to the challenge by effectively and efficiently organizing themselves so as to be able to carry out the arduous task of helping Nigeria to

However, bearing in mind the many problems, challenges and constraints of civil society organizations in the country, there is every need to strengthen them so as to maximize their contributions to good governance in the country. There is therefore, the urgent need for all concerned persons and bodies in the country to come together to help rescue civil society groups from their acute constraints and weaknesses and accordingly empower them with more efficient and effective facilities, resources, skills and methods of operations. It is pertinent to point out here that civil society organizations can only be effective in their contributions only when they function within specific national arrangements as it is within these arrangements that their contributions to good governance will make sense. Diamond (1999), has rightly emphasized that "civil society must be autonomous from the state, but not alienated from it. It must be watchful but respectful of state authority" (p.15) if it is to be effective in the task of helping to bring about good governance in the country. According to Aiyede (2001), civil society organizations marked by alienation and disengagement from the state will be feeble building blocks for democracy and good governance.

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Institutional Credibility as Mechanism for Promoting Social Justice in Nigeria

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Abstract: Strong and credible institutions do not only stimulate socio-economic and political development, but makes a nation great. Advanced nations of the world with such institutions ensure the promotion of social justice, a significant determinant of good governance. In Nigeria, institutions that support good governance are not only weak but lack credibility. This is responsible for slow rate of development; a trend that has enthroned corruption, lack of accountability, exploitation, marginalisation and ethnicity, consequently breeding social injustice and continuous search for peace and security in the country. The main thrust of this paper was to interrogate how institutional credibility promotes social justice in Nigeria. To seek solution to the problem of the study, the authors posed one research question and one hypothesis based on the stated objective of the study. Data was obtained through a structured four-point Likert scale questionnaire. Data were collected from 70 lecturers in the Department of Social Science Education, Department of Political Science, Department of Private Law and Department of International Law all in the University of Calabar sampled for the study. Data collected from the abovementioned categories of scholars was subjected to statistical analysis and was analysed with the aid of Multiple Regression Analysis as the tool for data analysis. Based on the findings made from the study, it was concluded that institutional

credibility significantly predicts social justice in Nigeria. The recommendation is that government should build strong institutions through character formation, moral restoration and capacity building
Keyword: Development, Good Governance, Institutions, Peace, Security, and Social Justice.

Introduction

All social systems have established structures, organisation and modus operandi; all of which shape and determine their cultural patterns. The structure, organisation and operational patterns of social system are expressed in different context specific. These structures are founded on establishments called institutions. Institutions form the basis for the actualisation of societal goals and aspirations because they are created for specific purposes – social, educational, political, legal, economic/financial, religious or otherwise. Every national government desires a functional system of education, governance, distribution of goods and services as well as efficient system of dispensation of justice. Towards these varied ends, institutions are created. On this note, Soludo (2006) said institutions, that is, the way society is organised, including its rules, laws and enforcement processes, matter greatly. In the same manner, Etim (2017) said that institutions have been variously seen as systems of established structure where human interactions and activities are predicated on a set of implicit or explicit rules. But where institutions are susceptible to undue extraneous manipulations and influences, they become weak.

Indeed, it has been observed that most often these institutional structures have not guaranteed the translation of national aspirations to reality. This ugly state of affairs is being blamed on weaknesses in institutional structures – lack of

credibility of existing institutions. In Nigeria, institutions that support good governance, development, peace and justice are not only weak but lack credibility. This is accountable for the slow rate of development, a trend that has enthroned corruption, lack of accountability and mismanagement of national resources, exploitation, marginalisation and ethnicity, consequently breeding social injustice and continuous search for peace and security in the country (Oladele, 2016). On the strength of this, Oladele (2016, p.2) maintained that:

You cannot cause development to happen if your institutions are not functioning. If your institutions have lost their focus and values, you can't make things happen. For example, if the police cannot be made to work according to the ethics of policing, nothing meaningful can come from the force. ...somebody who has not been trained to be a police officer cannot go and be wearing police uniform. These are established values in every society.

Such an imperfect system leads to social justice crisis and so the question asked is, how can social justice be maintained? Social justice, peace and security as indices of good governance can only thrive in a society with credible institutions – institution where rules and regulations are maintained; where no single individual is greater or stronger than an institution; where procedures are followed conscientiously; where institutional values are held sacrosanct; where compromise of all

forms are eschewed; where transparency, probity and accountability are visibly in place. This justifies the assertion of Ijege (2016) that for any government to succeed, it must ensure a solid foundation for sound political, economic and social institutions to be created. No single individual can solve such problems. The solution is in sound institutions backed by strong individuals. Strong institutions are thus instrumental to the sustenance of social justice work.

This must have prompted Lettinga and Troost (2015, p. 3) to describe the work of social justice as one which:

Involves addressing economic inequality and social marginalization as if they were – in some sense – human rights violations. However, beyond that core definition, approaches to social justice can vary widely. At one end of the spectrum, the authors argue that liberals seek to achieve social justice by having marginalized groups gain access to the institutions (e.g., corporations, the military, government, etc.) that have excluded or discriminated against them. At the other end of the spectrum, radical or Marxist activists seek to remedy social inequalities by overturning or revolutionizing those very institutions that they deem unjust. As a result, social justice work could range from promoting female CEOs, to fighting against the very corporations that those CEOs may lead.

This implies that while institutional framework is necessary for social justice to thrive, the state of social justice in a society also influences the operation of social institutions. The activities of social justice workers, social crusaders, human rights activists and civil society organisations could determine the operational mode of justice institutions. This usually applies when such institutions go deviant from their norm, and perhaps pervert justice.

Burke (2015) contends that contemporary debates about global justice begin with John Rawls' *A theory of justice*, which assumes the existence of a market economy and takes as given the possibility for stable economic equilibrium in a capitalist system. Similarly, Pogge (2010) views social justice as an assessment of the social impact of institutions and rules rather than a judgment of individual behaviour. To assess the conditions and prospects for social justice, we need to ask whether the system and institutions presently in place are providing, or are capable of providing or maintaining social justice for the world's people (Enu, Unimke & Undie, 2016). Pogge (2010) further posited that current global institutional arrangements actually cause harm because they perpetuate rules, whose foreseeable and avoidable results produce poverty and result in the deaths of innocent people. The point here is that there is not perfect institutional framework even on a global scale. This deficiency and lack of credibility in the global pedestal has trickled down even to Nigeria. This was corroborated by Federal Government of Nigeria Transformation Agenda (FGNTA, 2011–2015), which attributed the inability of Nigeria to decisively address the challenges of development in all facets of political governance, economic governance, corporate

governance and effectiveness of institutions.” Buttressing this point further, Soludo (2006, p. 17) stressed that institutions drive human progress, and while some unleash, others inhibit such progress. The author emphasised that “it is evident from all over the world that wherever the rule of law prevails and property rights and contract enforcements are more effective, progress has been faster than where such conditions are absent.”

In recent times, especially beginning from 2010, peace and security have eluded Nigeria. The advent of Boko Haram with its terrorist activities that peaked with the attack of UN building, the abduction of over 200 Chibok School girls in 2014 to the 2018 kidnapping of 110 Dapchi school girls among several incessant attacks on lives and property have spelled doom for the country. The recent and highly dreaded genocide attacks of Fulani cattle herdsman on farmers in the Middle Belt of the country have given Nigeria a grave cause for alarm. This ugly trend has remained unabated in spite of the presence of security personnel and coercive apparatus deployed to the area. Justice is yet to be done to the victims of these acts of bestiality.

Notwithstanding the anti-corruption stand of the current administration and pro-economic development in Nigeria, the Transparency International Report (2018) announced that Nigeria’s corruption index is worse than what obtained three years previously. The rate of social and economic development in the country is nothing to write home

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about. President Muhamadu Buhari’s administration has taken ethnic politics to an inglorious height with the introduction of clannishness, nepotism and tribalism into politics. Enu, Undie and Odey (2019) listed among others corruption, religious bigotry, ethnicity, resource control and power shift as pervasive challenges facing the Nigerian federation currently.

Several attempts have been made by the federal government of Nigeria to solve these aching problems of the Niger Delta agitations even though now they seem to be calmness. Several institutions or agencies have been created, and so much public funds have been sunk into these projects. Many statutes have been promulgated. Conferences have been held. The research community has been busy trying to proffer solutions to these myriads of challenges the country has been grappling with. The media have been quite vociferous as well as Civil Society Organisations. However, it is regrettable to observe that it has been difficult to sustain social justice in Nigeria. Nigeria has been accused of being excellent in programmes and policy-formulation but poor in implementation (Enu & Esu, 2011).

Certain institutions of governance are entrusted with oversight responsibilities of entrenching social justice, and ensure the promotion of good governance, development and peace and security in Nigeria. For the avoidance of ambiguity, institutions referred to here cut across political institutions, legal institutions, social institutions, educational institutions, financial institutions, religious institutions and media institution. Specifically, the following institutions are considered in this paper:

- The judiciary
- The legislature (comprising both the

National Assembly and States Houses of Assembly)

- The Security agencies (Police, Department of State Security and others)
- The civil service
- Political parties

A cursory look at the above institutions within the context of governance support base viz-a-viz their mandate in the promotion of social justice in Nigeria shows outright weakness and lack of optimum capacity to deliver the social good. For example, the Judiciary that is seen as the last hope of the common man, to a reasonable extent, is nothing but theatrical even with much constitutional empowerment. Innocent people are made to suffer unduly from the instrument of the law while perpetrators of criminality are moving about the streets untouched. This is what Kukah (2011) described as injustice. It is even worse under the present dispensation that the judiciary itself has suffered the worst assault itself as the head of the judiciary; the president unconstitutionally removed Hon. Walter Nkanu Onnoghen. If the CJN can suffer this fate, how much less an ordinary man?

The legislature, on its part, has failed in its oversight legislative mandate. Serious issues of breach of the principles of social justice by the government have not been raised by the legislature and addressed. Both the upper and lower chambers of the Nigerian legislature are more involved in the welfare needs of their members than issues of public interest. For instance, in 2008, former President Olusegun Obasanjo single-handedly ceded the Bakassi Peninsular to the Republic of

Cameroon, an act done against public interest. The entire process was never presented to the National Assembly for ratification. This is a clear case of impunity against the people. The National Assembly displayed overt lack of capacity and institutional failure to protect its citizens.

The security agencies are not spared as they have gravely compromised their professional ethics. Recent happenings in the country indicate the failure of the security institutions to protect lives and properties of the citizens. Killings across the North Central Zone by criminal elements have been going unabated with the combined effort of all the security agencies proving to be helpless. So much injustice has been perpetrated against the people of Benue, Taraba, Kaduna and Plateau States, who have variously suffered physical, emotional, economic and psychological emasculations. This is further corroborated by Enu and Odey (2017), who decried the apparent application of the military architecture of the Nigerian state at presidential whims and caprice; an act that has caused untold hardship on the citizens of Middle Belt. Social justice has eluded these people as the existing institutions of governance have failed to protect them.

Both the civil service and political parties by nature are supposed to be the heartbeat of every government. Incidentally, this is not so in Nigeria. One of the most corrupt institutions in modern day governance in Nigeria is the civil service. The civil servants are engrossed in all manners of unholy practices that have compromised public service ethics of transparency, accountability and honesty in the discharge of their duties. The civil servants constitute a nest of high-

powered officials promoting corruption in the civil service.

For political parties, because they are made up of mostly men and women with low ideological orientation of what it takes to be a party member, they cannot decipher between party and government. This has a serious impact on the quality of governance and delivery of public service to the citizens.

In the light of the above, Abubakar (2011, p. 2) pointed out that:

Democratic institutions such as INEC, Legislature, Executive, Judiciary and security agencies are put in place by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to act as mechanisms for the smooth conduct of periodic elections and the enthronement of political leaders. However, these institutions lacked the capacity to perform well due to the prevailing circumstances of the environment in which they are situated— weakened moral threshold and poor ethical values.

It is therefore the considered opinion of the current researchers that with credible institutional framework, these problems bedeviling Nigeria would be solved. There have been many unanswered questions on the credibility of institutions saddled with the responsibilities of maintaining social order, peace and security and good governance in Nigeria. With recourse to the above state of affairs, it was considered imperative to examine institutional credibility as mechanism for promoting social justice

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in Nigeria.

Literature review

Societies are built on structures deliberately created to achieve certain societal deals and aspirations. They are specially established to enhance the achievement of clearly defined goals. These structures are referred to as institutions. An institution is an organisation established for a religious, educational, political, social or legal purpose. Hodgson (2006) described an institution as the kind of structures that matter most in the social realm: they make up the stuffs of social life. The author went further to define institutions as the rules of the game in the society, the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction. Institutions could be formal or informal. An informal institution entails social order and organisation reflecting human psychology, culture, habits and customs while a formal institution is purposely created to attain a particular objective of national interest. The term institutional credibility is a derivation of the strength or integrity of institutional framework, which refers to a set of formal organisational structures rules and informal norms for service delivery in the society. It encompasses the systems of formal laws, regulations and procedures, and informal conventions, customs and norms that shape institutional behaviour and operation. In the context of this research, institutional credibility is referred to as the strength of an institution. In other words, a credible institution is a strong institution. This entails a strict or conscientious compliance with organisational structures, processes, principles and procedures in place. It is about an institution that has the capacity and the temerity to maintain standards and follow its guiding principles without any form of compromise. A credible institution is able to

deliver on its mandate irrespective of whose ox is gored. In this kind of institution, no individual can be greater than an institution. Though men be strong and mighty, the institutions are stronger. A credible institution makes social justice and social development possible.

Rawl (1971) conceive justice as the first virtue of social institutions considered as a truth system of thought. In his theory of social justices, Rawl noted that “a theory, however, elegant and economical must be rejected or revised if it is untrue; likewise laws and institutions no matter how efficient and well-arranged must be reformed or abolished if they are unjust” (p.5). This is a further description of the place of institutional credibility in maintaining social justice in the land. Social justice is a concept that originates in philosophical discourse but is widely used both ordinary knowledge and Social Science often without being clearly defined. By synthesising the common elements of various philosophical treatments, it is possible to offer a general definition of social justice as a state of affairs (either actual or ideal) in which:

- (a) Benefits and burdens in the society are dispersed in accordance with some allocation of principles (or a set of principles),
- (b) Procedures, norms and rules that govern political and other forms of decision-making that preserves the basic rights, liberties and entitlements of individuals and groups; and
- (c) Human beings (and perhaps other species) are treated with dignity and respect not only by authorities but also by other relevant social actors including citizens.

The Australian National Pro Bono Resource Centre (2015) viewed social justice from three perspectives:

1. Joint responsibility to address systemic/structural poverty, inequality and unfairness – emphasises responsibility of system or government to provide:
 - i. Fair redistribution of resources
 - ii. Equal access to opportunities and rights
 - iii. Fair system of law and due process
 - iv. Ability to take up opportunities and exercise rights
 - v. Protection of vulnerable and disadvantaged people
2. Individual responsibility – getting what you deserve according to:
 - i. Status (emphasises an individual’s social position as a determinant of the share of resources an individual deserves)
 - ii. Moral responsibility (emphasises the behaviour of those who are poor, excluded or disadvantaged)
 - iii. Workforce participation (emphasises workforce participation as the only legitimate way for an individual to contribute to society and be socially included)
 - iv. Individual capability (emphasises the personal characteristics that enable people to take advantage of opportunities)
3. Recognition of human value and wellbeing (emphasises human value beyond status and economic productivity)

Above are the themes of social justice. There are widely overlapping and interconnecting relationships between the various themes. These are quite complex; but the scope of this research does not cover these relationships. It should be taken that social justice is guided by the elements identified above. The attainment of these ideals would naturally give rise to peace and security and good governance in a state.

Babawale (2007, p. 9) see good governance as “the exercise of political power to promote the public good and the welfare of the people.” The author argued further that:

Good governance is the absence of lack of accountability in government, corruption, and political repression, suffocation of civil society and denial of fundamental human rights. The identified points attributes of good governance in any society include: accountability, transparency in government procedures, high expectation of rational decisions, predictability in government behaviour, openness in government transactions, free flow of information, respect for the rule of law and protection of civil liberties, and press freedom.

The absence of the above is a clear case of bad governance, characterised with pervasive corruption among others. To Oladele (2016), Corruption is a systemic issue arising from the weakness of institutions. Gbervbie (2014) equally argued that good governance and development in Nigeria can only be achieved if democratic institutions such

as Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Legislature, Executive, Judiciary, the Police, political parties and the press are strengthened to carry out their functions properly.

Similarly, Ekpe (2008) as well as Enu and Odey (2018) noted that the creation of a conducive climate for political and economic development is the purpose of good governance. Particularly, Enu and Odey (2018) emphasising the place of leadership, maintained that the aim of good governance is to bring about effective implementation of development programmes in the state. Furthermore, the authors conceptualised good governance as being a characteristic of “the interplay of the best practices in the administration of a state or nation for sustainable development. The implication of this assertion is that no nation is likely to experience enhanced development without the existence of good governance in place (p.14).” It must therefore be made clear that good governance, development and social justice are the direct corollary of a credible institutional framework in the society.

Speaking for good governance and justice in the electoral process especially with respect to democracy, Odey (2012, p.48) stated:

...We know the importance of allowing the votes to count. If the votes continue to count, leaders would be more responsible and responsive to the people. They would have respect for the people, and respect for the people is the beginning of responsible leadership. But if and when votes don't count....there would be no respect for anybody....

While upholding that there are Nigerians who are not corrupt, Obodo (2012) stressed that Nigerian institutions are riddled with spies

and wolves that believe, and are secretly sponsoring different ethnic and religious ideologies. The author decried the prevalence of ethnicity and religious sentiments in play in Nigerian institutions. The author alludes to a weakness in the judicial system occasioned by political interference in the system. According to him, this is the bane of Nigeria's effort in providing social justice, peace, political and social development.

Theoretical framework

This study is anchored on John Rawl's theory of social justice (1971). In 1971, John Rawls' theory of social justice, was propounded, and has been described as "probably the most influential" concept of social justice (National Pro Bono Resource Centre, 2011). Rawls' conception of distributive justice provided that "all social values... are to be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution of any or all of these values is to everyone's advantage" (Rawls, 1971). The thrust of this theory is the question Rawls asked, "What particular set of rules or laws would members of a society agree to obey if they made as their goal a fair social order – one in which no one is exploited or taken unfair advantage of" (Baldry, 2010). Rawls' theory of social justice is guided by two fundamental principles, which are:

- (1) Each person has equal right to the most extensive system of personal liberty compatible with a system of total liberty for all
- (2) Social and economic inequality are to be arranged so that they are both

- (a) To the greatest benefit to the least advantaged in society (so that the least well off people are made as well off as possible, which could mean giving an unequal/greater amount to the people least well off)
- (b) Attached to positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity (so that everyone in society has a reasonable chance of obtaining the positions in society that make decisions about inequalities)

John Rawls showed empathy to the socially disadvantaged and those whose inequalities are "undeserved" in the society. Rawls' "principles of redress" stress the need for this category of persons to be duly compensated.

This theory has some implications for this study. The view of John Rawl on social justice focuses on a systemic form of justice that is it is concerned with the general society holistically instead of individual persons. The theory makes an emphatic proposal for the distribution of social values and goods for individual members of the society based on their respective needs irrespective of size, class, opportunity or other mundane factors. Accordingly, the theory curries for the interest of the disadvantaged members of the society. With respect to the current study, if social justice is achieved in Nigeria, every segment of the society would benefit; justice would not be restricted only to the privileged. The national commonwealth would be distributed in such a way that even the downtrodden would benefit. This can be achieved only when institutions saddled with requisite responsibilities are strong enough to deliver on their mandate. When this is in place, development, peace and security would have been guaranteed.

Purpose of the study

This study sought to achieve one main objective, which is:

1. To investigate institutional credibility as a predictive mechanism for promoting social justice in Nigeria.

Research question

1. How does institutional credibility predict the promotion of social justice in Nigeria?

Statement of hypothesis

1. Institutional credibility does not significantly predict the promotion of social justice in Nigeria.

Method

This research was conducted in the University of Calabar (UNICAL), Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. University of Calabar is one of the second-generation universities in Nigeria. Law established it in 1975 by the federal government of Nigeria. It initially started in 1973 as Calabar Campus of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN). The University has a College of Medicine, 13 Faculties, 4 Institutes and 83 Departments. The study was based on ex-post facto research design since the occurrence of the variables had preceded this study. The population of the study comprised all Social Educators and Social Scientists and Legal Educators in the University of Calabar. Specifically, this study sampled only Lecturers in the Department of Social Science Education (Faculty of Education), Department of Political Science (Faculty of Social Sciences) and Departments of Private and International Law (Faculty of Law)

presently on ground (i.e not on sabbatical or leave) in the period of this research (first quarter of 2018). The sample of the study (70 lecturers) is presented in Table 1:

TABLE 1 Sample of study

S/N	Department	Number of sample
1.	Social Science Education	18
2.	Political Science	22
3.	Private Law	12
4.	International Law	18
	Total	70

Data for this study was collected by means of structured questionnaire that measured institutional credibility and social justice in Nigeria. The questionnaire had a total of 25 items. A four-point Likert scale questionnaire was administered to the subject and retrieved from them in their various offices. The data were subjected to statistical analysis using the Multiple Regression Analysis.

Result

This section presents the result of the analysis of data collected. One hypothesis was tested, which reads: Institutional credibility does not significantly predict the promotion of social justice in Nigeria. While institutional credibility is the independent variable, social justice is the dependent variable. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance using the Multiple Regression Analysis. The result is presented in Table 2. Table 2 shows that p-value of 0.001 is less than the 0.05 level of significance used for the study while the F-ratio is 4.542 at 5 and 64

degrees of freedom. This result shows a significant composite relationship between the predictor-variables and the dependent variables. The multiple R (correlation coefficient) that measures the strength of the association between the independent and the dependent variables is 0.412, a good correlation. The coefficient of determination, R^2 is 0.172, which shows the power of the independent variables in predicting the dependent variable. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, credible institutions significantly predict the promotion of social justice in Nigeria. A further analysis of the result shows that the predictive ability of each of the five predictor-variables differs. This is shown in the significance of t and p-values: the judiciary ($t=2.998$, $p=0.032<0.05$); the legislature ($t=1.886$, $p=.002<0.05$); security agencies ($t=1.971$, $p=0.005<0.05$); the civil service ($t=3.3834$, $p=0.000<0.05$); and political parties ($t=1.348$, $p=.002<0.018$). These statistics reveal that the independent variables have a positive or direct relationship with the dependent variable: this means that the stronger or more credible the institutions are, the more social justice becomes sustainable and achievable. Conversely, the weaker the institutions, the less like would the achievement of social justice be.

Discussion

The finding of this study revealed that institutional credibility significantly predicts the promotion of social justice in Nigeria. This is a negation of the null hypothesis directing the study. The finding shows that credible institutions the world over promote social justice,

Nigeria is no exception. It also proved that the level of social justice in the state is determined by the strength of justice institutions in the state commands. The weaker these institutions are, the higher the level of social injustice. This finding is in consonance with the works of Oladele (2017) as well as Ijege (2016). According to Oladele, development cannot take place in the midst of institutions that are not functioning. The author stated further that institutions that have lost their focus and values cannot make things happen. Soludo held that strong institutional framework dictates the kinds of skills and knowledge perceived to have the maximum pay-off. These go to show that institutions, especially those concerned with promoting social justice that lack credibility cannot make social justice happen or practiced in the land. By this, still, only strong institutions have the capacity to bring about social justice, development, good governance and peace and security. On his part, Ijege (2016) asserted that success by any government is determined by the presence or creation of formidable social institutions that can shoulder the responsibilities bestowed on it. The author maintained that achieving social justice or social development cannot be done where individuals are stronger than institutions. In fact, he recommended as solution to societal problems “sound institutions backed by strong individuals.”

Conclusion

There are so many challenges confronting Nigeria bothering on lack of social justice, good governance, social development as well as peace and security. The Nigerian government has never been blind to this. Several attempts have been made in terms of policymaking and creation of relevant institutional frameworks to address the

matters. Regrettably, the problem is yet to be resolved. Based on the findings made in this research, the researchers conclude that the problem lies with institutional credibility. It does not suffice to create institutions. What is of utmost consequence is the strength, the capacity, funding, transparency, accountability, human capital and relevant, enabling statutes. These are the hallmarks of credibility of an institutional framework.

Recommendation

Nigerian government should take a step beyond establishment of institutions to focusing on strengthening existing institutions by building capacity for such institutions for effective service delivery; strong institution should take pre-eminence over strong men.

TABLE 2
Multiple Regression Analysis of institutional credibility and social justice
(N = 70)

Sum of variation	SS	DF	MS	F	Sig.
Regression	109.013	5	21.803	4.542	.001*
Residual	307.392	64	4.800		
Total	416.405	69			

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Standard error	Beta		
(Constant)	33.487	6.343		5.279	.000
The Judiciary	.107	.107	.090	2.998	.032
The Legislature	-.176	.094	-.166	1.886	.002
Security agencies	-.318	.161	-.184	1.971	.005
The civil service	.299	.078	.355	3.834	.000
Political parties	-.158	.117	-.120	1.348	.018

a. Dependent Variable: Social Justice

R	.412 ^a
R Squared	.170
Adjusted R Squared	.132
Std. Error of the Estimate	2.191

*p<0.05, df = 5, 64

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Policy Options and Strategies Towards a Resolution of Farmers -Nomadic Cattle Herders Conflicts in Nigeria

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Abstract: Farmers-Herders' crisis is one of the most raging resource wars in the 21st century. This justifies why the dominant news items in international, national, and local newspapers carried captions relating to the said conflict. Some of these captions are: "Nigerian Army Deployed to State Rocked by Deadly Herdsmen Violence", End Killings by Herdsmen Now, Ohaeze charges Buhari", Declare Fulani Herdsmen Terrorists Now – Southern, Middle Belt Leaders charge Buhari", and "Mass Burial for 73 Nigerian Farmers Killed in Herder Clashes", among other headlines. Even with the above lamentations, Farmer-herders' conflict persists in Nigeria and Africa from a broader perspective. In this connection, this study charts the policy option/strategies towards a resolution of farmers-nomadic cattle herders' conflict in Nigeria. To do this effectively, the study investigates the historical perspective of the conflict under review. It also discusses the causes of the farmers-nomadic cattle herders' conflict in Nigeria. Following this, the paper unravels the effects of the conflict on the Nigeria State as well as the previous and present efforts at resolving the conflict. The study concludes that so far, all efforts made at resolving the farmers-herders' conflicts have ended in futility because this conflict is witness almost on daily basis in the country. The study recommends the herders to engage in ranching as the best option in addressing this societal malady. All these have been done using the historical methodology.

Keywords: Conflict Resolution, Farmers-Herders Clash; Nigeria; Policy Options; Strategies

Introduction

There has arisen... blood against formal reason, the race against purposeful rationality, honour against profit, unity against individualistic disintegration; smartial virtue against bourgeois security. The folk against the individual and the mass (Kriek cited in Sabine & Thorson, 1973:816).

Conflict is a social problem in which two or more persons, families, districts, communities, states, or nations are at war with each other. Other words used for conflict are disagreement characterized by quarrel, fighting, severe anger, aggression, violence, and bloodshed. Conflicts lead to tensions, threats, fears, anxieties, and uncertainties (Dzurgba, 2010:1). In a fight against one another, military men or soldiers shoot, cut, hack or club one another to death. The death toll rises as casualties also increase. Combatants use arrows, knives, cutlasses, guns missiles, bombs, chemicals, and nuclear arms, depending on whether or not the war is a local war or an international war (Dzurgba, 2010:1). In the contemporary world, human anger and cruelty are extremely bad to the extent that military men use sophisticated and dangerous weapons to fight even in district wars. In this context, conflict destroys life and property without limit.

It cannot be denied that the dominant news items in the 21st century are that of violence orchestrated by individuals and groups in pursuits of different goals. This violence is experienced by individuals, groups, communities, countries, and perhaps globally. The intensity of violence

oscillates from low to a very high level with deep pains. Violence is indeed widespread. Reports of violent conflict that destroys lives and materials resources disrupt entire communities, states, and affect regions are commonplace (George-Genyi, 2014:1). Similarly, Heassly (2009:2) affirms that: "One of the most significant challenges facing citizens of the world in the 21st century is how to live and work peacefully with others in all spheres of personal and public life". The above quotation expresses the difficulty of citizens in living smoothly with each other including the crop farmers and pastoral farmers.

It is in light of the above that, this chapter harps on the farmers- nomadic cattle herders conflicts in Nigeria. It contends that the relationship between farmers and herders is acrimonious in that cattle and crops cannot co-exist on the same piece of farmland. In giving this analysis the chapter veers into a historical perspective of farmers-nomadic conflict in Nigeria. It unravels the causes and the effects of the said conflicts. The paper also examines previous attempts at surmounting the lingering conflicts. Also, the study provides some policy options for the resolution of the conflicts under review and equally attempts a useful conclusion based on the issues examined. Our analysis shall be essentially historical, employing both descriptive narrative and empirical tools in analyzing the subject matter.

Historical Perspective on Farmers-Nomadic Cattle Herders Conflicts in Nigeria

Historically, pastoralists and agriculturalists (farmers and herders) in Nigeria enjoyed a fairly symbiotic relationship. Herders' livestock provided farmers with daily goods, as well as manure to fertilize their fields. In turn, pastoralists obtained gains and other farm

products from agriculturalist communities (Baca, 2015). However, this system increasingly shows signs of breaking down as the growth of farming activities has drastically diminished Nigeria's supply of grazing land. The herds and flocks of pastoralists now frequently encroach upon cultivated fields, much to the outrage of local agriculturalists. Ensuing confrontations can quickly degenerate into armed clashes that poison communal relations and lead to further instances of violence (Baca, 2015). However, Mohammed (2013) cited Roger Blench (a leading expert in this field) argues that:

Conflicts between pastoralists and farmers had existed since the beginning of agriculture, but the prevalence of tsetse flies and cow settlement densities had kept the incidence of clashes at low frequency until the 20th century.

The information above points that clashes between farmers and herders is a long-time phenomenon even though it was at a minimal level; it still existed and much later it became pronounced in the present day. Giving a detailed analysis of this phenomenon, Mohammed (2013) aptly posits:

The introduction of easy veterinary drugs has increased disease resistance and treatment, increase her size coupled with rapid depletion of natural fodder in the Northern states sharing borders with Niger and Chad had compelled herders to seek pasture outside their traditional ecological zones in the Sahel Savannah. At the same period, improved human

health, rapid populations, urbanization, and large-scale land acquisitions added pressure on arable land thus increasing the stiff competition of the static commodity.

It is on record that since the 1950s there has been a growth in human as well as livestock population in the coastal countries of West Africa including Nigeria. This gave rise to increased pressure on natural resources and stiff competition for available resources between farmers and herders (Tonah cited in Ofuoku and Isife, 2009). Following the Sahelian drought of the 1970s and 1980s, and the accompanying migration of a huge number of pastoralists into the fringes of the humid forest zone of West Africa presently, there has been a massive increase in the incidence of farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria in recent times. For instance, in the Desina Local Government of Adamawa State, 28 people were feared killed, about 2,500 were displaced and rendered homeless in the hostility between cattle rearers and the host community in July 2005 (Tonah cited in Ofuoku and Isife, 2009).

In Imo State, precisely between 1996 and 2005, 19 people died and 42 people were injured in the farmers-herders conflicts and violence that often accompanied such conflicts (Nweze: 2005). Igbahenah (2016) in his study of farmers-herders conflict in Gwer Local Government Area, Benue State revealed that in the last decade the clashes between indigenous farming communities and nomadic herdsmen have increased in several parts of central Nigeria, including the country's eastern flank. For example, on 4th March 2003 attackers, thought to be nomadic herdsmen from neighboring Chad attacked the rural town of DumneinBorno State killing 40 people. In the same year, Udawa cattle herds attacked and

burned 64 farming villages in Adamawa and Gombe State resulting in 63 dead, 563 injured and 23,700 displaced (International Federation of Red Cross-IFRC cited in Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre-IDMC, 2008). Earlier in 2002, a similar conflict occurred in the Mambila Plateau, which is in the same region, which resulted in dozens of deaths and forced more than 25,000 Fulani herdsmen to flee across the border to Cameroun (IDMC, 2008). Also on December 18, 2009, another conflict occurred in Nasarawa State where at least 30 persons were killed in fighting between farmers and cattle herders when armed herders raided the farm village of UdeniGida (Country Report on Human Right Practices, cited in Igbahenah, 2016).

The Global Terrorism Index (2015:43-44) indicates that Fulani militants (mostly herders) were the fourth deadliest terrorist group in 2004, using machine guns and attacking villages to assault and intimidate farmers. After killing around 80 people in total from 2010 to 2013, they killed 1,229 in 2014. Most deaths occurred in Nigeria's Middle Belt Region particularly in the states of Benue, Kaduna, Nasarawa, Plateau, and Taraba, which recorded 847 deaths. The state of Zamfara North Belt recorded 229 deaths. In addition to terrorist attacks, Fulani militants were also involved in non-state armed conflicts with groups from Eggon, Jukun, and Tiv farming communities; these resulted in 712 deaths (*Global Terrorism index, 2015: 43-44*).

Indeed, in the Benue area, farmers-herders' conflicts have become an annual event. Expressing his views on this matter,

Commanding Officer of the 72 Battalion, Colonel Timothy Lagbaja alludes that "the deaths were recorded between 2012 and 2015 comprised of four officers and eleven soldiers, out of which eight of them including two officers and six soldiers fell in one day in Agatu raid" (*Daily Trust* 2015:8). It should be mentioned that the above figures capture the number of officers and men of the Nigerian Army that died during the raid, neglecting that of the civilian populace.

Causes of the Conflicts

The causes of conflicts are also known as sources of conflicts. These sources are multifarious or myriad. Igbahenah (2016:84-88) isolates some of the courses to include: Trespass on farmlands, deliberate destruction of farm products, deliberate contamination of drinking water, sexual assault and others criminal acts by cattle nomads, reaction and reprisal by native farmers, and the pursuit of a hidden agenda, among others. Similarly, an informant who is also an indigene of Taraba State, Sunday Nyam (2010) explains that the cattle nomads are fond of deliberately taking their cattle to graze on farmland without minding whether crops are planted or not. Their actions are usually associated with two basic negative effects on the side of farmers. Firstly, cattle usually consumed cultivated crops. Secondly, the cattle hooves, compact or harden the soil make tiling difficult since the farmers operate under strenuous conditions with crude implements like hoes and cutlasses.

Another victim of the farmers-herders attack, Samuel Ako (2014) argues that the nomads love their cattle as themselves to the extent that they deliberately allow their animals to feed on-farm products kept on the farm. They open yam and grain barns and feed their cattle with; whenever farmers complain in most cases, it

results in violent conflicts.

Confiscation of grazing reserves is another source of farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria. In analyzing this teething problem the *National Mirror Newspaper*, August 06, (2015) pontificates:

Until the mid-1990s there were close to 500 grazing reserves in the country, but the big men both civilian, military, and police have taken over the lands for their commercial agriculture. Even though it is the government property they have shared it among themselves. Today a poor Fulani herder who needs to survive and also needs to feed his cattle has nothing to do other than fighting his brother who is a farmer and also needs a means of survival.

The Surveyor-General of the Federation at the time of this study, Professor Peter Nwile concurs to the above and notes that the grazing reserves in the country vanished because of undue encroachment and lack of maintenance (*National Mirror Newspaper*, August, 06:2015). Nwile stressed that there were over 400 grazing corridors in the country in the past, but that they had all been filtered away for development purpose (SIC). Out of 400 grazing reserves, only 40 were gazetted. He Nwile notes that it was wise to create grazing routes, but when cities grow, they share the grazing routes thinking they were not important (*National Mirror Newspaper*, August 06, 2015).

Assessing the causes of farmers-nomadic cattle conflicts, Hasan Kuraye, the chairman of *Miyatti Aallah (which is the umbrella association of herders in the*

URL: <http://journals.covenantuniversity.edu.ng/index.php/cujpia>

country)Katsina State chapter expressed his mixed feelings when he poignantly states that:

A substantial percentage of the grazing routes in Katsina State have been encroached by highly placed individuals, who built farmhouses and other buildings where they retire to from time to time. These individuals turn these government facilities into their facilities (*National Mirror Newspaper*, August, 06).

The preceding paragraph shows that private individuals have confiscated grazing areas for their aggrandizement leaving the herders in a state of confusion having nothing to do rather than moving widely from one place to another without restriction. There is also an emergence of migrant groups of resource users; migrant farmers have added stiff competition for arable land. These migrant farmers move from north to central and southern states to cultivate crops for subsistence and commercial purposes. Traditional grazing fields are gradually being leased out to these groups for a customary fee from pastoralists unlike in the past when it was free thereby generating conflicts. Thus, besides, the pastoralist-sedentary farmers' conflicts; we now have pastoralist- Sedentary farmers/migration farmers' conflicts with its attendant consequences (Mohammed, 2013).

Other causes of these conflicts include the encroachment on traditional livestock migratory routes, cultivation of traditional grazing areas, dry season cultivation of riverine areas and valleys in Northern Nigeria encouraged by the Federal Government of Nigeria *Fadamaprojects*, land grabs by very trado-political-merchant elites, attachment to land as a political tool to gain access to power have accentuated the conflicts. Blench (2010) paraphrase this scenario as presented thus:

In Nigeria... this conflict is now subsumed into a broader dichotomy of religion and disputed over access to resources are now framed in religious and political terms. The increasing, availability of modern weapons has increased the intensity and violence of these disputes.

Apart from these factors, traditional rulers as well contributed greatly to the cause of these conflicts by collecting a huge amount of monies from herdsmen to give them land. This is because many of the new-breed Fulani herdsmen typically do not know the lay of the land in Tiv society and assume that the structure of land ownership is the same as in the North where land belongs to the traditional rulers. However; in Tiv society, the land belongs to the people. The native farmer cultivates their lands - these lands and the crops on them constitute one of their most important assets as a people (Agbegbedia, 2013). Working on the assumption that the land belongs to traditional rulers, these new-breed herdsmen come in and pay some traditional rulers for leave to graze on lands, and some of the chiefs take money without informing their people. Supporting this position, Morgan (2013) noted that:

It is common knowledge that the common, average, ordinary, regular northerner respects, and revere's traditional ruler far over and above anybody else including the President of Nigeria. Armed with this attitude, the Fulani herdsmen, upon arrival in Tivland, pay courtesy visits to our Chiefs to

allow for safe passage and grazing in their domain. They in turn offer them royalties in cash and kind (cattle). This, however, has gone beyond royalties only and has amounted to exploitation.

Ati Kenneth Kengkeng (2018) corroborated this argument that:

Check across the entirety of Tivland and you'll hardly find a traditional ruler without connections to Fulani herdsmen and almost none without a herd of cattle numbering in the hundreds. This relationship has been going on for years until lately when it upgraded to the sale of land. Grazing areas have been sold to Fulani herdsmen and they have been denied access to such lands in specific areas... Attempting to prevent the herdsmen from accessing the land led to rancor and fighting.⁵³

Some Tiv traditional rulers having collected money from herdsmen failed to give them access to grazing land. The Fulani herdsmen, on the other hand, interpreted this as great cheating on their side and retaliated with the destruction of human lives, farms, and property.

Apart from the above causes of the pastoralists and farmers' conflict Idyorough (2017) identifies the following factors as being responsible for the conflict in question:

- i. There is desert encroachment in Central Nigeria that makes open grazing difficult during the dry season from November to May.
- ii. There are environmental pollution and degradation in Central Nigeria caused by overgrazing.

- iii. There is global warming and it affects rainfall and resulting in high temperatures in Central Nigeria.
- iv. There is poor maintenance culture in the provision of social services (such as water, health clinics, and schools) on the grazing reserves that were established in the past under the Grazing Reserves Act of 1965.
- v. There are cattle rustling by thieves and armed bandits on open grazing sites.
- vi. Herdsmen's culture belief that when their cattle are introduced into crops and they consume them, they become more fertile.
- vii. Ethnocentric behavior of the nomads to retain nomadic culture even though it is an obsolete or archaic way of raising animals.
- viii. Herdsmen's constant introduction of their herds into crop farms to destroy crops thereby instigating crisis.

Explaining these causes further, Idyorough (2017) notes that the Benue Valley has good rainfall and greener pastures that serve as a pull factor to the migration of Fulani herdsmen while the 8 factors mentioned above serve as the push factors; pushing them away from Central Nigeria into Benue Valley and even beyond and their engagement into conflict with crop farmers. The nomadic herdsmen wherever they are found (the Nuer of East Africa, the Tuareg of North Africa, Fulani of West Africa, etc) are a war-like people; ready to fight anyone who touches their cattle when they introduce such cattle into food crop farm owned by the crop farmer. The herdsmen, identified to be Fulani extraction, are the pastoralists that engage in open grazing,

gratuitous movement with animals, and open conflict with crop farmers (Idyorough, 2017).

In this connection, it would not be out of place to conclude that farmers-nomadic Herders conflicts have economic, religious, and political undertones. These factors have been further aggravated by the availability of modern weapons causing a deadly impact on the economy and society of the people of Nigeria.

The Effects of these Conflicts on the Nigerian State

The effects of the Farmers-Herders conflict in Nigeria are legion. It is worthwhile noting that these conflicts affect both farmers and nomads in various ramifications. First and foremost is the loss of lives; a lot of killing by the nomads and reprisal killing of nomads by the host communities takes place during these conflicts. Herds of cattle belonging to the nomads are also killed. Also some of the victims (young and old) are badly injured or maimed. This has reduced some women farmers to the status of widows. All these have drastically reduced the agricultural labour force in the area. Besides, the incessant conflicts are repugnant to national integration and peaceful co-existence, especially among the various ethnic groups in the country (Ofuoko and Isafe, 2009).

Secondly, there is a radical reduction in output and income of farmers as a result of the destruction of crops by cattle and indiscriminate bush burning. Many farmers lost a substantial part of their yields. This drastically reduced yielding which in turn led to low income on part of farmers who take farming as their core occupation. This negatively affects their savings, credit repayment ability, as well the food security

and economic welfare of urban dwellers that depend on these farmers for food supply. This seriously discourages farmers and rural agricultural development (Ofuoku and Isafe, 2009).

Thirdly, farmers-herders conflicts in the area under consideration paved way for the closure of schools. Abdul (2014) discloses that to ensure the safety of both school teachers and pupils or students whenever there is farmers-herders strife the schools in the affected areas are usually closedown. This situation compels many students to be at home for 24 hours daily since some of the parents and guidance have no money to send them to other schools where they can stay temporarily. As a result of this menace, some children engage themselves in other social vices on the grounds of being idle.

Furthermore, a vivid analysis of the effects of the farmers-herders conflict cannot be attained without stating that the crisis has deprived people of their basic rights such as the right to food, clothing, shelter, medical service, and security. Psychologically, the conflicts have created fear among the native farmers to the extent that they are afraid to go to the farm in the affected areas (Igbahenah, 2016:90-91). On the side of nomadic cattle herders, they have gained additional lands for grazing but they also live in fear and carry large arms to scare the people in case of any eventuality (Igbahenah, 2016:90-91).

Besides, there is erosion (land degradation) in Nigeria as a result of zero grazings. The exposures of the soil make it susceptible to erosion which is worsened

by the rain. This is accelerated by the topographic nature of some hilly areas. Erosion causes loss of soil materials and difficulty of cultivation (Ofuoku and Isafe, 2009).

Moreover, these conflicts have led to the displacement of farmers. Ofuoku and Isafe (2009) point out that there are reports of displaced farmers and herdsmen who relocate as a result of these conflicts. There are several Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps established to take care of refugees fleeing from these conflicts. It is important to state that most of these camps are often overcrowded creating serious health challenges and the problem of feeding. Quite often the government has been unable to respond to the pressure exerted on the few make-shift facilities provided in the camps such as water, toilets, and bathrooms, drugs, sanitation facilities, just to mention a few areas.

Apart from the aforementioned effects, there are allegations that some nomads have been involved in armed robbery and rape in different states of the Federation. The *Nation Newspaper*, May, 18 (2016:18) is very apt on this issue:

In the last two decades, there have been numerous reports of Fulani herdsmen committing crimes in their host communities all over the country, such as trespassing and grazing on farms, gang-raping of women, kidnapping, armed invasion and massacre of defenseless villagers; and even ethnic cleansing by battalion- strength Fulani militia armed with AK-47 and other sophisticated weapons. These reports have come from many states including the following: Plateau, Benue, Nasarawa in the North –Central zone,

and the southern part of Kaduna State in the North-West zone. Reports have also come from Ondo, Kogi, Oyo, Abia, Ogun, Enugu, and Delta. This report covers the six geo-political zones.

In the course of this violence, a lot of people were displaced in the name of seeking the safety of their lives. Contributing to this matter, Varvar (2017) shows that:

...ethnic conflicts have been the third factor of the Farmers/herdsmen crisis. The period from 2010 to the present has witnessed sustained brutal attacks on the rural farming communities of the Benue Valley area, leading to loss of lives and displacement of populations. Tiv farmers have seriously been affected as agricultural and socio-economic activities have been crippled in some of the affected areas. Many of the Tiv migrant farming communities have been displaced and forcefully taken over by herdsmen.

In discussing the same matter, Idyorough (2017) notes that during the invasion and occupation of some LGAs in Benue State the killings, displacement, and loss of valued property occurred was the order of the day. Some districts in these LGAs were occupied by the marauding herdsmen. The local crop farmers have been displaced from their farmland and are helpless.⁶¹ Food crop production in some of these areas has stopped and the local communities are made dependent. Table 1 graphically presented the random

statistics of causalities in the affected areas. The table shows the locations and nature of attacks and the aftermath. It can be seen as a total of 1,010 civilians (many women and children), Nigeria Police Force personnel killed, and numbers of cattle killed in the act of conflicts in the affected areas. Aside from the death toll, properties worth millions of naira were destroyed. This is as a result of houses, shops, markets burnt in the act of violence by the herdsmen while many civilians in the farming communities have been displaced. This situation suggests that the affected areas are under siege and if care is not taken, it could result in food scarcity due to the economic and social backwardness of the attacked areas.

Relatedly, the intensity, scope, and frequency of such conflicts have shown the fragility of the unity of ethnic nationalities in Nigeria. The tenacity to maintain 'no retreat and no surrender' by all parties in the conflict indicates the porosity of the Nigerian federation (Abass, 2017). Prone areas in fierce struggle and competition over the shared resources undermine the relative peace, stability hitherto enjoyed; with threats to social order. The conflicts have brought about fundamental problems of human security in the region, particularly humanitarian crises. These challenges are due to policy implication of the political economy with the formulated policies designed ostensibly to reduce and manage the conflicts but ironically turned to escalate them the more. This development has put the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) under serious threat due to the struggle for natural resources under contention. Conflicts in a federal structure can be effectively and efficiently managed when there are a sound and clear policy respect the feeling of each group, with giving and take

devices. Mismanagement of these conflicts shows that there is a weak institutional capacity in Nigeria's federation to manage them right from traditional to governmental institutions (Abass, 2017).

The harvest of conflicts, especially the stand-off between Pastoralists and farmers, must have been cultivated and irrigated by the leaders and followers in varying forms and magnitude. This has shown the low level of cohesion and fragility amongst numerous ethnic nationalities sequel to the construction and constitution of the Nigerian federal structure leading to the ubiquities of the instability of the failed Nigeria State and federalism (Abass, 2017).

Previous Efforts at Resolving the Conflicts

The attempt at curbing the farmers-nomadic cattle herders conflicts in Nigeria have been made at different periods by different categories of people. Here, the chapter considers the role of the Federal Government (FGN), government agencies, and local militias in surmounting the conflicts under study. The first step taken by the Federal Government to do away with this problem was the creation of ranches. The rationale for the creation of ranches in the country was to stop the wider and free movement of herders with cattle. But unfortunately, because of personal interest and corruption, almost all the cattle ranches have been taken by selfish individuals leaving the whole country in a total mess (Tsonov, 2016). It is praiseworthy to note that the FGN demonstrated a penchant attitude towards

her policy of completing ranches. Concerning the above matter, Nwilo disclosed that out of the 400 ranches created in the country only 40 of them were grazing (*National Mirror Newspaper*, August (2005).

Also, the FGN under the leadership of President Muhammadu Buhari (a Fulani man) has responded to the public outcry and ordered security forces to crack down on the cattle raiders (Mikailu, *BBC News*, 15th May 2016). Associated with the above, another source explains that President Muhammadu Buhari on Wednesday, April 27, 2015, ordered the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), Major General Abayomi Olonishakan and the Inspector General of Police (IGP), Solomon Arase to go after the herdsmen who are killing in several parts of the country. The president also assured of his administration's readiness to deploy all required resources to remove this new threat to the collective security of the Nation (*Daily Trust Newspaper*, April 28, 2016:3).

Since there are speculations that the herdsmen ravaging the Nigerian communities are foreign invaders, the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) is working assiduously to ascertain whether such claim is true and if possible proffer a solution to it. However, the spokesman of the NIS, Ekpedeme King, was captured (in the *National Newspaper*, May, 29 2016:2) postulating that:

There is no evidence that the herdsmen are foreigners, and the NIS does not profile immigrants based on their ethnicity, so the NIS cannot say whether the herdsmen are Nigerians or not because nobody has produced them for us to profile them. We are at the borders and we have not seen any herdsman coming into the country. We

have our men at the borders and they are doing their job. What we have so far is speculation, it is not possible that they could be foreigners.

The idea here is not just a debate on whether the violent nomads are outsiders or insiders but to assess the contribution of the NIS towards curbing the farmers-herders conflicts in Nigeria. It is also revealed that in the week preceding May 29, 2016, the police arrested five herdsmen alleged to have masterminded the attack on UkpabiNimbe community in Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State. According to the police, the suspects had a video of the attack (*The National Newspaper*, May 29, 2016:2). Similarly, in many states, the mobile police are usually deployed for peacekeeping in the affected communities.

In the face of the incessant security challenges in the country, natives of different communities resulted in forming militia and vigilante groups. It is glaring that during the conflict between farmers and herders these groups do come out to fight for the interest of the people. In many cases, they defeat the herders since they are more conversant with the terrain of their communities than the nomadic cattle herders (Piev, 2016). Despite the above-chronicled efforts, it should be recognized and acknowledge that efforts at stopping farmers-herders conflicts area are yet to yield the desired results and as such this call for policy suggestions.

Resolving the Present Conflicts: Some Policy Options

To do away with the farmers-nomadic cattle herders' conflicts in Nigeria, certain measures must be put in place. Firstly, there is a need for the FGN and the affected state governments to institute some necessary actions towards tackling the incessant problem of acute water shortage and drought, which are the key issues that drive the herdsmen out from their immediate environment to seek fresh pasture and clear water elsewhere.

Secondly, the FGN should implement the United Nations and African Union-backed Great Green Wall Programme, which brings together 11 countries to plant trees across Africa, to lessen the effects of desertification and improve the ecosystem integrity in the dry northern parts of the country stretching from Zamfara and Kebbi State in North-West, along the northern border of Nigeria to extreme eastern border of Borno States and involving 8 states in all. If this is done, it will go a very long way in reducing the insecurity involving pastoral herdsmen in the region (Okpaleke, 2016).

Thirdly, the FGN should enact relevant legislation to enable the grant of pastoral lease in some designated areas, taking into consideration, native or indigenous land rights, as the case may be. A pastoral lease is an arrangement whereby a lease is granted to livestock owners overstate or government-owned land for grazing or other pastoral use (Opkaleke, 2016). Widely used in some countries like Australia and New Zealand, this lease concept should perhaps be studied, with a view to, if possible, adapting same in Nigeria, that is if found to be relevant and suitable. This will at least drastically reduce farmers-herders' conflicts.

Importantly and much more fundamentally, the FGN should encourage herders to establish ranches and make sure that they are effective. If this is done it will prevent cattle and herders from moving out freely and generating violent conflicts in the process. Nigerians should take a cue from other countries whose have huge cattle such as Spain, Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Uganda, and Israel, among other but who have strictly adopted the practice of building and situating their cattle in well-irrigated ranches, thereby stopping or reducing to the barest minimum the problem of pastoral conflicts. The Minister of Agriculture, Dr.AuduOgbealso subscribes to the idea of ranching. According to him:

The Fulani cow yield 1 little of milk a day, the ones in Uganda and Israel that are ranched produce 15 and 40 liters a day, respectively. Countries in Europe, America, and Asia have long discarded the system of open grazing of cattle and they are reaping the socio-economic benefits. It is against the law in many of these countries to herd livestock in the open as is a practice in Nigeria (*The Union Newspaper*, September 1, 2015).

The quotation depicts that migratory herding has been archaic and unproductive and should be discouraged. In addition to the above policy options, raids, shootings, killings and abductions or violence of any kind should be outlawed and strict penalties and sanctions should be imposed by status for any infringement. Regulation of the business would modernize the business, enhance its growth as an export business, which can

on its own generate revenue for both the owners and the government through the cattle and cattle products which include beef, hides, and hooves, to mention just a few productions.

Policy suggestions for the resolution of the farmers-herders conflict in the country cannot be smoothly examined without stating that there should also be a program for the production of cattle feed by farmers and industrialists. This will help build a symbiotic relationship between cattle ranches and farming communities. Apart from modernizing and boosting livestock production for local consumption and export, the problem would help to put an end to the needless massacre and destruction of properties, particular farmlands, which have been the fallout of the migratory, herding system practiced in the country (*The Union Newspaper*, September 1, 2015).

Furthermore, the Fulani Cattle Breeders Association (Miyehi Allah Cattle Breeders Association (MACBAN) should stop misleading their follow cattle breeders by using the 1999 Constitution to justify their alleged right to graze on farms in order states of Nigeria. According to them, because freedom of movement is their Constitutional right, no one can stop us from grazing in the south (*The Nation Newspaper*, May, 18, 2016:18). Explaining their take on this issue, NuruAbdullahi, the chairman of MACBAN, Plateau State insists that:

Nobody can deprive Fulani herdsmen of their constitutional right of free movement because... the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria guarantees freedom of movement for every citizen of the country: this includes the right to live, work and carry out any legitimate activity in any

part of the country (*The Nation Newspaper*, May, 18, 2016:18).

The conservative notions such as these are likely to create acrimonious relationships rather than peaceful co-existence. In this wise, we recommend that the interpretation of the constitution should be done by the law experts for peace and harmony.

Traditional rulers and other community leaders should stop breaching their contractual agreement on sales of land with the herders. Those who do not want to sell their land to the herders should not pretend. If this is done, it will resolve to a great extent the farmers-herders conflict in the study area. To resolve the farmers-nomadic cattle herders conflicts, modern and indigenous conflict management techniques should be adopted. Here, all the identified stakeholders should be brought together under a common forum and included in the decision making and allowed to participate actively in the planning process that involves all stakeholders (herdsmen, crop growers, and government) in the dispute resolution mechanism, this will help to promote consensus instead of conflict (Bleneh, 2010).

Besides, another approach necessary for the resolution of the lingering conflicts between farmers-herders in Nigeria is that nomadic education should be intensified to properly position nomadic cattle herders to see the need for peaceful co-existence with their host communities. The host communities should stop emphasizing that herders are visitors to their communities but they should rather

have a priority of finding ways to accommodate them without conflict.

Lastly, all the states government should enact a law to prohibit open rearing and grazing of livestock and provide for the establishment of ranches and livestock administration, regulation and control, and for other matters connected with it. This has been already started by states like Benue, Kwara, and Taraba State. The purpose of this law is to ensure peace between farmers and pastoralists since both crops and cattle cannot coexist on the same piece of farmland. Benue State Government of Nigeria (2017) has identified the main objectives of this law as to:

- a. Prevent the destruction of crop farms, community pond, settlements, and property by open rearing and grazing of livestock;
- b. Prevent clashes between nomads' livestock herders and crop farmers;
- c. Protect the environment from degradation and pollution caused by open rearing and overgrazing of livestock;
- d. Optimize the use of land resources in the face of overstretched land and increasing population;
- e. Prevent, control, and manage the spread of diseases as well as ease the implementation of policies that enhance the production of high quality and healthy livestock for international markets;
- f. Create a conducive environment for large scale crop product.

With the above objectives, if all the Nigerian States enact and practice anti-open grazing law the factors that tend to degenerate to the farmers-herders conflict will be done away with or at least reduce to its barest minimum.

Conclusion

This paper on farmers-nomadic cattle herders' conflicts in Nigeria has demonstrated that the relationship between farmers and herders was hitherto based on mutual trust and peaceful co-existence. However, it became acrimonious due to the increase in the number of herders who embark on open nomadism leading to the destruction of waters, farms, and farmlands. Apart from the activities of nomads, the paper outlined and described other sources of the conflicts under consideration. The paper explained that despite the intermittent conflicts between the settled farmers and the herders, they still have a lot of things in common. This is because they need each other for their survival since none of them can wholly supply their needs.

The paper also examined the effects of these conflicts on the Nigerian economy and society. The paper contended that so far, all efforts made at resolving these conflicts have ended in futility because the farmers-herders' attacks are witness almost on the daily basis in the country. In the final analysis, the study made some recommendations aimed at resolving the long ravaging conflicts between these groups. Fundamentally, the paper specifically advocates the need for herders to engage in ranching as the best option in addressing this problem. This is because it is out of place in the 21st century for herders to move about with cattle. Apart from the environmental hazards accompanied by grazing, it is believed that ranched cattle produce more milk and beef and are not prone to diseases.

Table 1: Fulani Herdsmen/Farmers Clashes in Nigeria (2014-2019).

S/N	Date	State	Nature and place of incident	Number of Death	Other effects
1	05-03-2014	Plateau	People of Riyom LGA were attacked by herdsmen	10 people	More than 100 houses burnt
2	09-03-2014	Kaduna	57 gunmen, suspected to be Fulani herdsmen attacked the community of Angwan Sakwai in Kaura LGA	57 people killed	Houses were burnt and properties destroyed
3	19-04-2014	Delta	Residents of 25 LGA in Delta State grounded activities on the Benin-Asaba Expressway, protesting over attack and killings of domestic herdsmen	23 killed from the attack	N / A
4	Nov. 2014	Nassarawa	Herders attack villages	3	3 N / A
5	2014	Benue	N / A	1229	N / A
6	7-04-2015	Benue	Fulani herdsmen attack community in Benue State, injured many, sacked three (3) communities	2	8 N / A
7	27-04-2015	Benue	Suspected Fulani herdsmen attacked Benue Community, Adeke, Mbadirwa, in Gurua district of the Local Government. Injured many	2	1 N / A
8	19-06-2015	Rivers	Herdsmen attacked and killed farmers which resulted in pandemonium in Port Harcourt	10 farmers killed	N / A
9	October 2015	Kogi	Herders attacked Agojeju-Idkain Dekina LGA	2	3 Properties destroyed and houses burnt
10.					
11.	12 to 13-12-2015	Kaduna	Z a r i a M a s s a c r e	700-1000 were killed	N / A
12.	13-12-2015	Plateau	Fulani herdsmen attacked Kwata Community in Southern Jos	2	2 N / A
13.	24-01-2016	Benue	Fulani herdsmen ambushed police officers including Division Police Officer as revenge over the feud between the local farmers and herdsmen.	3	1 N / A
14.	08-02-2016	Benue	Fulani herdsmen attack Beane Village at Tom-Agaja and Tom-Azara Communities of Mfara, Tombu in Buruka LGA	1	0 Over 300 people have been displaced
15.	18-02-2016	Benue	Herdsmen attack on Okokolo village in Agatu LGA of Benue State	5	Properties destroyed
16.	14-03-2016	Benue	Many fired and killed as Fulani herdsmen invaded Agatu. The attacks lasted for days according to the Vanguard Newspapers.	3	0 0 hundreds were displaced and many injured
17.	31-03-2016	Benue	Herdsmen attacked Agasha Community in Guma LGA	7	N / A
18.	10-04-2016	Benue	Fulani herdsmen attacked Dori and Maisuma village	1	N / A
19.	21-04-2016	Benue	Ten communities were razed while many killed by herdsmen in Agatu, Benue State	A b o u t 5 0 0	N / A
20.	24-04-2016	Benue	Fulani herdsmen killed many in Benue State	3	5 Many displaced
21.	24-04-2016	Plateau	Kwata, Zamfara of Jos South seven kilometre from NPPS at about 8:30pm Sunday night in Plateau was attacked killed mainly women and children	1	4 Burnt houses
22.	25-04-2016	Enugu	Ukpabi Nimbo attack of imported mercenary by Fulani herdsmen	4	0 a b o v e Serious fled to nearby communities
23.	07-05-2016	K o g i	Gunmen attacked Fulani camp at Enjema Community in Ankpa LGA of Kogi State.	41 cows killed	300 cows missing
24.	03-08-2016	Kaduna	Armed Fulani herdsmen attacked in Jama's LGA of Kaduna State	5	N / A
25.	04-09-2016	Adamawa	Attack by Fulani herdsmen raiding Demsare, Unumakoh, Dikajam and Taboungou villages	30 killed and a DPO	Several houses and other properties burnt
26.	13-10-2016	Kaduna	Attack by suspected Fulani herdsmen along Kagoro Gidan Waya road in Kaura LGA	2 police officers were ambushed and killed	2 police officers injured
27.	15 to 16-10-2016	Kaduna	Gunmen, suspected to be Fulani herdsmen attacked Godogodo area of southern Kaduna in Jama'ah LGA	20 killed	Several injured
28.	14-11-2016	A b i a	Suspected Fulani herdsmen attacked farmers harvesting rice on their farm in Abam community of Arochuku LGA	Several killed	Others injured
29.	17-11-2016	Niger	Fulani herdsmen attacked Kukaki community of Shiroro LGA	6	20 injured, 200 cows, goats and sheep razed away.
30.	2016	Kaduna	Herdsmen attacked 53 villages	8	0 8 700 people, 100 houses, 100 animals, 100000 properties, 6000 cows lost.
31.	26-03-2017	Rivers	Herdsmen attack in Abraka	A lecturer and 16 villagers killed	N / A
32.	12-04-2017	Taraba	Two villages in Gashaka LGAs of Taraba State	1	5 N / A
33.	19-04-2017	E d o	25 local Govt. blocked Benin-Asaba Highway in protest of the killing of 23 persons by Fulani herdsmen.	2	3 N / A
34.	21-04-2017	O y o	Herdsmen attacked Lagun village in Iyana Olofin, Atogba, Lapata and surroundings in Lagelu LGA of Oyo State	A night guard killed	10000 displaced and 1000 injured
35.	2017	Benue	Herdsmen attack in Zaki Biam	N / A	2000 displaced and 1000 injured
36.	2017	Kaduna	H e r d s m e n a t t a c k	2	0 4 N / A
37.	28-04-2018	Taraba	Attack by herdsmen on some villages in Wukali	N / A	N / A
38.	16-06-2018	Delta	Fulani herdsmen attacked Ossisa community in Ndokwa East LGA of Delta State	A 45 year old farmer shot dead	N / A
39.	20-06-2018	Benue	Fulani herdsmen attacked Ugondo, Turan and Gabo-Nenzen in Logo LGA of Benue State	59 person killed	N / A
40.	URL: http://journals.covenantuniversity.edu.ng/index.php/cujpia		L G A s	3	5 Properties destroyed 100000 burnt
41.	04-02-2019	Zamfara	Herder's attack 7 villages for revenge of 7 cows	2	6 N / A

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42.	11-02-2019	Kaduna	Attack on Adara settlement-ungwar Bardi	1	5	2	65 missing
43.	20-02-2019	Benue	Fulani herdsmen	1		7	N / A
44.	26-02-2019	Kaduna	Fulani herdsmen attack	4		0	N / A
45.	10-03-2019	Kaduna	Attack by suspected Fulani herdsmen	A	B	3	5
46.	11-03-2019	Kaduna	Fulani herdsmen attack for revenge for cow	A	B	5	2
47.	16-03-2019	Kaduna	Fulani herdsmen revenge attack	1		0	N / A
T O T A L				ABOUT 3,126,001			

Source: Author compilation from *Daily Trust*, April 15, 19,24, May 31, January 24, Punch April 21, Sunday Trust December 13, vanguard February 8, Today online media April 24, Sahara Reporters January 24, the Guardian May 3, Daily Trust May 7, Vanguard May 8.

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Regional Security Initiative and the Security Challenges in Nigeria: The Case of Operation Amotekun

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Abstract: It is no longer news that the Federal Republic of Nigeria is currently faced with increasing security challenges in its six geopolitical zones. In South West Nigeria, a region that is home to millions of Nigerians, predominantly Yorubas who share common ancestry, beliefs, values and culture, are reoccurring security challenges – ritual killings, Fulani herdsmen-farmers clash, armed robbery, kidnapping among others. Over the years, the underfunded, understaffed and overstretched Nigeria Police Force (NPF) has been unable to stamp out the aforementioned crimes in the region. Hence, the governors of the six states in the region – Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, and Oyo State, having rubbed minds, launched a regional security initiative – ‘Operation Amotekun’ in January of 2020 to complement the efforts of the police. This paper takes a critical look at the Western Nigeria Security Network (WNSN) codenamed ‘Operation Amotekun’ as the region’s security initiative in addressing the myriad security challenges bedevilling the region. For the study, data were garnered from secondary sources, and the Social Contract Theory was adopted as the tool of analysis. The paper concludes that the laudable Amotekun Corps is a ray of hope for the people of South West Nigeria that the spate of armed robbery, kidnappings, ritual killings and the likes will be reduced to a bare minimum if not become a thing of the past in coming years.

Keywords: Nigeria Police Force, Operation Amotekun, Regional Security Initiative, Security Outfit, South West Nigeria

Introduction

The protection of human lives and property remains a primary responsibility of state governments the world over, be they democratic or autocratic. It is no wonder that ‘security’ is among the sectors critically examined by pundits when appraising a government’s performance over a given period.

In the Nigerian State, burgeoning security challenges in the six geopolitical zones of the country has in time past and recent years left tens of thousands of unarmed civilians dead and property worth millions of naira, destroyed. Beginning from 2009, North East Nigeria has been the epicentre of Boko Haram insurgency and the attendant humanitarian crisis in the region. In North Central, herders and farmers clash is occasionally reported in Benue and Plateau State. North West of the country is not any better, as armed banditry is well pronounced in Zamfara State while infrequent clashes with tribal and religious colouration, do rear its ugly head in Kaduna State where the Muslims are the majority in Northern Kaduna and in Southern Kaduna, a preponderant Christian population. In the oil-rich South South region, militancy is still very much alive, while kidnapping, cultism, armed robbery, secessionist movement, and farmer-herdsmen clash are common incidents in South East Nigeria.

In the face of the abovementioned insecurity situations in parts of the country, and kidnappings, armed robbery, farmers-herders clash, and ritual killings in the South West region, is the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) which is underfunded, understaffed and

overstretched in the discharge of their core mandate of maintaining law and order, and protecting lives and property. Thus, state governors and groups within the Nigerian Federation began to float regional security initiatives to complement the efforts of the police and other conventional security agencies.

In South West Nigeria, the governors of the six states therein collaboratively came up with the security outfit codenamed ‘Operation Amotekun’ (Yoruba: meaning ‘Leopard’) which was launched early January, 2020, in Ibadan, the capital of Oyo State. No sooner had they done this than the Coalition of Northern Groups (CNG) unveiled a ferocious Lion as the symbol of the Northern Nigeria Security Initiative ‘Shege-Ka-Fasa’ (Hausa: meaning, ‘I dare you’) in Kaduna State on the 5th of February, 2020 (Enyiocha and Idowu, 2020; Isenyo, 2020; Hassan, 2020). In South East Nigeria, the apex Igbo socio-cultural organisation, Ohanaeze Ndigbo, suggested a security outfit for the region, which could be codenamed ‘Operation Ogbunigwe’ (Punch, 2020a).

Against this backdrop, this paper examines the regional security initiative ‘Operation Amotekun’ as a panacea to the security challenges in South West Nigeria. To achieve this, the paper has been compartmentalised into the following sub-headings: research methodology, theoretical framework, an overview of the insecurity situation in South West Nigeria, regional security initiative and the security challenges in Nigeria: the case of operation amotekun, the Nigerian constitution and the legality of operation amotekun, conclusion, and lastly, recommendations.

Research Methodology

The research method adopted for this study is, the qualitative method. This research method entails the gathering of data from secondary sources – journal articles, literatures, newspapers, online articles, work papers, unpublished theses etc.

Evidently, the launch of the regional security initiative ‘Operation Amotekun’ is a new and welcome development *vis-à-vis* addressing the security challenges spreading in South West Nigeria. Hence, data collected and analysed in this paper were largely gotten from online newspapers.

Theoretical Framework

The theme ‘Regional Security Initiative and the Security Challenges in Nigeria: The Case of Operation Amotekun’ is one that can be analysed with one or two theories in the social sciences. For this study, the Social Contract Theory was adopted.

The Social Contract Theory (SCT) is one out of five well-known theories of the origin of the state (Ogunnoiki, 2018: 118). The progenitors of this theory remain the Englishmen – Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and John Locke (1632-1704), and the Swiss-born political philosopher, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). For this paper, only the argument of Thomas Hobbes will be employed.

Thomas Hobbes theory of the origin of the state was to a great extent shaped by the happenings in England in the mid-17th

century. Having witnessed the English Civil War (1642-1651) which was precipitated by the discord between the monarch, King Charles I, and the Parliamentarians, Thomas Hobbes in the year 1651 published the *Leviathan* (the name of a sea monster in the Holy Bible, see Job 41: 1-34; Psalms 74: 14; Isaiah 27: 1). In his classic albeit fictional book, Hobbes tried to justify the idea of an inviolable absolute sovereign that is capable of maintaining law and order in a state. He began by painting a gloomy picture of the state of nature which is a corollary of his concept of the human nature, that all men are equal in mind and body. According to Hobbes, man by nature is a selfish being. His actions in a state of nature are not guided by his intellect or reason but appetites, desires and passions (Mukhi, n.d.: 423; Appadorai, 1968: 21-22; Gauba, 2003: 181-182).

Living in a state of nature, men were in a perpetual struggle, ceaseless conflict, and a condition called ‘Warre’, where every man was against every man, and the life of men was “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short” as there was no common authority over them. There was no morality in the state of nature, and industry among other things was practically impossible owing to the psychological fear of violent death. Three things according to Hobbes are the main causes of the condition of ‘Warre’: i) competition, ii) diffidence, and iii) love of glory. Hence, men that pursued self-preservation decided to exit the state of nature and found a society and state by concluding a social contract among themselves. By finalising the social contract which is an agreement that cannot be revoked by the people or their descendants, the people relinquished all their natural rights and powers to an absolute sovereign who is a

product of their covenant because, according to Hobbes, “[c]ovenants, without the sword, are but words and of no strength to secure a man at all.” Being a creation of the people’s social contract, the absolute sovereign (who can eventually become a despot owing to unchecked powers) cannot at any time be accused of breaching the so-called contract since the sovereign is not a party to the agreement. In the newly formed state, the primary business of the absolute sovereign is to maintain law and order, and ensure the security of all (Mukhi, n.d.: 423-434; Appadorai, 1968: 22; Gauba, 2003: 182-184).

Hobbes Social Contract Theory like other theories of the origin of the state, has not been spared of criticism. To theologians and conservatives, Hobbes Social Contract Theory of the origin of the state buries a centuries-old belief. For years, men and women of faith in the supernatural being, God, have believed a reigning monarch enjoys the divine right to rule. To them, he/she on the throne is not accountable to the people but to God from who the divine right to rule stem from. This was not taken into account in Hobbes proposition. In place of the ‘divine right to rule’ argument, Hobbes states that the absolute sovereign is in power by the will and consent of the people, who fleeing the state of nature, reached an agreement to surrender their rights and powers to the sovereign. In other words, the state is not a creation of God, and there is nothing mystical about it (see Mukhi, n.d.: 449-450). Secondly, Hobbesian Social Contract Theory has been faulted for the lacuna in the chain of his argument. According to Thomas

Hobbes, human action in a state of nature was determined by appetites, desires and passions (Gauba, 2003: 182). How come the savages abruptly became rational beings, capable of reaching peacefully a consensus for their mutual interest of security? is a question left unanswered by Hobbes. Lastly, Hobbesian state of nature, which brutes lived in, cannot be proven with historical evidence. Hence, a number of critics are in agreement that the horrendous state of nature Hobbes wrote about only existed within the walls of his imagination which he penned down in black and white in support of having an inalienable absolute sovereign.

Despite his theoretical shortcomings, Hobbes proposition to date is still used in the discourse of domestic and international security. Security wise, Nigeria, though a post-colonial state, can be examined with some of the assumptions of Thomas Hobbes. The Federal Republic of Nigeria operates a three-tier of government, and the 1999 Constitution (as amended) explicitly states that the onus of protecting lives and property rests on the government. Unfortunately, the Nigeria Police Force, being part of the executive arm of government, has been unable to single-handedly tackle the security challenges in the country that currently resembles the imaginary ‘state of nature’ Hobbes wrote about centuries ago. Thus the need for regional security initiatives arose, especially in South West Nigeria, to complement the efforts of the police in eradicating the prevalent ritual killings, kidnappings, armed robbery among others.

An Overview of the Insecurity Situation in South West Nigeria

The South West region of Nigeria comprises of six states – Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo,

Osun, and Oyo State which are geographically contiguous and share similar culture, beliefs, values and language. From 2015 to date, the insecurity situation in South West Nigeria has gone from bad to worse. Operating on several major highways in the region are suspected herdsmen, armed robbers, kidnappers and ritualists. The Akure-Owo-Oba Akoko-Akungba, Ondo-Ore, Ilesha-Oshogbo, Ipele-Ido Ani, Ife-Ibadan, Ilaro-Owode-Idi-Iroko, Ijebu Igbo-Oru-Awa, Abeokuta-Lagos roads to mention a few have become unsafe for commuters to ply on owing to the rising criminal activities that take place there on a regular basis (Amaize et al., 2019).

On Monday, 21st of September, 2015, Chief Olu Falae, a former Finance Minister and presidential aspirant, farmland in Ilado village, Akure, Ondo State, was not only attacked by Fulani herdsmen but he was abducted, on his 77th birthday. Many of his workers including the farm manager were macheted while others were reportedly wounded and admitted in different hospitals (Johnson, 2015). He (Chief Falae) was released three days after by the herdsmen after a 5 million naira ransom was paid (Johnson, 2017a). Again, his farm was attacked in April 2016. This time around, his security guard, Ayodele Ige, was killed in the process (Baiyewu and Akinloye, 2016). It was not until April 2017, that the Ondo State High Court sentenced seven of the apprehended herdsmen who abducted the elder statesman in 2015, to life imprisonment (Johnson, 2017a).

In April 2017, the Akure-Ilesha highway reportedly became a death trap due to the

activities of armed robbers, kidnappers and herdsmen on the road who rob, kidnap, maim, rape, kill, and dispossess motorists and their passengers of their hard earned money and personal effects. The Managing Director of Daily Times Newspaper, Adinoyin Ojo Onukaba, who was returning from the former president, Olusegun Obasanjo's Presidential Library launch in Abeokuta, Ogun State, died around Ero village, just before Ilara Mokin in Ifedore Council area of Ondo State, after his vehicle ran into robbers in one of their operations. Also, a top banker with one of the new generation banks in Akure, Ondo State, Mr Sola Abe, was murdered by hoodlums on the same highway as he journeyed to Lagos alongside his driver, on official duty. His lifeless body was found three days later in the bush between Igbara Oke/Ilara Mokin in Ifedore Council area. His driver survived the incident, though with bullets lodged in his body and was in a critical condition at the hospital for weeks (Johnson, 2017b).

In May 2019, the President of the Yoruba Council of Elders (YCE), Col. S. Ade Agbede (Rtd) disclosed that there are about 1,123 cells belonging to armed herdsmen who perpetrate their nefarious activities across the length and breadth of Yorubaland (Johnson and Akinrefon, 2019). In June 2019, a 25-year-old woman, Mrs Olawunmi Adeleye, and her stepson, Destiny Paul, aged 14 years, were kidnapped by unknown gunmen at Osi community along Akure airport road while returning from church service. Their abductors, according to a family source, placed a ransom of 10 million naira on them. In the same month, the Ondo State Governor, Arakunrin Rotimi Akeredolu disclosed that a gang of kidnappers attacked his convoy on the Akure-Ibadan expressway. It took the proactive response of his security detail to

scare them away with gunshots in the air (Akingboye, 2019).

Perhaps the incident that drew public attention to the worrisome insecurity situation in the South West region was the killing of the 58-year-old, Mrs Funke Olakunrin by suspected herdsmen. Mrs Funke Olakunrin, the daughter of Pa Reuben Fasoranti, the national leader of the Yoruba socio-cultural group, Afenifere, was killed on her way to Ore junction from Akure on July 12, 2019 (Vanguard, 2019). On April 03, 2020, suspected herdsmen invaded a farm settlement in Arimogija in Ose local government area of Ondo State and killed a rice farmer, Jacob Odushe, his son, Adura, and another boy by the name Victor Ejeh (Johnson, 2020).

Across the states in the South West region, clashes between farmers and herdsmen are rampant with resultant loss of human lives and investments. In Oyo State for instance, farmers in Saki and Iseyin towns of Oke-Ogun do intermittently clash with the Fulani pastoralists over the encroachment of brazen cattle on their farmland (see Olaniyi, 2015). Thus on the 29th of August, 2016, the former Ekiti State governor, Mr Ayo Fayose, signed the Anti-Grazing Bill into law which prohibited grazing in some places and at certain time in the state (Punch, 2016).

While the Ekiti State anti-grazing law addressed just an aspect of the insecurity question within its border, the greater security challenges of armed robbery, kidnapping, and ritual killings within South West Nigeria requires a concerted effort in order to stem the tide of

insecurity in the region.

Regional Security Initiative and the Security Challenges in Nigeria: The Case of Operation Amotekun

In the political arena of the Nigerian State, the first quarter of 2020 will be remembered as a period several regional security initiatives were floated along ethnic lines. In Northern Nigeria, operation ‘Shege-Ka-Fasa’ was rejected by the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammad Sa’ad Abubakar III, and the states governors in the region following the unveiling of the security initiative by the spokesman of the Coalition of Northern Groups (CNG), Mr Abdul-Azeez Suleiman. Several reasons were given for opposing the proposed security outfit, one of which is, its abysmal nomenclature (This Day, 2020).

In South East Nigeria, the President-General of the supreme Igbo socio-cultural organisation, Ohanaeze Ndigbo, in person of Chief Nnia Nwodo, made an appeal to the Federal Government to permit the setting up of the security initiative ‘Operation Ogbunigwe’ which would tackle the security threats in the region e.g. armed Fulani pastoralists whose cattle boldly trespass on farmlands, feed on and destroy valuable crops (Ede, 2020). To date, the only regional security architecture put forward recently that has come to fruition is ‘Operation Amotekun’ in South West Nigeria.

In the year 2019, high-level meetings and deliberations were made by the governors of Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Osun, Oyo, and Ondo State and stakeholders in South West Nigeria *vis-à-vis* addressing the insecurity situation in the region. On the 9th of January, 2020, at Ibadan, Oyo State, the South West governors launched the Western Nigeria Security

Network (WNSN) codenamed ‘Operation Amotekun’ which the Development Agenda for Western Nigeria (DAWN) Commission helped in birthing. The said security outfit will take-off with 120 Pick-up Vans (20 each for the six states in the region) which are equipped with communication gadgets, and one hundred motorcycles (Feyisipo, 2020; PM News, 2020).

At the launch, Ekiti State governor, Dr Kayode Fayemi, dispelled rumours making the rounds that the new security network is a regional police. Left to him, Amotekun is nothing but a “confidence-building strategy” and most importantly, about community policing that will not only complement the work of mainstream security agencies in the country which he commended, though according to him are “overstretched”, but will reduce the burden on them (Feyisipo, 2020; PM News, 2020). In his words:

Amotekun is not a duplication neither is it a replacement for the Nigeria Police Force. Amotekun is a complement that gives our people the confidence that they are being looked after by the people they elected into office. We do not want this to create fear in the mind of any one. We are not creating a regional police force. We are not oblivious of the steps we need to follow in forming a State police. We are law abiding citizens of Nigeria. We know that will require a constitutional amendment and we are not there yet” (PM News, 2020).

On the 4th of August, 2020, the government of the Oyo State governor,

Seyi Makinde, approved the sum of 59.7 million naira as grant for the take-off of ‘Operation Amotekun’ in the state (Adeniran, 2020). Seven days after, Ondo State governor, Oluwarotimi Akeredolu, inaugurated the pioneering officers of the Amotekun Corps who just completed their training in Akure, the state capital (Channels Television, 2020). Almost a month after their inauguration, the Corps made the news. On the 3rd of September, 2020, men of the Amotekun Corps arrested three members of a kidnap syndicate, which according to an eye witness are Fulani herdsmen, after abducting a popular businessman, Mr Kunle Agbayewa, in a popular saw-mill in Idoani, Ose Local Government Area of Ondo State. According to the Commander of Amotekun Corps in the state, Mr Adetunji Adeleye, the victim was rescued and the three apprehended kidnappers have been handed over to the state police command for further investigation and prosecution (Gbadamosi, 2020).

Once again, Chief Olu Falae’s farmland at Ilado village in Akure North Local Government Area of Ondo State, reportedly came under attack by suspected herdsmen. In November 2020, Chief Olu Falae’s maize and citrus farms which worth millions of naira, were set ablaze by suspected herdsmen who allegedly attacked the workers on the farms. Chief Olu Falae has called on the police and Amotekun to come to his aid (Otabor, 2020).

The Nigerian Constitution and the Legality of Operation Amotekun

With a prancing and angry Leopard as its logo, the lauded Amotekun Corps will have zero tolerance to criminal activities in the region (Egbas, 2020). This will only be achievable after the said Corps is formally established based on a legal framework.

In Part III of Chapter VI, Section 214 (1) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) states that “There shall be a police force for Nigeria, which shall be known as the Nigeria Police Force, and subject to the provisions of this section no other police force shall be established for the Federation or any part thereof.” Going by this section of the constitution alone, the setting up of the Amotekun Corps is technically unconstitutional. However, as stated in Chapter II, Section 14 (2) (b) of the said constitution, “the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government”. The word “government” here, as interpreted in Section 318 (1) under Part IV of Chapter VIII, “includes the Government of the Federation, or of any state, or of a local government council or any person who exercises power of authority on its behalf;” (WIPO, n.d.). Hence, the onus is on the governors of South West states to take appropriate measures in safeguarding the lives and property within their jurisdiction.

In a statement made public on the 14th of January, 2020, through his Special Adviser on Media and Public Relations, Dr Umar Jibrilu Gwandu, the Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF) and Minister of Justice, Mr Abubakar Malami (SAN) said:

The setting up of the paramilitary organization called “Amotekun” is illegal and runs contrary to the provisions of the Nigerian law. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) has established the Army, Navy and Airforce, including the Police and other

numerous paramilitary organisations for the purpose of the defence of Nigeria. (Daniel, 2020)

He finally added that, had the South West governors approached his office, they would have been given “proper information and guidance” on founding the security outfit (Daniel, 2020; Nmodu, 2020). Following the AGF declaration on Operation Amotekun as an unlawful paramilitary organisation, were divergent reactions from prominent persons and legal luminaries in South West Nigeria such as the Aare Onakakanfo of Yorubaland, Chief Gani Adams, and the outspoken human rights lawyer, Mr Femi Falana (SAN).

Respectfully, Mr Falana stated that Mr. Malami’s proclamation of Operation Amotekun as illegal was “hypocritical” and “discriminatory”, seeing in North East Nigeria, Yobe and Borno States to be precise, there is a Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) of 26,000 well-armed volunteers who are assisting the Nigerian armed forces in their counterterrorism operations in the restive region. In Kano and Zamfara States respectively is the Hisbah Commission (an Islamic police force set up by the states governments), and in Lagos State the ‘Neighbourhood Watch’ which assists the Nigeria Police Force and other security agencies in securing human lives and valuable property. He therefore advised the incumbent governments of Ekiti, Lagos, Ondo, Ogun, Osun, and Oyo State to ignore Mr Malami’s purported proscription of the security outfit and proceed to enact the necessary laws establishing the Amotekun Corps (Adegunle et al., 2020; Ojo, 2020).

By giving such an advice to the six states governors to enact the laws setting up

Amotekun, Dr Umar Jibrilu Gwandu is of the view that Mr Falana confirmed the Federal Government's position that before the eyes of the law, the founding of the security outfit was unconstitutional. In his words:

By asking for the state governments of the Southwestern Nigeria to 'proceed to enact the necessary laws,' in justifying the legality of the establishment and operation of Amotekun, Mr. Femi Falana is reaffirming and reiterating the Federal Government's stance that the establishment of the operation currently is illegal. (Chioma, 2020)

On the part of Chief Gani Adams, he clearly pointed out that the AGF was not in the position to declare Amotekun as an illegal regional security initiative. According to him, "only a court of competent jurisdiction" can determine if the setting up of the Amotekun Corps is illegal or not, and not the learned AGF acting as the law court (Adegunle et al., 2020). Later in the month of January, 2020, Mr Abubakar Malami (SAN) came out to say that he was misconstrued *vis-à-vis* his released statement days back. Clearing the air, the AGF said he only called for Operation Amotekun to have the backing of the law to avert successive i) governments in the six states of South West Nigeria from rubbishing the Operation or declaring it illegal in the nearest future (Punch, 2020b).

On the 14th of February, 2020, Ekiti State House of Assembly passed the bill setting up the Amotekun Corps in the state (Vanguard, 2020). On the 3rd of March,

2020, Ondo State House of Assembly passed the State Security Network Agency and Amotekun Corps Bill. Similar bills establishing Amotekun were passed same day by the Lagos, Oyo, Ogun and Osun State House of Assembly (Adeyemi et al., 2020).

Conclusion

Obviously, Nigeria over the years has been confronted by a number of security challenges that cut across the multi-ethnic country or one of its regions. Much as this is true, they are surmountable, especially when there is unity and the political will to tackle these security challenges head-on. Thus far, the proposed regional security initiatives by the governments of sub-national units or groups in the Nigerian Federation are a proof that to a great extent, there is social cohesion and political synergy despite party differences. For the people of South West Nigeria, the child of necessity – Amotekun Corps is a ray of hope that the spate of armed robbery, kidnappings, ritual killings and the likes in the region will be reduced to the barest minimum if not become a thing of the past in coming years.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings in this paper, the following are strongly recommended to the state governments in South West Nigeria for consideration and implementation:

I) Operation Amotekun and the law establishing the Corps in South West Nigeria was no doubt hastily put together owing to the unabating security challenges in the region. Thus, there is a need to painstakingly review in coming years the law setting up the Corps in order to correct any oversight;

- ii) Underfunding, coupled with corruption has been a major problem in the policing of Nigeria in general. The incumbent and successive governments in South West states should ensure adequate funds are made available to the Amotekun Corps, and accounted for by the Corps *vis-à-vis* its operations and the welfare of the officers;
- iii) The state governments in South West Nigeria should ensure the recruitment process of Amotekun Corps personnel is based on merit and not nepotism. Following their training and inauguration, they should from time to time undergo further training in order to keep up with new methods in tackling the security challenges bedevilling the region;
- iv) Traditional rulers of communities are indubitably closer to the people who take heed to their words. They should be consulted and carried along in the policing of communities;
- v) To fish out highway robbers, kidnapers and ritualists from their hideouts, there is the need for constant intelligence gathering from the locals, farmers, and hunters who are more familiar with these terrain and can quickly detect the hideouts of these highway criminals.

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The Dynamics of Farmers and Herdsmen Violent Conflict in Nigeria: A Reflection on the Vulnerability of Women and Children

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Abstract: The violent conflict between farmers and herdsmen seems to have taken a life of its own, with dire consequences on women and children in Nigeria. This paper dwells on the dynamics of the violent conflict between farmers and herdsmen in Nigeria. A reflection on the vulnerability of women and children. The environmental resource scarcity and violent conflict theory of farmers and herdsmen is used in explaining the phenomenon. Many scholars associate the phenomenon with the failure of security agents to perform their statutory functions. The paper argues that the desire to avoid the consequences of this violent conflict has led to the displacement of women and children leaving them in vulnerable situations. The existence of this conflict has led to constant fear of attacks in livelihoods. Women and children continue to bear the brunt of this conflict as they suffer various forms of abuses such as loss of the sources of subsistence occupation of either farming or livestock herding. This instability of their family system creates a mass population of widows because husbands are killed in the violent conflict. The paper discovers that most children drop out of school because there is lack of cash crop to sell and raise funds for stationeries and tuition fees. Some of the children are separated from their families during violent conflict. This exposes them to climatic hazards, abuses and child labour. The paper concludes that in view of the increasing violent conflict and its negative effects on women and children's lives, farmers and herdsmen should evolve ways of resolving their violent conflict amicably in order to reduce the vulnerability of women and children. The paper recommends that national and international organizations should help implement state strategic campaigns on the negative effects of violent conflict on women and children in Nigeria.

Keywords: Dynamics, Farmers, Herdsmen, Violent, Conflict, Reflection, Vulnerability, Women and Children.

Introduction

The history of humankind is replete with violent conflicts. The prevalence of the phenomenon has pitched individuals and ethnic groups against each other in the modern society. It has become a contemporary global social problem that has imposed danger on the entire human species in the world today. For instance, countries like Ukraine, Iraq, Syria, and Palestine/Gaza among others are struggling with the problem of violent conflict in recent years. It is estimated that, about 78 million people were internally displaced worldwide between 2000- 2014 due to violent conflict (Ngigi 2015). Most developing countries and African states in particular have continued to experience dangerous scenes of incessant violent conflicts, which have occurred between communities, cultural and religious groups in modern days. Women and children are more vulnerable to becoming victims' violent conflict in form of rape, forced marriage, trafficking, child labour and abuses.

In Africa today, violent conflict has become a common phenomenon that affects the entire continent. Indeed, the African continent has continued to embroil in these violent conflicts, which have adversely affected women and children. This factor negatively affects women and children (Iruonagbe & George 2007). Countries like South Africa, Mozambique, Chad, Liberia, Mali, Ghana, Libya, Cote'Ivoire, Angola, Somalia, Cameroon, Uganda, Sudan, South Sudan, Sierra Leone, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic

of Congo, Chad and Rwanda have suffered from the menace in Africa (Cheruiyot, 2014). These violent conflicts seriously affect the lives of women and children of the countries that are engulfed in these violence. With the dynamics of the activities of farmers and herdsmen in recent times, these violent conflicts have increased on a high magnitude on the continent. Tsa (2014) maintains that herdsmen are linked to several violent conflicts in the African Sub-Region. Particularly Cameroon, Mali, Guinea, Senegal, Ghana, Niger, and Nigeria which has affected the social and economic development of its people. UNICEF recently stated that up to 350 million people are adversely affected by the activities of herdsmen in Sub-Sahara Africa; the majority are women and children (Duru, 2017). Tsa (2014) reports that 20 people were killed and thousands fled Cameroonian villages on the border with Nigeria following violent conflict between Cameroon farmers and armed herdsmen.

Nigeria is a large multi-cultural country where socio-cultural cleavages remain a critical problem. Since her independence in 1960, Nigeria has been struggling with the challenge of managing her ethnic groups and cultural relations in order to promote social, economic, national integration and unity without violent conflict among Nigerians. These efforts have however, been thwarted as a result of violent conflicts. Violent conflicts have become a recurring decimal with its devastating effects on lives, property, women and children. These have been witnessed in virtually all the 36 states of Nigeria since the return to democratic rule in 1999. Violent conflicts are not confined to specific parts of the country, but are spread across Nigeria's geopolitical zones (Iruonagbe & George, 2007). These include Hausa, Fulani and the

Kataf ethnic group of Zangon Kataf in Kaduna State, 1999; Ijaw/Urhobo and Itsekiris of Warri in Delta State, 1999; Hausa, Fulani and Yoruba in Oyo and Lagos States respectively, 1999/2000; Jukun/Chamba and Kuteb, Jukun and Tiv in Taraba State, 1999, Jukun and Tiv in Taraba and Benue States 2001. In addition these conflicts include Tiv and other ethnic groups in Nasarawa, Plateau and Taraba States in 2001, the Tiv and Kuteb in Katsina- Ala and Takum Benue and Taraba States, Tiv-Jukun in Benue 2016, Hausa and Yoruba in Ile-Ife 2017 (Isa 2001; Angya, 2006; Utsaha; Ugbah & Ugbah, 2007; Abubakar 2015; Agbese, Ahmadu-Suka & Shehu 2017).

The farmers and herdsmen conflict has resulted in many deaths across the nation. With the increasing activities of farmers and herdsmen in contemporary times, violent conflict has become a pervasive phenomenon in Nigeria. Different communities across the nation are brutally attacked and their sources of livelihood mindlessly destroyed. Properties worth billions of Naira, including places of worship, schools, hospitals and business enterprises are torched and turned to ashes. Ubanna & Wada, (2013) maintain that over the last 30 years, herdsmen and farmers crisis has caused major security threat to the country as they kill, maim and destroy farm crops, rob and rape women across the country. Kwaja (2017) reports that herdsmen attacks on farmers have cost 6500 lives in the middle belt region of the country between 2010 and 2015. Over 2,500 people died nationwide during farmers and herdsmen conflict especially

in Kaduna, Benue, Narasawa, Plateau, Adamawa and Taraba States between January 2015, and February 2017 (Umeagbalasi, 2016; Abubakar 2017). Ozor (2016) observes that anxiety and confusion have engulfed Abbi Community in Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area, Enugu State, following the invasion of the area by herdsmen who unleashed mayhem on the people killing 19 persons and razing down seven houses, shops, crops and several motorcycles. Social and economic activities were disrupted following the killing of 40 persons by armed herdsmen at Ukpabi-Nimbo, Ngwoko, Ugwuijoro, Ekwuru, Ebor, Enugu Nimbo, Umuome and Ugwuachara in Uzo- Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State (Mamah, Ndujihe, Nkwopara & Ozor 2016).

In all these attacks, women and children suffer all kinds of abuses such as the loss of the sources of subsistence occupation may be farming or livestock rearing. This results in family instability and creation of a mass population of widows because their husbands are killed in the violent conflict. This increases the inability of children to attend schools due to the fact that they are rendered homeless and living in IDP camps. This creates tension and social hardships on them, leading to long run deprivations (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2017). These women and children have no access to medication and sleep on bare floors anywhere they found themselves a development that has exposed them to chronic cough due to cold (Iorhemen 2018). They are exposed to hardship leading to the death of 12 people in the internally displaced camps across some states (Bashir 2018). They are denied the relevant support for their social, educational and long-term development. The

long run effects of the violent conflict is deprivations of the social stability of the community as a whole.

Based on the foregoing, this paper unveils the dynamics of the effect of violent conflict between farmers and herdsmen in Nigeria; a reflection on the vulnerability of women and children. To achieve this goal, the paper is subdivided into the following themes: the introduction, conceptual framework, theoretical framework the vulnerability women and children in conflict zones, recommendations and conclusion.

Conceptual Framework

For the sake of better understanding of the phenomenon in any social research world, there is a need to clearly explain some concepts.

Farmers and Herdsmen Violent Conflict

In this research, farmers-herdsmen, violent conflict is typically used to refer to conflict between farming and herding groups in the society. The phrase separately is misleading because most farmers nowadays turned to herdsmen rear livestock, while many herdsmen are crop farmers on a seasonal basis. Farmers-herdsmen violent conflict is referred to as the physical competition over resources between crops producers and cattle grazers in a given area.

Vulnerability

In the context of this paper, vulnerability refers to the inability of individuals and households to defend resist and respond effectively with any violent conflict

situation around them. Vulnerability is the inability of individuals and households to react or respond effectively to any situation or event adjudged to threatening the capacity of available resources at the disposal of the groups.

Vulnerable women

Vulnerable women here connote adult female persons, wives of some people, sisters or daughters and above all human beings who cannot defend them during the calamities in a given area.

Vulnerable children

The vulnerable children here include those children whose families cannot afford money, food, healthcare, clothing items and cannot attend schools as a result of the situation they found themselves in a given place.

Theoretical Framework

This paper adopts Environmental Resource Scarcity and Violent Conflict Theory of Farmers and Herdsmen as its theoretical framework to analyze the dynamics of farmers and herdsmen violent conflict in Nigeria.

Environmental Resource Scarcity and Violent Conflict Theory

The fundamental theoretical assumption of the theory is that environmental resource scarcity is the product of an insufficient supply, too much demand or an unequal distribution of a resource that forces some sector of a society into a condition of deprivation (Suhrke 1996). The link between environmental resources and violent conflict has attracted the attention of scholars like Baechler (1998), Percival & Homer-Dixon (1998), Homer-Dixon (1999) and Gleditsch

(2001). These scholars argued that the relationship between environmental (natural) resources and violent conflict probably as old as human settlement. Environmental resources are critical to the survival of people and nations, both for subsistence and for economic mainstay. Access to control of the resources of an environment has been a contentious issue often generating tensions and violent conflicts within, and among nations. The resource issues as they relate to violent conflict focuses on 'hard' resources such as strategic minerals, to the neglect of 'soft' resources such as water, food, and land (Bissel, 1996). Violent confrontations associated with environmental scarcity are not likely to enhance some desirable forms of cooperation. However, when such elements of environmental scarcity are manipulated, without being properly managed by social and economic setting, it will be easily and cheaply hijacked for political agenda. Hence, the confrontational elements of environmental scarcity will gain prominence and currency. The widespread environmental scarcity is highly enormous.

It is conceded that environmental scarcity is but one in a complex web of causes that collectively precipitate violent conflict between farmers and herdsmen. Environmental scarcity functions within the given multilayered matrix of history, economy and politics and is most acute where human and livestock population pressures are reinforced by unequal resources access (Suliman, 1999:32).

These three sources of scarcity are in turn caused by variables such as population growth, economic development and pollution. The continuing violent clashes that have ensued between farmers and herdsmen thus constrain agricultural and economic productivity, further inducing the disruption of livelihoods, poverty and migration. Homer-Dixon & Blitt (1998) observed that large populations in many developing countries are highly dependent on four key environmental resources that are very fundamental to crop production: fresh water, crop, land, forests and fish. Scarcity and shrinking of these resources as a result of misuse, over-use or degradation under certain circumstances will trigger off violent conflicts. Homer-Dixon (1999: 30) maintained that;

Decrease in the quality and quantity of renewable resources, population growth, and unequal resource access act singly in various combinations to increase the scarcity, population groups, of crop, land, water, forests, and fish. This can reduce economic productivity, both for the local groups experiencing the scarcity and for the larger regional and national economies. The affected people may migrate or be expelled to new lands. Migrating groups often trigger ethnic conflicts when they move to new areas, while decreases in wealth can cause deprivation conflicts.

Migration will occur either because the environmental quality of a habitat has become unlivable or, more commonly, because the migrants economic outcome is likely to be better in areas with greater resource availability. Both constrained productivity

and migration are likely to strengthen the segmentation around already existing religious, class, ethnic or linguistic leavages in a society and thus precipitate violent conflicts (Gleditsch & Urdal 2002). Gleditsch & Urdal, (2002) explained that, intricate linkages develop between environmental resource scarcity, livelihood, and conflicts. For instance in the Lake Chad area where rapid population growth and converging environmental trends contribute to the shrinking of the Lake, violent conflicts in the basin are likely to worsen considerably as resource scarcities interact with, or exacerbate other conflict-related social variables. Coser (1956) perceived that in terms of the struggle between parties over desirable values.

One crucial defining element of violent conflict is the presence of two or more actors struggling to secure a thing of value or adjudged to be valuable of which the gain by any of the actors amounts to a loss or deprivation to the other actor (s). The benefit that goes with access to or control of the 'valuable' and the deprivation or insecurity that follows denial of access underlie all violent conflicts. Mark & Synder (1971) contended that a key element of all violent conflicts is the existence of resource scarcity where the wants of all actors cannot be fully satisfied and where the quests for such resources result in violent conflict behaviour. Opportunities for violent collective action can decrease, even under conditions of environmental scarcity, when the power of potential challenger groups is diffused by vigorous

horizontal interaction within society and vertical interaction between civil society and the state. However, if poor socio-economic conditions persist, grievances will remain. These grievances will probably be expressed through an increase in deviant activity, such as crime. Unless the grievances are addressed, the legitimacy of the government will decrease, society will once again become segmented, and opportunities for violent collective action will correspondingly increase.

The theory further assumes that during conflicts of this nature people adopt varying ways to survive. Some of these coping strategies include living internally displaced person's camps (IDPs), churches, mosques, town halls, abandoned and uncompleted buildings, their relatives, friends, among others. The environmental resource scarcity and violent conflict theory is criticized on the grounds it failed to consider technological advancements and human ingenuity increased agricultural production, which gave rise recently violent conflict between farmers and herdsmen (Ikoh, 2014). Critics also point out that theory failed to foresee the possibility of reclaiming lands that were then considered waste for human use or either animals agricultural production or human habitation. Marx on his part held that poverty and unemployment were not due to the increased farming activities, but due to the capitalist system, which failed to provide jobs for the timing population to survive. The violent conflict emanates as a result of the consequence of uneven distribution of wealth and the failure of the bourgeois class to provide jobs for the timing population in the society. No country in the world violent conflict will increase on the account of scarce

resources but will increase only because of capitalist policies, which the masses access to the resources (Basiago, 1996). The capitalists make labour a major factor of their production but under pay the labour leading people to seek other means of survival like farming and rearing of animals, which often result in violent conflict. To worsen it by installing labour saving machines a capitalist maxima surplus value out of the labour. As a result of this unemployment spreads, wages decline and poverty increases which often lead one to such employment like farming and rearing of herds that result in violent conflict between farmers and herdsmen. He maintains that the cause of violent conflict is nothing else but the wrong politics of the capitalists to expropriate lands from the peasants for their selfishness, which lead to the violent conflict in the society.

While criticize, believe that because of the population growth and introduction of modern farming technology the bourgeoisie exploit the working class by suppressing wages and keeping them in relative poverty make poor people resort farming and grazing of animals as coping strategies that result in violent conflict (Murphy, 1992). The increase in population growth has also witnessed the depression of wages especially for the unemployed and proletariat who depend on wages for subsistence cannot survive making it compulsory to have farms. While the herdsmen on their side adopt the rearing of animals as means of survival as encroaching into farmers products which always lead to the violent conflict. It also strains investment by

diverting funds for maintaining a lumped proletariat (a body of unskilled people) (Rifkin, 1994). Marx was of the opinion that the general law of capital accumulation; the appropriation and accumulation of surplus value by the capitalist class leads to the poverty of those who are precisely the source of that surplus value which often result in violent conflict. Criticizes are of the opinion that the environmental resource scarcity and violent conflict theory supported bourgeois ideology and blamed the poor for many of the world's problems such as crime and violent conflict. Conflict, poverty, hunger, and unemployment have continued to be on the rise as a result of the inequalities of capitalism perpetuated by the bourgeois class (Franke, & Chasin, 1989).

Inspite of all these criticisms, the environmental resource scarcity and violent conflict theory of farmers and herdsmen theory remain relevant for studies of violent conflict between farmers and herdsmen. During periods of drought, farmers encounter problems not because of the drought itself, but also owing to the tendency of some herdsmen to practise unfair pasturing methods. Farmers complain of herdsmen deliberately feeding their livestock where the farmers had already planted their food crops (Ruttan, 1991). This is a common practice as during dry season herdsmen had little to feed their cattle. However, this tendency cause great conflict, with the farmers on the one side and the herdsmen on the other (Onuoha, n.d).The herdsmen often cross borders in pursuit of the receding greener pastures for their herdsmen. This violent conflict has resulted in a complex web of social and economic issues, which spill over into human rights issues (Dixon & Fallon, 1989). The increase in the influx of

herders for grazing from the Republic of Niger and migrates from Chad further south in search of optimum opportunities leads to violent conflict between herdsman and farmers. This has contributed to the violent conflict between farmers and herdsman in Nigeria. Onuoha, (n.d) asserted further that farmers and cattle herders have moved deeper south wards where they have ended up competing for the available scarce resources such as fresh water and arable or grazing lands with other economic groups or with host communities. Harsh environmental trends in the northern part of Nigeria, such as the shrinkage of Lake Chad and desertification, have made the seasonal movement of the cattle rearers to the southern part of Nigeria more permanent (Moore, 1994). In the previous years, the herdsman migrated to Benue valley during the dry season and return back to the north during the rainy season. Due to the deteriorating situation in the region, many of them are now settling permanently in the Benue valley contributing to violent conflict over scarce resources in the valley with the possible potential to spill over into ethnic clashes. In the use of environmental scarcity resources grievances arise which contributes to violent conflicts.

Based on the foregoing, the environmental resource scarcity and violent conflict theory is adopted as the theoretical guide for the study.

The Vulnerability of Women and Children in the Farmers-Herdsman in Violent Conflict

The frequent eruption of the conflict has some deleterious effects on women and children in societies the world over (Gbenro 2008). Displaced women and children are suffering in camps across the nation as a result of violent conflict. Perpetrators of this violent conflict view rape and other forms of violence against women and children in displaced persons camps as bounties of conflict (Aluko (2017). For instance, about 80% of the Africa refugees are women and children (Gbenro 2008). According to Anonymous (2018), Nigeria has the number of IDPs represented by 4.5 per cent increase to the 1,702,680 in December 2017. This shows that 766,206 persons have become displaced as a result of violent conflict in the country (Anonymous 2018). In Nigeria, there are about 1.7 million IDP camps across Nigeria out of which 70% are women and children (Aluko 2017). Women and children are adversely affected by farmers-herdsman violent conflict. Their abductions have been on the increase in recent times. The men seem to have the ability to defend themselves during this violent conflict better than women and children. Women and children are regarded as vulnerable groups in violent conflict because of their inability to defend themselves from the occupying militia.

The manifestation of this violent conflict on women and children cannot be quantified. During this conflict, they lose their lives, relationships and as such become induced to trauma. (Mercy Corps 2015). They also have to endure the loneliness and vulnerability of separation from their families, as a result of the loss of the

husbands. More importantly is their forced migration which inadvertently thrust the sudden changes on the rural economy and the family (Oluyemi-Kusa 2010). During violent conflicts their households and family are often separated. This forces them to flee without their husbands or breadwinners who are usually left behind or killed in the violent conflict. This group of people are pushing them to IDP camps without their family members as a result of the displacement and do not know the fate or whereabouts of their loved ones resulting to traumatic conditions (International Committee of the Red Cross ICRC, 2016). Their forced migration to other communities or IDP camps resulting in their lack of potable water, inadequate sewage facilities and severe overcrowding resulted in dangerous and unsanitary conditions in those IDP camps they found themselves (Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017). Their family members who survived the violent conflict and became displaced members of the refugee community try to establish their new household in an alien setting without the comfort and resources of the rural economy they left behind.

Moreso, their displacement often entails finding new sources of livelihood, which could be prostitution or child labour in order to cope with the new demands of life (Musa; Shabu; Igbawua, 2014). This exposed some of them to treatable diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, and tuberculosis due to the prostitution or hard labour (Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017). For those who found themselves in the IDP camps

in the course of the violent conflict, they are exposed to widespread sexual violence, abduction, abuse, unwanted pregnancy, sex trafficking, forced labour, forced marriage and religious conversions, which often result to physical and psychological trauma (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2017). Reports indicate that government officials, security forces, local communities and others in charge of IDP camps commit sexual exploitation on women and young girls in exchange for food stuffs (Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017). In most cases the gatekeepers in control of some IDP camps, at times in collusion with police officers and soldiers, force them to have carnal knowledge of them in exchange for food and other services in the IDP camps (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2017).

In the IDP camps, the condition of this people remain very poor as Berliner & de Casas (2009) posit that women and children living in IDP camps are prone to infectious diseases as they have less access to sanitation and in most places water from the tap needs to be boiled before it is potable. Most of the women are poor single mothers with children. The women and especially children often come down with colds, catarrh, pneumonia and other respiratory infections. Gbabo (2017) states that women and children in most camps often come down with different sicknesses. If it is not cold, it is catarrh, pneumonia or malaria. Vulnerable children are left without any medical care in most IDP camps. For instance in LGEA primary school in Daudu, Guma Local Government Area of Benue State when displaced villagers arrived at the camp, most of their children started complaining about

headache and stomach ache but there were no drugs to give them. Most of these children sleep in bushy parts and have no nets that would shield them from mosquito bite as a result of malaria and fever. A woman tending her sick girl and has been vomiting all day without drugs (Owolabi 2018). Aluko (2017) affirms that the sick women and children in camps across the nation depend on herbal drinks in the absence of orthodox medicines. Ejembi (2017) also supports the view that many sick women and children in the IDP camps depend on herbal drinks in the absence of orthodox medicines. He further stated that a member of the IDPs in one of the camps in Nigeria posited that her daughter just recovered from malaria using concoctions, attested to the efficacy of the herbal solutions. Ejembi (2017:5) succinctly reveals the view of the IDP camps that:

We do not have drugs to use here either. We are suffering. It has been a while since the good Samaritans that used to bring us drugs and other things came to us. I had to drink herbal solutions when I had malaria last month.

Lack of healthcare facilities is a major challenge in IDP camps. Travel at least 40 Km to access medical treatment for common ailments like malaria, cold and catarrh (Adimula, 2016). Health facilities and services in IDP camps are almost non-existent, as many displaced persons do not even access Panadol there in camps (Maier, 2000). Baker (2006:163) succinctly found that:

Children, who are taken to internally displaced people's camps (IDPs) particularly the younger ones, become preoccupied and anxious about potential illness for themselves and their families. Many start having trouble sleeping, and fretting about their homes, their possessions, the life they left behind, and friends who were not with them in the same IDP camps. Older children, while sharing some of these concerns, were more preoccupied with the family's financial concerns and showed general anxiety about their future.

Agreeing with the findings the World Children, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), (1996; 1) captured that;

Even if they have never seen a gun, millions of children suffer from violent conflict, as resources that could have been invested in their development are diverted into armaments. Indeed, one of the most distressing realities of the time is that most violent conflicts have been fought in precisely those places that could least afford them.

Regarding the educational development of the children during the violent conflict all the primary, secondary and tertiary institutions of learning in the affected areas remain closed. The buildings destroyed with the supporting facilities destroyed, while their re-opening becomes indefinite. Owolabi (2018) maintains that a head teacher, who has been displaced from his village in Kambe, is worried about the children who are now out of school because of the incessant attacks by herdsmen across communities in Benue and Nasarawa states. He further observed that most schools have been under lock, and

children meant to be in school are scattered across displaced persons' camps, with their education now on hold all the schools are closed. Since we came to IDP camps, there has been no educational provision for the children. They cannot go to school again because we are now homeless people (Owolabi, 2018). More than 60% of children who are supposed to be in school are forced to drop out (Duru, 2017). For instance, the report indicated that most IDP camps in the conflict areas like Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau, Taraba and Adamawa States among others, which are dominated by women and children of nursery, primary and secondary school age (Duru 2016). Benue and Nasarawa States the breakdown show that 80,450 children currently trapped in eight internally displaced persons, camps established by the Benue and Nasarawa States Government to cater for victims of herdsmen incursions (Charles 2018). This has affected the entire life of facets of the children in these states. Jumare & Surma (2015) further state that most these children drop out of school because there is no cash crop to sell and get money to buy uniforms, purchase books and pay for their school fees. A student in one of the IDP camps in Barkin Local Government Area of Plateau State asserted that:

I registered for 10 subjects but could not write three papers because we had to run from our community when the herdsmen attacked us; my father was killed in the process. I am the second child of five children. We paid N3,

500 for the exams and my mother might not be able to finance the exams as a widow, in addition to the school fees of my other four siblings. Many of my classmates have lost a parent or both in the attacks and did not have the resources to re-register for the exams next year, we paid N34,000 for the exams, and most of us cannot afford to pay again next year (Obasi 2018: 1-3).

Agreeing with the above quotation most families' livelihood have been destroyed as such, they moved to a safe place where they become dependent. Many children are separated from families during violent conflict exposing them to danger; abuse and child labour (CPWG 2012). When many households' livelihood practices are seized and throwing them into poverty, children are often forced to join armed forces or groups (Child Soldiers International 2012). Ndahi (2015) postulates that in New Kuchingoro, a village hosting about 5 million IDP camps in one of the states, the community normally contributes N480,000 monthly to pay the school fees of over 300 hundred children living in IDP camps in the community. Sometimes this problem also affects even some schools outside the conflict zones as they are forced to close down temporarily because people are taking refuge in those schools especially women and children among others (Mohammad, 2018).

Most classrooms in these schools are occupied by IDPs so normal academic activities in the schools converted for IDP camps resume as soon as the situation of the displaced people is resolved. In the other word, the children's classrooms are turned

into sleeping rooms by the IDPs. Owolabi, (2018) affirms that a head teacher who camped at the LGEA primary school in Agasha, Guma Local Government Area of Benue State, said the government knows that we have converted most schools to IDP camp but no one has come to assure us of better days, especially the children. The children have resumed school but our own children cannot go back to school now, we cannot go back to the village. A day before yesterday, we were asked to move to RCM School Gende, where other displaced people are camped, but we don't have anything to move ourselves and that is why we remained here (Owolabi 2018). The same goes with St Francis LGEA primary school in Daudu where hundreds of displaced persons are camped, their children who should be in school are loitering around the school field. Most of these children are prevented from going to school as such, forced to withdraw from schools leading to obstacles on their development as a result of their mass displacement and destruction of school structures. The long run effects of this violent conflict in Nigeria is deprivations of the social stability of the community as a whole. Women in poverty tend to raise children in poverty who are less likely to enjoy good health, education; employment in turn breeds unstable lives with long-term consequences in the country. The increase in the violent conflict threatens women's livelihood as the loss of earnings and income has negative consequences beyond their personal lives. For example, as women are usually partly responsible for paying their

children's school fees, their declining financial status means that the children are taken out of school or moved to a less expensive one.

Considering the malnutrition of women and children in IDP camps it was observed that the displaced persons are totally neglected by the government and they are seriously suffering and looking very miserable (Duru, 2017). Jelili, & Olanrewaju, (2016) reveal that in most of the IDP camps, there is a high rate of malnutrition which is 18% threshold; the situation is higher than the global emergency threshold of 15%. Ogundamisi (2015) asserts that lack of malnutrition in both adults and children is occurring at alarming rates in the IDP camps. Moreso, their inability to feeding well exposes them to malnutrition, poor condition of infrastructure such as power, water, roads, lack of healthcare, security, education among other basic amenities are some of the agonies of vulnerability of women and children in IDP camps (Adimula, 2016). Some camps have shown to be derelict and unfit for human habitation while food supply and security have posed serious challenges both for managers and inmates. Again Jelili, & Olanrewaju, (2016) identified welfare, security and rehabilitation as problems faced by IDPs in their camps. Systematically the shortage of food supplies and essential necessities amidst these travails, women, most of whom often have little or no capacity to manage household economies, are compelled to take full responsibility for fending for hungry children and sustaining the family member (Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017).

Boyden, Berry, Feeny, & Hart, (2006) made an overview of current knowledge on children affected by violent conflict and found that six

areas will be of particular challenge to the development of the child. They include (i) social disruption, (ii) loss of service access, (iii) impoverishment, (iv) civil and political violations, (v) threats to physical integrity, and (vi) transformations in roles and responsibilities. Jensen & Shaw's (1993) reveal that children exposed to violent conflict are trauma seems likely to overwhelm most children's coping capacity and resilience. UN (2008) submits that children normally experienced traumatic events in times of violent conflict they suffer from increased anxiety about being separated from their families, they always have nightmares or trouble sleeping at night. Aluko (2017) opines that many children in the camp who have experienced horrible scenes of how family members and friends were either killed or burnt alive are traumatized and they engaged in the psychological trauma healing process to recover from the suck. The effect of the violent conflict turned to affect the entire life cycle of women and children as individuals.

Conclusion

The paper concluded that in view of the increasing violent conflict having negative effects on women and children's lives thus farmers and herdsmen should evolve ways of resolving their violent conflict amicably in order to reduce the vulnerability. The growing farmers and herdsmen violent conflict is the consequent small arms and light weapons proliferation. The inefficiency of security agencies worsened this conflict situation

in most of these communities affected farmer-herdsmen conflict. As a strategy, there is need for stronger collaboration between civil society organisations (CSOs) and security agents to end this violent conflict in order to reduce the vulnerability of women and children. The need for relevant institutions of government and security agencies establish mechanisms for detection, investigation and prosecution of perpetrators of this violent conflict.

Recommendations

The paper recommended that the national and international organizations should help implement a state strategic campaign about the vulnerability of women and children in herdsmen violent conflict in Nigeria. International support organisations and other human rights bodies need to support this campaign to end the violent conflict.

There is an urgent need for the Federal Government to take a decisive action on issues of small arms and light weapons proliferation throughout the country to reduce this violent conflict. The federal government should carry out a thorough investigation to identify those involved in supplying arms for those who involved farmer-herdsmen violent conflict

There is a need for a re-orientation and attitudinal change toward oneness in Nigeria this will go a long way in charging farmers and herdsmen relationship in this country. The herdsmen should fish out those criminal elements among them who are normally involved in killing women and children in the rural areas. The ongoing killing of women and children, the abuse of their rights during this violent conflict need to be stopped and

controlled with urgency. Mechanisms must be put-in place for reporting incidences of herdsmen violent conflict, which affect women and children.

There is also need for increased women's employment in the security agencies and extension workers, as well as deliberate efforts at girl child education in the rural areas. There is the need to provide support to victims of farmers-herdsmen violent conflict especially women and children. Establishment of free education across the IDP camps for the children of violent conflict will be a welcome development. This will go a long way in rehabilitating both parents and children who have been displaced from their astral homes by the violent conflict.

The current trend of ignoring the victims of farmers-herdsmen violent conflict especially women and children who have lost their husbands or fathers need to be discarded. Moreso, government, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Civil society organisations (CSOs) should provide free counselling and health services for women and children who were abused by either militia or security agencies during the violent conflict. Leaders of farmers and herdsmen need to collectively put heads together and end this violent conflict in order to prevent women and children from the vulnerability.

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