

An Analysis of Ethno-Religious Conflict in Kaduna State

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Abstract

Ethno-religious conflict is one of the major security challenges that consumes lives and property of Kaduna People. The salient factor responsible for the conflict is linked with the densely populated society scrambling for scarce resource. Therefore, this paper has analyses ethno-religious conflict in Kaduna State of Nigeria. Data were obtained from the secondary source. The paper adopts social conflict theory at a guide for analysis. The findings indicate that economic hardship, ignorance, religious and intolerance among other are responsible for the conflict. The paper recommends for economic development, national dialogue and civic education.

Keywords: Analysis, Ethno-Religious Conflict and Kaduna.

Introduction

Kaduna State is confronted with variety of internal security challenges than external threats. These internal security challenges have been superimposed by lingering and wanton ethno-religious conflicts that lead to political, economic and social quagmire. To this extent Yusufu (2014) examined that, “the meaning and significance of the increasingly violent politics in this country today can only be fully understood when seen within the larger context of what has been happening to Nigeria, to Nigerians, and to the whole of the African continent over, at least, the last ten years.

Ethno-religious conflict is a form of conflict supposedly generated on the basis of real or imagined “difference” rooted in ethnic and religious identities. The notion of ethno-religious conflict emanates from the congruence and mutually reinforcing nexus between ethnic and religious identities in the social and political process (Dunmoye, 2012).

Sometimes religious identity becomes part of an ethnic group’s identity or vice versa, and presents a volatile social mixture coupled with the power of the ethnic group’s myth of common descent. In Kaduna State however, in the course of struggle for power and resource, or resisting domination, ethnic or religious members tend to use ethnic or religious means to reach to the vested interests. Against this background, this page seeks to analyses ethno-religious conflict in Kaduna State.

Theoretical Framework

This paper adopts social structural conflict theory as a guide for analyzing ethno-religious conflict. Social conflict theory was developed by two schools of thought. The first is the radical structural theory represented by the Marxist dialectical school with exponents like Karl Marx,

Fredrick Engels, and Vladimir Ilyic Lenin. The second is the liberal structuralists represented by Ross (1993) Scarborough (1998) and the famous work of Johan Galtung (1990) on structural violence.

The main argument of the social structural conflict theory is that conflict is built into the particular ways societies are structured and organised. The theory looks at social problems like political and economic exclusion, injustice, poverty, disease, exploitation happen because of the exploitative and unjust nature of human societies, domination of one class by another. However, radicals like Mark, Lenin and Tsetun blamed capitalism for being exploitative system that divided society into the class of proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The exploitation of the proletariat and lower classes under capitalism create inevitable conflict (Ademola, 2014).

This is to concur with the fact that conflict of one nature or the other has been disturbing the hitherto peaceful atmosphere of Kaduna State of Nigeria, this could be linked with the blind acceptance of America's liberal democracy. It should be noted that liberal democracy and capitalism is mutually inseparable ideologies. Liberal democracy goes inside with capitalism. However, capitalism engenders divisiveness and promotes exploitation.

Nigeria since 1999, when military handed over power to civilian government, the international capitalism has ensured the domination of the Nigerian economy which deepened and deteriorated cost of living in Nigeria, particularly Kaduna State, the situation gave birth to a number of conflict, ethno-religious conflict is inclusive. The Nigerian economy today is not under control of Nigerians. The Nigerian state cannot embark on policies that can fundamentally restructure the Nigerian economy for a proper development. This is because it is caught in the trappings of neo-colonial capitalist contradictions which have produced a distorted dominant capitalist class whose interest is not development of Nigeria.

Methodology

This paper employed the assistance of secondary source of data, sourced from books, Journals, Newspapers, Magazines and Academic articles. Content analysis is used in the course of analysis. Content analysis is widely used in academic, when it comes to the issue of analysing secondary data.

Kaduna State has three senatorial zones, namely: Kaduna, Zaria and Kafanchan Zones. Kaduna has thirty-three local governments. Kaduna State is a cosmopolitan society with different ethnics and religious groups. The major tribes in Kaduna States are Hausa, Fulani, Bajju, Atyeb, Gbagy, and many more. The major occupations of people of Kaduna State is Farming. Kaduna State is a former administrative headquarter of Northern Nigerian.

An Overview of Ethno-Religious Conflict in Kaduna State

Looking at the incessant clashes, separation of settlements, along religious lines, absence of religious tolerance, ethnics mistrust and hate speeches that have deepened the gab Christian and Muslim faithful in Kaduna State, ethno-religious conflicts left a lot to be remembered and felt in Kaduna State, and not only in terms of economic losses, but also on the political and social relations of the people vogue in Kaduna State, where people of different ethnic and religious background lived together harmoniously.

One major aftermath of the conflict is the way and manner in which Kaduna Metropolis and suburb settlements were partitioned along ethnic and religious lines. Respective communities that ere hitherto together are now wearing different faces as Christians, Muslim, Hausa, Fulani, Bajju, Gbagy, moved away from each other respectively. Segmented pattern of settlement is counterproductive. Ntim (2006) clarified that, there are two dimensions in religious crises: Inter-religious and Intra-religious. According to him, inter-religious crisis occur, mainly between Christians and Muslim, while intra-religious crisis may be between one religious sect and another (P100).

Since independence in 1960, Kaduna State saw a number of conflicts that soon turned into bloodshed along ethnic and religious lines. The city of Kaduna is a British Colonial establishment by Lord Lugard, first governor general of British Imperial Power. He establishes Kaduna as the British administrative headquarters of the Northern Nigeria to ease imperialistic tendency and to spread capitalism (Yusuf, 2022).

To this end, Buba (2014) opined that, it is naïve to assume that segmented settlements along either ethnic or religious lines could foster lasting peace in Kaduna Metropolis as well extent to the entire state. The more people are segmented, the more they see themselves different and the chance, of cementing old wounds might be difficult. Indeed, segmentation of settlement is not only politically inimical, also is socially counterproductive as it affects the voting behavior of the people and alters the pattern of social interaction that ensures peace, and harmony.

Religious conflict is a dynamic and complex subject as it participants have various reason in partaking in it. On the one hand, from the Christian view, partaking in religious conflict is an epitome of ascending to heaven, if a person is lucky to be killed, while on the Muslim perspective, engaging in religious-related conflict is a Jihad, and any Muslim killed in Jihad has achieved martyrdom. These differences in religious belief suggest the number of mistrust and disharmony that encouraged bloodbath among different religious faithful.

There have been agitations and counter-agitations since 1960, in Kaduna State. Some agitations are religious oriented ones while other are ethnically packaged. To this end, Dunmoye (2012) examined that, there was violent inter-communal clash between the Atyab and the Hausa community, the conflict spread to other turns and for about three days, there was virtual anarchy as a systematic ethnic cleansing went on both sides. Following the crisis, judicial commission was set up, many people were jailed, but no final solution was found.

The religious cum ethnic conflict was ignited again in Kaduna Metropolis is between the Southern Kaduna (Mostly Christians) and the people from Northern Kaduna, Zazzau Emirate. The conflict was perceived by many southern Kaduna People as an attempt to throw off the Yoke of Hausa/Fulani domination. Many non-indigenes of Kaduna State lost their lives in the Conflict.

Buba (2014) stated that, the Shariah project revolved around the agitations for the enactment and implementation of Shariah Law in Kaduna state. The demand for Shariah law implementation was greeted with misgivings and suspicions from Christians who perceived it as a manipulation device to take advantage of the situation and achieve political goals in, and a hidden agenda to Islamise the Christians and use state resources to promote the course of Islam in Kaduna State.

Moreso, Christians equally feared that they would be treated as second class citizens in their state of origin. The former Governor of Kaduna State, Senator Ahmed Makarfi formed a Committee

as tasked the member with the responsibility of Sampling the opinion of Muslims for Shariah implementation in Kaduna State and to suggest a possible blueprint for the Shariah Law implementation project (Buba, 2014).

Yusuf (2022) asserted that, the majority of people believed that ethnicity is the primary conflict in Kaduna State, however, that is not true. Most of the conflicts in Kaduna State may partially relate to ethnicity not because the parties belong to different ethnic groups. Study indicates that factors such as religion, population and scrambling for scarce resources, or competing state, political power, majority against minority, and many more lead to conflicts.

Kukah (2011) argues that, military rule has always worked in favour of the minorities, mainly because of their numerical advantage in the army. His has inevitably enhanced the bargaining power of minority elite. In the process it has strengthened a new elite among them who hitherto been outside the orbit of power at the national and local levels. However, because military regulates freedom, religion increasingly becomes a tool for the emergence of a cross cutting cleave. The religious riots which occurred in parts of Kaduna State, in many instances, demonstrate a turning point in Intercommoned relations.

Conclusion

Conflict is an inevitable aspect of social existence. It exists in all social and political system. It is when conflicts go beyond the threshold of reasonableness and legality, that they pose threats to security and development. Conflict management and peace building is an integral part of good and services to the citizens. Transparency in government transactions, respect for rule of law, enthronement of equity, justice and fairness, constitutional and democratic government brought about through fair elections and responsible and responsive political leadership are also important.

In order to prevent the threats of ethno-religious conflicts and to maintain law and order in Kaduna State in particular and Nigeria at large, the following areas should be upheld:

- i. Economic development
- ii. National ethnic and religious dialogue
- iii. Civic education
- iv. Ethnic and religious tolerance
- v. Preaching the gospel of peace
- vi. Respect for the rule of law.

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