

## Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria: Causes and Consequences

ALI Usman D.<sup>1\*</sup>, YAHAYA Garba S.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Department of Public Administration Taraba State University, P.M.B Jalingo, North Eastern Nigeria

\*Corresponding Author: [usmanalidanwamzam@gmail.com](mailto:usmanalidanwamzam@gmail.com) Tel: +2348039568878

Available online at: [www.isroset.org](http://www.isroset.org)

Received: 22/Nov/2018, Accepted: 07/Jan/2019, Online: 31/Jan/2019

**Abstract:** Nigeria has a population of (one hundred and eighty million) 180,000,000 million inhabitants with over 250 different ethnic groups and over 400 spoken different languages and dialects. The multicultural nature of the Nigerian society with its sharp ethnic and religious differences has generated various versions of ethnic identity and question which has threaten the existence of Nigerian communities by turning to ethnic conflict, and have created dangerous suspicion, distrust and conflicting antagonistic relationship among the various ethnic nationalities in Nigeria, and this is affecting the successful operations of democracy, because, religion and ethnicity are manipulated by the Nigerian political class for their own personnel gain. The aims and objectives of this paper is to interrogate the causes and consequences of ethnic conflict in Nigeria. For the purpose of this paper, qualitative method of data collection has been adopted; materials were derived from secondary sources of data. The effect of ethnic conflict in Nigeria is on thousands of women, the aged and children have been compel to desert their homes and seek refuge in neighboring villages, towns and countries due to the ethnic conflict.

**Keywords:** Ethnic Conflict, Causes, Consequences, Nigeria.

### I. INTRODUCTION

“Nigeria has a population of 180,000,000 million inhabitants with over 250 different ethnic groups and over 400 spoken different languages and dialects; Nigeria has 36 states and Federal Capital Territory (FCT Abuja), with 774 local governments (LGAs).” (The 1999 constitution). The multicultural nature of the Nigerian society with its sharp ethnic and religious differences and divisions has generated various versions of identity question which has threaten the existence of Nigerian communities by turning to ethnic violent conflict, and have created dangerous suspicion, distrust and conflicting antagonistic relationship among the various ethnic nationalities in Nigeria. Despite the multiple and sharp division of the Nigerian society, culturally diverse and religiously fragmented makes Nigeria different in the world and a source of concern in modern day Nigeria [1]. Modern day characteristics of ethnic cleavages as well as the position of religion and ethnicity occupied in Nigeria politics is affecting the successful operations of the democracy, because, religion and ethnicity are manipulated by the Nigerian political class. The reason is the divided nature of the Nigerian society, culturally, religiously, ethnically, ideologically, and to achieve their selfish interest, and indeed, when there is frustration and transfer of aggression, among the local population, the feeling of hatred and anger can result to violent ethnic conflict.

Nigeria is a country with diverse multi ethnic and religious identities which have come to play significant roles in persistent ethnic conflict. These identities or nationalities finds expression in divide and rule politics in Nigeria coupled with the fact that political elites manipulations of ethnic or tribal and religious sentiments as a means to achieved political power so easily. Before Colonialism, there have been in existence many types of traditional state society and independent political entities operating at different level of development, civilization and administration locally. These local or indigenous political entities existed as caliphate, kingdoms, empires, chiefdoms, city-states and local communities [2].

The cultural diversity of Nigeria is one of the most difficult and complicated to handle in the world, three different ethnic groups among the many mentioned earlier formed the majority, Hausa-Fulani ethnic groups are the majority in the North and are Muslims, the Yoruba in the South are the majority and significant percent of them are Muslims and Igbos in the East are the majority and significant percent of them are Christians, most of the time, they used ethnicity and religion to manipulate political process to their personal and selfish advantages and most often than not it result to ethnic violent conflict. These three major ethnic groups in Nigeria are competing for the scarce resources in an unhealthy rivalry.

These differences and divisions resulted to violent ethnic conflict; thousands of innocent people were killed and political elites are using this ugly situation to advance their personal ambition across Nigeria, there is persistent ethnic violent conflict all in

the name of religion and ethnicity. Few among these conflicts are Ife/Modakeke conflict, Ogoni/Andonis ethnic conflict, Sagamu/Kano ethnic violent conflict between Hausa and Yoruba, Zangon- Kataf ethnic conflict, Jukun/Tiv ethnic conflict. These are interconnected and interwoven social and economic factors which give rise to them. Inter ethnic hostilities, tribal war fare or national question has become a dangerous signal in Nigeria with serious political, economic, social and psychological consequences. Chief Obafemi Awolowo said that Nigeria was no more than a “geographical expression”<sup>4</sup>. While Sir Ahmadu Bello, The then Sardauna of Sokoto equally commented that the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates of Nigeria as “The Mistake of 1914” [3].

The political parties organized at that time were based on tribal and ethnic lines. The Northern people’s congress (NPC) garnered its support from the then Northern region; the Action Group was supported in the western region, while the National Congress of Nigeria Citizens (NCNC) had the Eastern region as its main supporting Nigeria as a country referred to as a “giant of Africa” because of its multi ethnic groups and strong economic based. In Nigeria, ethnic loyalty is far above national loyalty in the psyche of the Nigerian citizen’s generally. In fact, the situation is affecting the continuous existence of Nigeria as one nation with one destiny, violent ethnic conflict are recurring events, it is clear that ethnic division/conflict in Nigeria is common right from the colonial period or era. The colonial masters did nothing to co-opt the diverse political entities they met on their arrival [4].

The then colonial Governor of Nigeria in 1923, Sir Hugh Clifford said that it was difficult to fusion “collection of self contained and mutually independent Native states” that made up Nigeria into “a Single homogeneous nation”. Nigerian political class that took over power from the British colonial masters did not make any move to foster national unity and cohesion in the country as well which is unfortunate [5].

Consequently, Nigeria remain sharply divided along ethnic, cultural and religious lines since then, distrust, hatred, violent ethnic conflict, antagonism and discrimination characterized the inter relationships among the different ethnic groups in Nigeria, The Country experienced civil war in 1967-1970, violent ethnic conflict in different parts of the country such as Zangon Kataf crisis in Kaduna state, Tiv/Jukun ethnic conflict in Taraba State, Hausa-Fulani and Birom ethnic conflict in Plateau state, Ife/Modakeke ethnic conflict in Oyo state, Igbo/Hausa-Fulani in Kano and others ethnic conflicts occurred has threaten the corporate existence of Nigeria as a Nation-State. Ethnic, cultural and religious diversities may tend to increased violent ethnic conflict and ethnic conflicts are one of the greatest problems to national development generally. In view of the above, this paper will examine Ethnic violent conflict in Nigeria, causes and consequences.

Therefore, this paper was divided in to the following subheadings; introduction, methodology, literature review, the concept of ethnicity, ethnic conflict, the argument, findings and assessment and conclusion

## II. METHODOLOGY

Methodology is the process of information and data collection to be used in analyzing research and making critical decisions. The methodology may include qualitative and quantitative methods. For the purpose of this paper, qualitative method of data collection has been adopted; materials were derived from secondary sources like published books, journals, web based newspaper and internet materials on ethnic conflict.

## III. LITERATURE REVIEW

### The Concept of Ethnicity

Ethnicity is a sense of collective belongings that tied together ethnic group based on a common language, history, culture, race, norms, values, traditions, religion, nationality and ancestral descent [6]. Therefore, an ethnic group is a group of people that have the same culture, race, language or dialect which differ them from others. Ethnicity is a difficult and complicated concept to explain due to its nature of ambiguous features [6]. Hassan, (2008) explained that “ethnicity relates to a people whose unity rest on race, language, religion and cultural ties or bonds [7]. (Enloe 1973) observes that “of all the groups that man attaches himself to, ethnic groups seem the most encompassing and enduring. It can be a building block, but also a potential stumbling block on the road to modernity and no ethnic group remain isolated”. Ethnic group sharp and mould an individual perception with a sense of belongings in the society [8].

Deutch, *et. al.* (2006). Stated that, “a sharp culturally divided society with ethnic affiliations affect not only family and social life, but also formal community life as it affects political and economic life of an individual”. That is why ethnic groups which are tied with kingship are bounded together in such a way to increase the effective use of political structure [9].

Nnoli, O. (1995:12), explain that “when emotionalism turns out to be a serious force or factor in inter- ethnic relationship, it limits the application of wisdom, reason, feelings and the hope of viewing the other ethnic group as moral equals that is entitled to their own opinion and sympathy”. Ethnicity therefore is a dangerous political instrument that is used among ethnic groups in Nigeria to achieve individual selfish interest [5].

### **Ethnic Conflict**

Ethnic conflict is a disagreement, misunderstanding, whether violent conflict or non violent between or among various ethnic groups. Nnoli, (1995:4) explains that “ethnic conflict emerges as a result of common group awareness to live or urge to achieve some objectives that are seen to be of great value and which are perceived as being stop”. Ethnicity encourages segregation, discrimination and polarization of the society characterized by “We” or “Them”, according to, Usman (1987. 2). “The re emerging ethnic conflict has its origin from the past due to mistrust, suspicion, selfishness, poverty, envy, ignorance and unemployment between/among ethnic groups, in Nigeria”.

In his opinion, Egwu, (2004), stated that” ethnic conflict is difficult to understand when state is believed or reason to have take side or serving the interest of the powerful or influential group while claiming to represents the interest of the all groups”. Ethnic conflict in Nigeria is persistently happening because of the fact that ethnic loyalty serve as the pillar of ethnic conflict, ethnic loyalty in Nigerian context is a feeling of attachment to ones ethnic group. This loyalty carries along with him the willingness to support and act negatively or positively on behalf of the ethnic group having an elective attitude towards those regarded as “outsiders”. Ethnic conflict is very sensitive, complex and difficult to resolve, because the affected persons experienced loss of lives and property which are traceable to some people or individuals, that still see them when justice is not meted on them, may lead to grudges, nursing an ambition of revenge, hatred towards the perpetrators of such violent ethnic conflict, this resulted to counter attack, and the reemergence of the ethnic conflict [10].

The heterogeneous nature of Nigeria population contributes to ethnic conflict and cultural diversity is an important factor in determining how the country can experience violent ethnic conflict persistently. Nigerian government is battling with the problem in every part of the country.

Ethnic conflict is a type of group conflict in which the group participating in the conflict interprets the conflict, its causes and consequences perceived along ethnic lines. Ethnic conflict involves one conflict party is organized around the ethnic identity and its group members. Conflict in Cyprus in 1974 can be refers to as ethnic conflict because in each of these conflict is organized around ethnic groups confront each other or the institutions of the state in which they live. Equally in Nigeria, the 1967-70 civil wars is an ethnic group conflict because Igbo as an ethnic group try to break away from Nigeria Federation to form their own country called Biafra.

Samuel, Huntington. (1993). Observed that “conflicts of the future will happen along cultural lines separating civilizations, Huntington explain that ethnic conflict is as a result of globalization bringing multiple cultures in contact and contrast with each other and can cause clash of civilization”, he further went on to elaborate that “the increased of global communication will lead to more interactions between people of different cultures, norms, values and traditions, which resulted to civilization consciousness”<sup>18</sup>. Therefore, the increased civilization consciousness makes difference between civilization more glaring and will increased violent conflict. Differences in culture seem to be a more reasonable cause of violent ethnic conflict. For example, “Boko Haram” conflict in North East Nigeria is a byproduct clash of western civilization, culture, values, norms and traditions and indigenious, local, traditional, (Islamic) cultural heritage of Northern Nigeria [11].

Samuel, P. Huntington. (1993:2-18). Stated that “certain worldwide ideological and institutional developments have also contributed to the growth of ethnic conflict, the spread of norms of equality has made ethnic subordination illegitimate and mobilized ethnic groups in close proximity”. The spread of the value of achievement has cast in doubt the worth of groups whose competitive performance seems below standard [11].

The state system that emerges out of feudalism in Nigeria and now, in the post colonial period, covers entire state institution like judiciary, executive, legislative and the police provides the framework in which ethnic conflict occurs .Control of the apparatus and machinery of power by the minority ethnic group in Nigeria in the case of the former President Goodluck Jornathan from 2009-2015 are among the source of ethnic conflict in Nigeria.

In Nigeria politics, people expect favorable attention at the hands of government personnel belonging to their own ethnic group and unfavorable attention at the hands of government personnel belonging to other ethnic groups. In some part of the country in Nigeria for example, in Jos, Plateau state, the Hausa Fulani ethnic group are described by the Birom ethnic group as settlers,

non indigenes, expansionist, or land grabbers, and ethnicity is often accompanied by violent hostility towards Hausa Fulani by the Birom ethnic group supported by the plateau state government in their actions and body language.

Ethnic attachments in Nigeria are demonstrated or find its way and penetrated in employment, educational institutions, civil service, police, army, trade union activities.etc. All political activities have ethnic affiliation, political parties were formed or organized along ethnic division or lines, elections are held along ethnic affiliation. Army are ethnically divided, security forces send to quell violent ethnic conflict end up taking side with their own ethnic group. In multi-cultural and multi ethnic complex communities of Nigeria, ethnic groups violently compete for scarce resources, property, jobs, education, social amenities and political power because political power is an instrument acquiring quick wealth, domination and revenge. Nnoli (1995:15) stated that “the working of economic forces warrants for tension between and among different ethnic groups with unhealthy competing vested interest”. Idowu, (1999), stated that “relative deprivation theory offers an explanation based on an ethnic groups access to political power and economic resources” Idowu, (1999),he further said “that ethnic group’s worth is based on the result of economic and political competitions”.

According to Adedeji, A. (1999:39-40), “violent ethnic conflict is a sign of a weak, fragile state or state deeply involved in ancient ethnic loyalty”. In this awkward situation, states act with bias mind to favor a particular ethnic group or community, and behavior such as preferential treatment spark up violent ethnic conflict. Therefore, in critical or complex political situations, the effectiveness of governance is dependent on its ability to address social critical issues and human needs, cultural and religious diversity leads to greater political instability. Violent ethnic conflict can take different types or forms from collective ethnic violence which is perpetrated by a group or ethnic group against another.

Collective violence is categorized into riots, pogroms and civil wars. Riots refer to a violent clash between two groups of civilians, often characterized by mob action and disorganized collective crowd behavior, while in riots the neutrality of the government may be in question; the government does not give up the idea of neutrality. In pogroms, a majority community attacks an unarmed minority, and the idea of neutrality is for all practical purposes dropped by the state. The government officials either looks away, or sides with the attacking group, these are features of the Nigerian community.

In civil wars, the government not only abandons the idea of neutrality, but it either participates as a combatant fighting an armed rebel group, or is physically unable to arbitrate between the two armed groups fighting each other. Nnoli, (1980:9) Stated that, “there is a sharp difference between pogroms and civil wars, in pogroms, the target group is typically a minority ethnic group, helpless and unarmed, whereas in civil wars both armed groups or combating sides are heavily and dangerously well armed”, and most of the time pogroms and riots do not lead to civil wars, Muslim- Christians riots in Northern Nigeria in 1990s does not lead to civil war, the Nigerian civil war happened in 1967-1970, it had nothing to do with Muslim- Christians divisions, it was ethnically driven by the Igbo ethnic group rebels in the name Biafra [12].

The conceptual issue is whether conflict is violent, or it is pursued within the institutionalized channels of the political process. When ethnic protest or demonstration is channel through the National Assemblies (lower or upper chamber); States House of Assemblies or the executive arm of government or it takes the form of industrial action (labor strike) and non-violent demonstrations or protest on the streets, it is an expression of conflict to be sure, but it is not a form of ethnic violence such institutionalized conflict, which can be quite healthy for a polity, must not be equated with riots, pogroms and civil wars, in view of the above, Ethnicity can be redefine as common descent, common history or common home land and nationality. Salim, (1999), identified conflicts as follows;

- Boundary and territorial conflicts or disputes
- Civil wars and internal conflicts
- Succession and ideological conflicts
- Ethnic conflict
- Urban and rural violence

Collier, et al. (1999), identified conflicts into “(a) loot seekers and (b) justice-seekers”, others type of conflicts include urban violence-sometimes they take the form of ethnic conflict, sometimes religious conflict, and sometimes they are class-based, the poor class of ethnic groups attacking government properties, offices, shops and houses of the rich, urban violence is provoke by specific incident or situation or reacting to poverty, unemployment or struggles between supporters of political parties, parties which are often ethnically based [14].

In rural areas in Nigeria, conflicts erupted or organized around ethnic divide and most of the time over grazing areas and over cattle rustlings amongst pastoral people; also, there are dispute over cultivable land amongst farmers within the same ethnic

group and also between ethnic groups. Pastoralist Fulani ethnic group in Nigeria most of the time had conflict with rural farmers over grazing lands which later escalate into ethnic armed conflict between the farmers and the grazers. Most of these rural conflicts over land and cattle have been going on over a long period of time and is happening silently, unreported to the authorities concern, unless large scale killing and destructions takes place and the government intervenes.

Adebayo, A. (1999:5), identified two types of conflicts, the “inter-state conflict and internal conflict”. The Interstate conflicts emerge as a result of the colonial demarcation of artificial territories, most of the interstate dispute was caused by claims over territory, the reason for claims to change them and reason which led to border dispute. Nigeria had border dispute with Cameroon.

The causes of interstate conflict or dispute can be attributed to, some borders or territorial boundaries were demarcated or delineated incorrectly or in accurate, some borders were overlap and extend to other side of the country with the same ethnic group as it is found in Nigeria with its neighboring countries all occupied by Hausa Fulani ethnic group. Some countries, their territorial borders passed by areas endowed with rich mineral deposits or resources, sharing the border line and who control the mineral deposits will become the bases for interstate conflict [15].

Internal conflict can be categorized into two; a conflict in which the government is a party to the conflict, or politically instigated and conflicts between ethnic groups within a country and the state is not a party to the conflict. These types of conflicts can be a rebellion to overthrow a government, secessionist rebellion, coup d'état, or conflict to seize state power, rural conflict over land or resources, eg Ife and Modakeke ethnic conflict in Nigeria, and urban conflict or violence.

#### IV. THE ARGUMENT

Scholars were of the opinion that competition for scarce resources; political power, marginalization, poverty, unemployment, and politicization of religion and ethnicity are the reasons that contribute to ethnic conflict in Nigeria.

Nnoli, O. (1980:5), laid more emphasis on the empirical examples linking “socio economic factors to ethnic conflict and the working of economic forces warrants for tension between groups in competing interest in Nigeria”. According to Idowu, O. (1999), “relative deprivation theory offers an explanation based on ethnic groups access to political power and economic resources”. From the above, ethnic conflict emerged as a result of economic and political competitions. Thus, from the theoretical expositions provided above, the causes of ethnic conflict in Nigeria can be explain from different perspective generated from the various views of the scholars, these perspectives includes.

##### **Colonial legacy of British administration**

The history of ethnic conflict in Nigeria can be view in retrospect back to the colonial incursion that forced the ethnic groups of Northern and Southern protectorate to become a political entity in 1914, which later resulted to deep hatred, competition, distrust and persistent conflict.

The former British colonial administration merged Northern and Southern Nigeria into one country called Nigeria forcefully without the peoples mandate, consent and opinions. The British deliberately planted a dangerous seed of conflict, germinated and now disturbing the peace and progress of the country. The British introduced “indirect rule” system of administration in the North because there was a centralized system of indigenous administration they met on ground controlled by the Emirs and Chiefs, the policy of indirect rule system of administration was used to managed the affairs of the indigenous people through the use of their local leaders indirectly, the policy of indirect rule system of administration was autocratic and it has denied the larger population of the society participating in the decision making process in the affairs that affect them. The system was introduced by Lord Fredrick Lugard and using the traditional institutions as their agents.

According to Nnoli, O., (1980:113), “the system of indirect rule reinforced ethnic division and has made it difficult for the ethnic groups to come together as a true nation”. The style and execution of indirect rule separated Northern and Southern Nigeria; therefore ethnic groups were separated from each other, the power, authority and privileges given to the Emirs and Chief were misused and abused by acquiring ill gotten wealth, land and establish patronage around them which promoted tribalism and nepotism.

Afigbo, A. E. (1989:23), was of the opinion that, “the segregation of the Nigerian societies was also reinforced by the colonial authorities that controlled the movement of Christian southerners to the Muslim North, created a separate settlement for non indigenous citizens in the North as “Sabon Gari”, and even limited the purchase of land outside one’s own region in the

southern part for Muslims Northerners are referred to as “settlers”. Different ethnic groups in different regions started looking at each other suspiciously; prejudices, hatred and rivalry become the order of the day”.

Unequal, preferential and differential treatment of ethnic groups has contributed to the competition, envy and hatred, because some Nigerians are more equal than others [17].

To explain the theory of decision making in related to the leadership style of colonial administration in Nigeria, Herbert Simon (1967) stated that, “all human activities or organizations are based on decision, understanding human behavior would demand for the determination of underlying decision that kick start any activity”. Decision, constitute the basic unit of analysis of human actors. The decision to merged/amalgamate three separate and loosely independent regions which is called Nigeria is a bad and irrational decision taken by the colonial administration and the resultant effect kept on troubling the country in the name of violent ethnic conflict with heavy lost of lives and properties as well as displacement of innocent people [18].

The time of colonial administration in Nigeria, there was absence of basic needs experienced in areas of life and these has affected employment, education, political participation and the provision of social services to the citizens. The absence of such basic social amenities gives the political elites the opportunity to use their ethnic groups for unhealthy competition, rivalry and ethnic conflict, to advance their selfish and personal interest [18].

The 1947 colonial constitution divided Nigeria into three regions; the North which was predominantly Hausa-Fulani and Muslims was the largest region, the Eastern region was dominated by the Igbo ethnic group mostly Christians and the Western region dominated by the Yoruba ethnic group and mostly are Muslims, with three largest ethnic groups in dominance, the minority ethnic group were dominated and marginalized. Okonjo, I. M. (1974) stated that “the minority ethnic groups rebelled and Nigerians started fighting for ethnic dominance as the country move towards political independence”.

The creation of the three regions did not take into consideration the interest of the minority ethnic groups for autonomy and self determination instead; they were disappeared within the majority ethnic groups. This situation was based on the regionalization policy, that one should be loyal to and protect the interest of his region instead of the others. Colonial administration endorsed segregation for its people and does not have the unity of the country at heart [19].

Nigeria experienced disunity as a result of imposition of different cultures, traditions, values, norms, by the colonial administration. Countries with political stability were of the same culture, language, religion or sentiments and desire of the citizens concerned to come together under a common authority, and single political entity. In the case of Nigeria, British colonial administration compel different ethnic groups to come together without considering conditions for the emergence of common values among the people.

The implication of the loose integration or amalgamation of 1914 was that the different cultures of Hausa Fulani ethnic group, Igbos and Yorubas saw themselves as rivals and competitors instead of one people, and without faulty implementation of decisions of 1914, there would not have been arise such competition and rivalry which resulted to violent ethnic conflict in Nigeria.

Another reason why ethnic conflict persisted in Nigeria is because of poverty and unemployment among the local population. Poverty is provoked by unemployment in the midst of plenty. Poverty dehumanizes vast majority of the population which are always used to fuel trouble on the other ethnic groups whom they see as being the cause of their problem, even frustration is contribute to aggression.

The cause of ethnic conflict in Nigeria from another dimension is that, the perpetrators or culprits go unpunished and escape unhurt, the Nigerian government paid lip service and fail to bring the perpetrators to book by not implementing the recommendations/report of various committees and panels set up at post conflict areas. The failure of security apparatus to live up to expectations in combating the challenges of ethnic conflict is also a cause of persistent ethnic conflict in Nigeria. The security agencies in most of the time send to control these ethnic conflict disappointed Nigerians by taking sides with one side. Theories of ethnicity provided by scholars fit very well to explain the Nigerian ethnic conflict situation; primordial and constructivism are more related to the Nigeria situation. Primordial as a theory of ethnicity try to explain that ethnicity is deeply rooted in historical experience that it should be properly treated as a given phenomena in a given human relations, colonial experience/rule characterized by divide and rule strategy has affected the mentality of Nigerians.

Constructivist argue that ethnicity is not a historical experience at all, but in fact is highly adaptive and malleable phenomenon and that it is primary a practical resources that individuals and groups deploy opportunistically to advance their fundamental

personal and selfish interest and that they may even discard when alternative affiliations promise a better return. The two theories related very well to the Nigerian situation in reality. Adedeji, (1999:331), identified causes conflict generally are;

- The struggle for political power
- Lack of visionary leadership and accountability
- Lack of good governance and transparency
- Non adherence to the principle of human rights
- Economic
- Poverty
- Inequitable allocation of national wealth and resources
- The negative effect of Bretons Woods Institutions policies in Nigeria Social and Cultural
- Social inequality
- System of exclusion and ethnic hatred
- Role of political elites in the manipulation of ethnic and religious sentiment
- Cultural detachment and the search for ethnic identity

Ethnic groups and identities are not pre ordained, they are deliberately constructed and constantly changes and people choose to be ethnically identified to meet their needs and expectations. It is also an individual and groups falling back into their ethnic group which provides them with security and psychological weapon to manipulate every happening around them based on ethnic identity [19]

In my own opinion, given the nature of heterogeneous nature of Nigeria, a fundamental objective is to initiate the concept of nation building and should be a long term plan to develop a national consciousness through cultural policies to be implemented in the educational system. Central to this concept is the recognition of cultural diversity within a framework of national unity. Poverty and unemployment should be reduced through good policies and programs, economic resources and development across the country should be distributed evenly, poverty and uneven distribution of economic resources among ethnic groups can lead to violent ethnic conflict. Carefully and long term strategies implemented will reduce the development of conditions favorable to the emergence of ethnic conflict. Nigeria with numerous ethnic division and conflict should have a permanent mechanism for managing and resolving ethnic conflicts through an independent arbitration panel between conflicting groups especially politically instigated conflicts.

## V. FINDINGS AND ASSESSMENT

Based on different scholarly views and opinions generated, the study was able to find and assess consequences of ethnic violent conflict in Nigeria. The consequences of ethnic conflict on women, aged and children had the most damaging impact, thousands of women, the aged and children have been compel to desert their homes and seek refuge in neighboring villages, towns and countries due to the ethnic conflict, they are internally displaced persons (IDPs) in their own country.

- The Findings reveal that violence against women, the aged and children is devastating which include emotional and physical injuries, rape as a traumatic injury, sexually transmitted diseases, maternal mortality, unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortion and the use of child soldiers' to fight in ethnic conflict.
- Ethnic conflict have affected the government and the people generally and have resulted to political and economic instability, weakened patriotism, breed suspicion, lack of trust and true relationship among different ethnic groups in the country, it is believed that responsive and responsible government would restore confidence among the population and promote de-Ethnicization policy among the competing ethnic groups in Nigeria.
- Ethnic war lords in Nigeria often benefited from control of state resources and power which are the bases of their patronage networks and they seek to instigate violent ethnic conflict, they get involve into ethnic conflict given reasons on high rate of unemployment, illiteracy, marginalization and an unequal distribution of the national wealth in their areas dominated by their ethnic groups.
- The violent ethnic conflict in Jos, Plateau state, Zangon-Kataf in Kaduna state, Tiv-Jukun in Taraba state, Tiv-Fulani herdsmen in Benue state always produce vengeance because an attack by an ethnic group, lead to reprisal attack and the ethnic conflict is persistently re emerging from time to time.
- Further findings and assessment reveal that, ethnic conflict in Nigeria encourages use of illegal arms and ammunitions and also proliferation of bombs, dangerous weapons and explosives by the conflicting ethnic groups. Ethnic groups purchase sophisticated weapons and ammunitions to protect or defend themselves from attacks from other ethnic groups; community members contribute money weekly or monthly to buy weapons before, during and after violent ethnic conflict.

- Ethnic conflict in Nigeria since independence divert the attention of the government from embarking on meaningful development, because huge amount of money have been wasted in the name of security vote to maintain or peace building in conflict areas.
- Generally, the study assess violent ethnic conflict can result to heavy loss of revenue to the private individuals and the government, ethnic conflict in Nigeria destroy the economy and the imposition of curfew which will affect the economic activities of the conflict areas.
- As a result of the ethnic conflict in Nigeria, the situation has deterred away foreign investors, damage the reputation of Nigerians abroad and the image of the country at the international community, foreign investors relocate to other peaceful African Countries.

## VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study agreed that violent ethnic conflict is one of the most dangerous sources of conflict in Nigeria with heavy loss of lives, properties and displacement of people including the aged, women and children with traumatic consequences on the victims of rape, abduction and sex slavery. The study observes that political elites or politicians manipulate ethnic conflict to achieve their personal interest. In Nigeria people generally perceive themselves as more “ethnic” and less “national”, the study observed with keen interest that “Indigenes” versus “Settlers” is one of the sources of ethnic violent conflict, to address this problem, there is need for the government at all level to entrench “Minority” rights and “Settler” issue into the constitution, so that “Minority” or “Settlers” can be secured from discrimination and hegemonic domination, power should be “shared” or “rotate” between and among the ethnic groups, in fact local autonomy for the ethnic groups and inclusive government will tend to prevent ethnic conflict from eruption. Finally, the study concludes that, unhealthy rivalry, competition for power and resources among ethnic groups resulted to violent ethnic conflict and the government failed in its responsibility to give adequate protection to its citizens and huge amount of money was wasted as a security vote to manage the conflict but still persisted due to the fact that the perpetrators were not punished.

## REFERENCES

- [1]. Otite, et al. (2006). *An Introduction to Sociological Studies*: Ibadan. Heinemann Educational Books Limited.
- [2]. Egwu, S. G. (2004). *Contested Identities and the Crises of Citizenship in Nigeria*: Journal of Policy and Strategy.14(1) 40-65.
- [3]. Ogban, Iyam. O. (1998). *Federalism in Nigeria: Past, Present and Future*. In Tunde Babawale et al (ed). *Re-Inventing Federalism in Nigeria*. Malthouse Press.
- [4]. Ojo, E . (2006). *Imperatives of Sustaining Democratic Values*: In Ojo Emmanuel. (ed). *Challenges of Sustainable Democracy in Nigeria*: Ibadan. John Archers Publishers Ltd.
- [5]. Nnoli, O. (1995). *Ethnicity and Development in Nigeria*: Aldershot. Avebury, Ashgate Publishing. Ltd.
- [6]. Crawford, Yound. (1965). *Politics in the Congo*: Princeton University Press.
- [7]. Hassan, M.(2008). *Ethno Religious Crisis and the Challenges of Democratization in Africa*: Ilori. Unpublished Seminar Paper.
- [8]. Enloe, C. H. (1973). *Ethnic Conflict and Political Development*: Boston. Little Brown Company.
- [9]. Deutch, et al. (2006). *The Hand Book of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*. *Disagreement in Varying Degrees between two Groups*.
- [10]. Shils, Edward. (1957). *Primordial, Personal, Sacred and Civil Ties*: British Journal of Sociology.
- [11]. Samuel, P. Huntington. (1996). *The Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of World Order*: Penguin Books Publishers.
- [12]. Nnoli, O. (1980). *Ethnic Politics in Nigeria*: Enugu. Fourth Dimension Publishers.
- [13]. Idowu, William, O. (1999). *Citizenship, Alienation and Conflicts in Nigeria*: Africa Development. Xxxiv, No. 1 and 2.
- [14]. Collier, et al. (1999). *Ethnic Loyalties: State Formation and Conflict*. World Bank, Project.
- [15]. Federal Government of Nigeria: *The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. (As Amended)*
- [16]. Afigbo, A. E. (1989). *Federal Character: Its Meaning and History*. Ibadan. Heinemann, Publishers.
- [17]. Herbert, Simon. (1967). *Administrative Behavior*: Glencol. The Free Press.
- [18]. Ejimofor, G. O. (1987). *British Colonial Objectives and Politics in Nigeria: The Roots of Conflicts*. Onithsa, African Press.
- [19]. Adedeji, Adebayo. (1999). *Comprehending and Mastering African Conflicts*: London. Zed, Books.