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CONFLICTS ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

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Abstract

This study investigated the conflicts on the African continent. The continent of Africa has been highly susceptible to conflicts and wars. This has prompted the insinuations that African continent is the home of conflicts and instability. This paper specially, examined the concept and types of conflicts, causes and the impact of conflicts on Africa's socio-economic development and the solution to the problems of conflicts in African continent. The conflicts have genocide in Rwanda and gross violations of human rights including gruesome mutilations of large numbers of people in Sierra Leon, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, the Sudan, Uganda and Nigeria with its two decades of Boko Haram insurgency and amongst other African regions. In addition, to causing the collapse or near collapse of some of the countries,

these conflicts have significantly impacted negatively on the political, socio-economic growth and development as well as provision of public service in the African states. Therefore, it was suggested amongst others that African continent need committed and sincere leaders that will governance with example, through equal distribution of resources, promotion of rule of law, protection of fundamental human rights and among others. Also, the African continent leaders(President, Prime-Minister or Head of States) should ensure the eradication of poverty through equal access to qualitative education, provision of gainful employment for the youths and Workers should be adequately remunerated and promoted when due. Conclusion were made and implication of the study drawn.

Keywords: **Conflicts, Socio-economic Development, Leadership, African Continent.**

Introduction

Over the years, the issue of conflicts, civil unrest, wars and violence has been a recurring decimal in African continent, political and socio-economic development prior to the independence of the nations and still lingers in post-independence era. According to Nwanegbo (2006) African continent is under severe inter-state and internal conflicts threat as the threat has political, socio-economic and environment dimension. Each of these dimensions has critically affected the stability of the African States. Snapshot of explosive conflicts in today Africa continent presents a worrying and devastating picture, of Rwanda, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Eritrea and Ethiopia; Namibia, Zimbabwe, Sudan the last with the longest-running civil way on the continent; of Sierra Leone with gruesome atrocities against civilians; of Somalia, Burundi, Guinea Bissau and Lesotho, the latter reeling from south Africa's recent intervention (Gordon-Summers, 2004).

In view of the above, Oshaghae (2006) states that the impact of these conflicts and wars include regional parallel economics in light arms and assets generating displaced refugee population and creating exiled communities. The present record of conflicts in African continent in the recent time has more than doubled the record of the pre-colonial period of territorial expansion, when groups fought as a matter of necessity for nation-building and self/national preservation. The African continent remains besieged by many conflicts. Since 1970s, Africa has seen more than thirty conflicts and wars which have resulted in more than half of all war-related death worldwide and have produced about 9.5million refugees (the observer, June 15, 2003). According Alabi (2005) the history of Africa as a continent is reptile with conflict, Alabi further asserts that the major current that runs through Africa from North to South, East to West and Central is conflict and wars since the 1960's series of conflicts and civil wars has taken place in Africa. For instances, examples include Sudan (1995-1990), Chad 1965-85), Angola since 1974, Liberia (1980-2003) Nigeria (1967-70) Somalia (1999-2003) and Burundi, Rwanda and Sierra Leone (1991-2001).

But apart from civil wars, Africa continent has also witnessed a number of intermittent border and inter-state conflicts notable among which are the following; Nigeria–Cameroon dispute over Bakassi Peninsular since the 1970s; Algeria – Morocco conflict over the Atlas Mountains area in October 1963; Eritrea - Ethiopian crisis between 1962 and 1979; Somalia-Ethiopia dispute of 1964 to 1978 over the Ugandan desert region; Chad - Libya crisis of 1980-1982; Kenya - Somalia board war of 1963 in which Somalia aimed at recovering its lost territories including the frontier district of Kenya and Tanzania – Uganda crisis in 1978 -79. The regularity of conflict in Africa has become

one of the distinct characteristics of the continent. However, David (2007) notes that Africa has no monopoly of conflict, other regions of the world are also riddled with considerable violence and social conflagration. For instance Bosnia, Serbia, Turkey and Northern Ireland are among the trouble parts of Europe. In Asia one may point to Cambodia, Iraq and Burma among others as conflict ridden. Latin America is also enmeshed in conflicts as evinced by countries like Peru. Guatemala, Mexico and Columbia (Adedeji, 2005).This widespread existence of conflicts across the globe according to Aremu (2010) conflict is an inevitable aspect of human interaction as such conflict may be ineradicable for as long as people, nations and groups pursue conflicting interest, there will always be disagreement and conflict. In the period between 1980 and June 2005, Nigeria state alone recorded over one hundred and forty (140) internal conflicts. This situation in other African countries is not different; in fact, it has become that bad that the entire continent of Africa has collectively been described as a vast theatre of conflicts. Oche (2008) explains that this situation has so much deteriorated to the extent that it has assumed the dimension of a scourge. This position according to Nwanegbo (2006) is under scored by the changing character, increased frequency and intensity as well as the deplorable implications and cost. Perhaps the most disturbing is the cost or implication of these conflicts to the political and socio-economic growth and development of African states. Considering the amount of damage conflict in Africa has caused the continent.

However, Elujekwute (2019) identifies two broad categories of conflicts, these are inter-State and internal conflicts, it is apt to observe that Africa has experienced both types of conflicts over the years. Similarly, the causes of conflicts in African continent could be said to have multiplicity of factors such as ethnic composition of African States, leadership problem, corruption in governance, arbitrary boarders created by the colonial authorities and among others. Although, Elujekwute further maintains that conflicts in African continent primarily from crises of national governance and from failure of government institutions in African continent to mediate conflicts. Abdalla (2002) states that colonial factors as the root of many conflicts in Africa. Abdalla further argues that this factors must be taken into consideration in the attempts to address African conflicts because the root of many post- colonial conflicts in Africa such as the recent case of Sudan remain buried in Africa past and specifically in the colonisation and de-colonisation processes.

The impact of conflict situations on socio-economic development in African continent is devastating, worrisome and verity of conflicts and violence have become a part of everyday life and threaten socio- economic development and societal development on the African regions. The unending political tension, conflicts and wars in the continent have devastating negative impact on the socio-economic development of African states because socio-economic development cannot be sustained in an environment ridded with conflicts and violence, instability and insecurity.

In view of the above, as a way out of the predicament of conflicts and wars that have bedevilled African, valuable suggestions based on a thorough analysis of the causes of conflicts in African continent may be experimented with to bail African continent out of recurrent conflicts and wars. With committed and sincere leadership and eradication of poverty and among others would assist African continent tremendously from recurrent conflict in the regions. Therefore, this paper is focused towards looking at the concepts, types of conflicts, causes and impact of conflicts as well as the solutions to the problem of conflicts in African continent.

Concept of Conflict

The term conflict has been variously defined by different scholars with each definition reflecting the individual dimension of observations. According to Eminue (2004) conflict is a particular relationship between states or rival factions within a state which implies subjective hostilities or tension manifested in subjective economic or military hostilities. Nwanegbo (2005) views conflict as a struggle over values and claims to secure status, power and resources in which the aims of the conflicting parties are to injure or eliminate their rivals. Scholars often use terms such as civil war, violent, conflict, civil strife, hostility, war and political instability interchangeably. Conflict could however, be violent or incontrollable, dominant or recessive, resolvable or insolvable. This implies that violence is not an inherent aspect of conflict but rather a potential form that conflict may take. According to Abdalla (2002) conflict means a violent and armed confrontation and struggle between groups, and between two or more states. In such confrontation and struggle some of those involved are injured and killed, such a conflict can last anything from six months to over twenty years. But then, unfolding events in world history suggest that most conflicts are violent, inflicting life-long injures on the victims apart from monument loss of lives.

Elujekwute (2019) defines conflict as a form of friction, disagreement or discord arising within a group when the beliefs or actions of one or more members of the group are either resisted by or unacceptable to one or more members of another group. Conflict appears to have direct implications for social and economic development in the African continent. In the African continent crisis is pervasive, the property destroyed and cases of rape, flog their economic and social opulence back by several steps. Besides the destroyed properties, socio-economic development in those states is usually grounded to a halt as people could not freely go about their socio-economic activities for fear of being killed. Sustainable development implies the consistency in the positive qualitative increment in the standard of living, economic, political and cultural variables in a society. Conflicts impede on such increases and render a nations development goals static and unachievable, however most scholars tend to think of conflict in Africa as being political conflicts such as wars between states, armed rebellion against states (ranging from small-scale low intensity conflicts to large-scale civil war) armed secessionist rebellion and coup d'état. Adedej (2005) argues that universally conflicts are the result of lack of security and psychological fear of political uncertainty. Throughout the world, conflicts are the consequences of fear of the future, lived through the past, it is the collective fear of the future based on a history of social uncertainty, due to the failure of the state to arbitrate justly between or provide credible guarantee of protection for groups, resulting in emergency anarchy and social fractures. Similarly, competition for resources typically lies at the heart of conflict, these accounts for the intensity of the struggle for political power in many African continents today. However, there are two broad categories of Africa conflicts, inter-state and internal conflicts

Types of Conflicts in the African Continent

There are various types of conflicts in African continent. The two broad categories of conflicts are Inter-State and Internal Conflicts which are examined as follows;

a. **Inter-State Conflict:** Inter-State conflicts arose as a result of colonial boundaries and although Organization of African Unity (OAU) charter declared the borders irrevocable, nevertheless, almost all the inter-state conflicts were caused by claims over borders. Abdalla (2002) reports that the features of African boarders which were the bases for claims to change and claims which led to boarder conflicts are, many boarders were

impresses; some boarders were straddle by a large ethnic group considered strategic by one side of the boarder; some boarder passed by areas rich with mineral resources all of which fell on one side of the boarder, thus, excluding the other country, inevitable one or a combination of any of these factors become the vases of a claim by one country or another to change the boarder or to claim territory which fell on the other side of the colonial boarder. Some inter- State conflicts have occurred mainly over disputed territories like the Chad-Libya conflict over the Aouzou strip. There was also a case of the Tanzania –Uganda war that toppled Idi Amin in Uganda; other included the Kenya-Ethiopian conflict (1963-1967), the Somali- Ethiopian conflict (1964-1978), the Eritrea-Ethiopia border conflict (1998-2000) and the 1994 Cameroon- Nigeria conflict over the disputed oil-rich Bakassi Penisula.

b. **Internal Conflicts:** These types of conflicts are presently the majority of conflicts in Africa, especially since the end of the post cold war period. These conflicts can be divided into two broad categories (1) conflict in which the state is a party to the conflict, politically driven or instigated conflicts (2) Conflicts between groups within the country. The following is briefly examined in each of these two broad categories above;

i. ***Secessionist Rebellion:*** The rebellion seeking secession are often driven by their perceived political, economic and cultural oppression, such rebellion often go through a similar development process but are usually defeated by military forces. The most spectacular secessionist conflict war was that of Biafra in Nigeria (1967-1970) that ended in catastrophic failure. The Eritrean war on the other hand succeeded for different reasons. Another example was Guinea Bissau which separated peacefully from the Cape Verde. Currently in Nigeria, the blackest nation is faced with the growing agitation for self determination from the indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB) led by Nnamdi Kalu has been at the fore front of the agitation for Biafra. The Nnamdi Kalu led IPOB has anchored its agitation on the Nigerian government's failure to improve the economy of South- East States well being. IPOB also anchored its agitation on the alleged marginalization of the region by the President Mohammed Buhari led Nigerian government. Also, the unchecked atrocities which is committed by the herders against farmers and the people of South- East States, which the government has failed to deal with, is the major reason for their separatist agenda.

ii. ***Urban Conflict:*** This is not a new phenomenon but has been taking place sine colonial period. Urban conflicts may last only for a few days, a specific incident or situation often triggers them. For instance violence focused against the colonial authorities for deplorable living conditions and its control system, citizens reacting to poverty and to struggles between supporters of political parties which are often ethnically based.

iii. ***Rural Conflicts:*** This is the types of conflict that in rural areas of many countries, there are numerous conflicts which are ethnically based, mainly over grazing land and over cattle amongst pastoral people. For instance, in Nigeria Fulani herdsmen and farmers clash have pitch Christians and Muslims against each other. Similarly, there are conflicts over cultivable land amongst peasant farmers within the same ethnic group and also between ethnic groups. Sometimes these inter-ethnic conflicts over land and cattle develop into rebellions and armed fighting between the ethnic groups and State, when the later sends in the military to stop the fighting or even to take side.

iv. ***A Rebellion to overthrow a Government:*** A rebellion by groups outside, the military establishment of a country and which aim to overthrow a government are most common type of political conflict in most African States. They mobilize a section of their regional

or ethnic supports; acquire arms clandestinely and often supported by a neighbouring country and sometimes by an outside power as well. Initial grievance of the leadership of such a rebel group would vary from being blocked from achieving political power under representation of their region/ethnic group in the government and administration of their region deliberately neglected from access to development funds and amongst others.

v. ***Coup d'état:*** This is undemocratic change of government by the military; it is one of the most common processes of achieving power in African Continent. A Coup d'état by the military of a country can be instigated and even carried out by outside force such as in Comoros. However, most coup d'états are carried out without external instigation or support they are generally the expression of struggle for power between contending groups amongst the elite.

vi. ***Cold-War Conflict:*** In early 1970 and 1980s, there are various competitions among the super powers in Africa, such as Americans and Russians in particular and less so openly the British and French, Competed for the hearts and minds of the African elites and their followers, political and diplomatic allies, strategic allies, and mineral resources. The rivalry and competition among these countries took various forms such as supporting government, overthrowing government of the day, supporting/opposing political parties, covert activities in support of or in opposition government and supporting, if not initiating rebel movements.

vii. ***Many Sided Conflict to Seize Power:*** In this type of conflicts certain specific conditions prevail, several rebellions emerge independently, each of which is trying to capture the capital and takeover power. Each of the rebel movement is supported by a different neighbouring (or distant) country-financial support, supplies or arms, diplomatic support, giving refuge to the various levels of the leadership and among others. Each of patrons or leader of group has its own interest; mainly in terms of its potential influence in the future government of its group succeeds in getting to power, for instance, Sierra Leone and Liberia, Congo Brazzaville and democratic Republic of Congo conflicts and wars.

Causes of Conflicts in African Continent

These causes of conflicts in African continent are briefly examined below;

(a) ***Leadership;*** African continent has consistently suffered from the problem of once their leaders in power, they held tight to power which has hindered political integration and unity's almost all Africa regions. It is automatically being assumed that African leaders, once in power naturally misuse their power, become oppressive and autocratic. Unfortunately however, the realities on ground in most African continent have revealed that most leaders are weak, corrupt and unpatriotic. Apart of hindering national integration and socio economic development, the attitudes of their leaders have sparked off widespread bloody violence for instance Sudanese, Nigerian, Algerian and Liberian civil wars led credence to the fact that African leaders have failed to forge national unity in their respective countries. According to Aremu (2010) what African countries have lacked during most of their history as independent states are leaders who are unifiers chiefs in the true sense who bind wounds hold everything and everyone together, mobilize and motivate their people chase a policy of inclusion rather than exclusion and are seen by one and all to be of the highest integrity and beyond suspicion. In view of the above therefore is that African leadership must be acceptable to all sections of the communities of the process of integration is not so be halted. Until then a recurrence of

conflicts across African Continent may be continue to be a common phenomenon as the case is today. According to Adedeji (2005) the heterogeneous composition of the most African continent perhaps what the leaders needed most are the virtues of administrative strategies, political tolerance and social justice these essential ingredients are to be provided by the continent leadership but weak leaders.

(b) ***Corruption:*** Corruption is the major phenomenon responsible for most conflicts in African continent and has divesting impact on growth and development of the region. Corruption is manifested in the embezzlement and misappropriation of public funds, it has hindered development efforts and caused debilitating immobilize in March towards socio-economic transformation and political integration in Africa. The economics of African regions have been badly managed over the years this as a result citizens are fed up with their so called leaders. However, this has provoked militant nationalism against African leaders, the result, expectedly is the unending conflicts across the Africa regions. The African union itself acknowledges the devastating impacts of corruption on the political and socio-economic stability of African continent. This perhaps explains the adoption of the African convention of preventing and combating corruption by the 2nd ordinary session of the union on July 11, 2003. The convention is meant to among other things promote and strengthen the development in Africa continent by each state party of mechanism required to prevent; elect, punish and eradicate corruption in public and private sectors.

(c) ***Poverty;*** Africa is one of the poorest continents of the world. This is largely due to hash environment conditions. Corruption and huge foreign debt that exacerbate the condition of poverty, for instance desertification has contributed to famines and hunger in a number of African States such as Ethiopia and Mali. As results the number of people living in extreme poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa grew from 217 million in 1987 to more than 300 million in 1998. The saying is true that hungry man is an angry man, and then conflict may for long be a part of Africa life owing to this situation of absolutes poverty prevalent across the continent.

(d) ***Colonization of Africa continent:*** The colonization of Africa regions by European governments in 19th Century manifested political fectors that divided African continent into ethnic groups in some cases and confined rival groups in others. As currently composed boundaries of most Africa regions were arbitrarily drawn without regards to ethnic and cultural affinities. The impacts of these borders were felt to varying degrees from one country to the other throughout Africa. The European boundaries forced startled different, rival cultures to cohabit within the confines of a single region. For instance, many Yoruba are found in the Benin Republic while Akan speaking peoples were split between Ghana and Cote d' Ivorian, Ewe ethnic group has also been split between Ghana and Togo while in Nigeria many Yoruba are found in Kogi state, some Igbo found in Benue some Igbo' are found in River state and Delta state respectively. It should be noted since 1950s when African regions started to gain independence, these arbitrary borders have more than not become source of conflict. Alabi (2005) observes that colonization of Africa by European powers in the 19ths century created political units that divided groups in some cases and combined rival groups in others. As currently composed, boundaries of most Africa states were arbitrarily drawn without regard to ethnic and cultural affinities and in most cases European boundaries forced starkly different rival cultures to cohabit within the confines of a single state.

(e) ***Multi-ethnicity of African continent:*** The heterogeneous ethnic composition of Africa States and the resultant problem of ethnicity are the causes of most conflicts in the region. Carment (2008) and United Nation (2009) reports that of over 180 states of the world, only a small number are ethnically homogenous. This perhaps suggests that multi-ethnic states are likely to continue to be a feature of international politics and that ethnic conflict is not only a threat to the African continent but also a menace to the whole international community. In view of foregoing, one cannot deny the fact that ethno political conflicts have been on the increase in Africa continent. This perhaps not unconnected with the factor of ethnic diversity of most African continent with resultant problem of ethnicity. Aremu (2010) states that of all the factors, multi-ethnicity is the most frequently associated with conflicts. The fact remain that ethnic cleavages are already deep and political discrimination against minority groups is widely practiced in Africa, ethnicity cannot but be a great potential for separatist activities. For instance, the Igbo ethnic group in Nigeria, led by indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB) headed by Nnamdi Kanu are currently agitating for separation because of marginalization of Igbo speaking ethnic groups by Nigeria government. Ethnicity has bred the feelings of suspicion, hatred and distrust among members of the various ethnic groups in Africa and has no doubt retarded political integration in Africa continent. However, it is not surprising to note that at least (1967-70) civil war, ethnic rivalry has been the major cause of internal conflicts in Nigeria. The story is not different in Liberia, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, Sudan, and Congo and among host of other Africa regions.

Impact of Conflicts on Socio-Economic Development in African Continent

The following are the impact of conflicts on socio-economic development in African continent. Some of the factors are examined below;

a. ***Economic Factor:*** Economic growth depends on resources availability but also on the patterns of resource use, in particular, on the composition and distribution of output. Hence, whatever causes a distortion towards the achievement of the above hinders economic growth and development. According to Nwanegbo (2005) one economic truth that is constant for an age now is /that resource is scare and needs is at the same innumerable for this reasons human has to ration his needs according to his means to exist and develop. Issues pertaining to the allocation of society resources to competing ends are therefore the same reason above central in interface between armed struggle and economic growth and development. Social system to experience an upward shift, the structure of production has to tilt in favour of civilians' consumption. There has to also be greater participation of the citizen in the production of the GNP, and the national income must be more equitably distributed even as its rate of growth is increasing. Hence given that resource are everywhere scare relative to needs all leaders uses of resource are bound to comprised economic development because they divert resource away from citizens application for example education, health and physical infrastructural facilities.

b. ***Unemployment;*** Conflicts in African continent have combined to compound the problem of unemployment. There is high rate of unemployment particularly of youths, is a major source of concern. This has been growing at annual rate of 10%, in countries coming out of conflict, many young people not only lack employment; they have also been denied education and economic development because of conflict/war and without other means of economic support, there is a danger that unemployed former combatants will resort to criminal tendencies especially with the many small arms in their positions.

c. ***Poverty:*** The political stalemate and periodic eruption of violence have resulted in significant cumulative decline in gross domestic product (GDP). This problem has been compounded by the frequent recurrence of drought in some sub-region of Africa. Prospective investors in Africa have been turned away of fear of instability, low profit and loss of investment to looting and arson during wars and conflicts. Thus, the persistent failure to rising investment rates have translated into GDP growth rates which had ranged between 3 and 4 percent for several years as against the seven (7%) annual growth required to reduce poverty across African continent. According to Aremu (2010) an estimated 340 million Africans were living below poverty line as at 2003 and in all, the persistent of low growth rates across African means that most countries will not be able to make significant reductions in the 50% of their population that fall below the poverty line. Social development, another aspect of human existence that is greatly and negatively affected by conflict. The typical social development programme like the family welfare services, education, housing, health, rehabilitation of community development among others receives a big below whenever conflict ensures in any society. That again, gives rise to poverty, diseases, illiteracy, hunger and starvation. It is usually difficult to weigh the cost of this to the society and spill over problems even after the conflicts. But if you look at most post war countries you will see that several years after the war or conflict, the social services do not recover from it. The civil war in Nigeria is an example.

d. ***Reconstruction Problem:*** Problem of reconstruction is the most debilitating impact of conflicts and wars on Africans growth and development, most of the countries coming out of conflict and war face challenges of reconstruction in order to avoid a recurrence to conflict. During conflict times, infrastructural facilities are wontedly destroyed while loyalty, patriotism and mutual relations are broken between friendly peoples and nations such broken relationships must be mended to ensure lasting peace between belligerent groups while the destroyed facilities are replaced. Global coalition (2005) reports that this amounts total waste of material resources and unnecessary description of energy on unproductive ventures. This has been the general trend of events in Africa and has been retarding growth and development among the countries.

e. ***Death (Loss of Life):*** The civil war in Sudan has been one of the longest and costliest on the African continent with estimated to two million lives lost in the war (Global Coalition, 2004). A great number of African young, old male and female, civilians and military men alike have lost their lives to various conflicts and wars on the continent. According to Aremu (2010) in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda about 800,000 Rwandans were reportedly massacred. Similarly, the Burundi civil war claimed over 200,000 lives as at the year 2000. In Liberia, over 250,000 lives were lost in the country's fourteen years civil war between 1990 and 2004. The same may also be said of Sierra Leone in which an estimated 200,000 people were killed during the nation's civil war between 1991 and 2001. (Global Coalition, 2004).

f. ***Refugee Consequences:*** It is sad to note that conflict have caused a severe humanitarian crisis in African continent as many displaced people are now spread throughout the continent. Global Coalition (2004) reports that in Liberia an estimated 700,000 people were internally displaced as at 2003, and the spill-over effects of the Liberian conflicts were felt in neighbouring countries through increased refugees flows. About 3,000 Liberians were hosted by Nigeria at the height of the crisis while an appreciable number of them also became refugee in Guinea. In Sudan, an estimated 4.7 million Sudanese were displaced during the nation's prolonged civil war. As at 2004 the total number of

African refugees was put between 15 and 20 million (UNHCR, 2004). They become refugees in neighbouring countries in the region. As refugee, the affected people have been exposed to serious risks of diseases and hunger; therefore these are attendant effects of wars and conflicts in Africa.

g. ***Environmental Factor:*** The consequences of conflict on environment are as follows: Pollution by war equipment on environment; by gases chemicals and toxic, Radio-activities; Destruction of the forest by the heavy equipment like armoured tanks; Water pollution by chemicals and other pollutants; Scaring away of foreigners and conservation experts; Neglect of environment by government agencies that their engage in war prosecution and Refugee problems to neighbouring countries and cities and its consequent effects on their own environment like over population, destruction of their forest; over cultivation and grazing of their lands, social and cultural breakdown economic cost on the host town and countries.

h. ***Political Consequences:*** Conflict also affects good governance, the failure of government generate conflicts, in fact under conflict situation, it is usually very difficult to organise good election and more difficult to select a good leader, situation of rancour affects election (voting pattern) appointments and government polices among others. The problem of the various conflicts in Nigeria starting from the Nigeria civil war has been deep sealed marginalization of the Igbo's (Conteh, 2008). Otit (2005) maintains that with the venom with which elections are held within the areas that experienced crises, as much as it affects the internal political system, it equally hinders the socio-political order at the regional and sub-regional level as it kicks the thrust and spirit of unity between warring groups..

Solution to the Problems of Conflicts in African Continent

The following solutions and strategies as a way out of the predicament of conflicts that have bedevilled African continent, the solutions are briefly examined below;

(i) ***Develop Consciousness of National unity:*** The heterogeneous nature of almost all African continents, a fundamental objective should be to revive the concept of nation-building initiated and developed by the nationalist leadership at the beginning of the independence period but which was later abandoned in most countries. However, the core of this concept is a long-term strategy to develop a national consciousness through cultural policies, mainly implemented through the educational system. Central to this concept is the acknowledgement of cultural diversity within a framework of national unity. Details of these policies will vary from sub region and country to another. For instance, Tanzanian has been more successful than most African countries in its nation-building strategy and policies. Where there has been no effort to develop consciousness of national unity, serious divisive tendencies have led to conflicts or civil wars to disintegration of the countries. A homogenous culture by itself is not sufficient to keep a country united and prevent serious conflict as the example of Somalia, Burundi and Rwanda clearly show. While in Somalia the state collapsed, in Burundi and Rwanda, they had and still have cultural homogeneity and strong centralised states but with civil wars, Tanzania and Uganda are good contrasting examples of what are the implications of having or not having national unity.

(ii) ***Equal distribution of Resources:*** marginalization of one ethnic group and the other should be avoided or not be allowed in order to win the support and cooperation of

all and Sundry in the region. African leaders (Presidents, Governors, Prime Ministers among others) should endeavour or ensure equal distribution of resources among the various geo-political zones in their countries when the resources are not evenly distributed instead ethnicity is applied hence conflict is bound to occur, therefore allocation of state resource should not be lopped sided to a particular geo-political zone of the country.

(iii) ***Protection of Fundamental Human Rights:*** the fundamental human rights of association, freedom of speech, religion and among others should be guaranteed. The citizen should be allowed to criticise the performance of governance of government without fear of been prosecuted, opposition should be tolerated while the press (media) must not be caged , therefore, African leaders should promote, protect and guarantee the fundamental human rights of their people. Some of the African leaders are autocratic to an extent they do that when criticized, the citizenry will be arrested and prosecuted subsequently dumped in prison. Government should always listen to constructive and sincere criticism of their people and press must not be censured, in this wise government would be always be kept on her toes to provide sincere leadership in their African regions.

(iv) ***Political System*****:** There is a need to develop a political system whose rules allow competitions for power and which guarantee the possibility of alternate groups achieving power within a reasonable period of time. The system should allow large numbers and groups to be involved in the selection or election of decision-makers at different levels of power structure and they should not be handpicked. Several important principles are absolutely critical to such a political system: there should be extensive devolution of power; accumulation of wealth through the use of state institutions must be totally avoided; good and democratic governance must be fully implemented, transparency, accountability, independent judiciary and civilian control of the military and among others.

(v) ***Promotion of Rule of Law:*** when our leaders promote the rule of law in his/her country, there is a guarantee of peaceful coexistence among the citizenry and a peaceful transition of power from one government to the other. Succession dispute related conflicts that are very common in African continent may be eradicated. In view of the above, the formal Nigeria President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan peacefully handed over power to President Mohammed Buhari in 2015 by so doing eliminated the conflicts that would have arise in such transition of power. Recent experience of African countries has brought to the fore ethnicity and perhaps reinforced ethnic identities not only in political arena, but in many areas of the national activities. Therefore African leaders should endeavour to encourage the rule of law; this involves equal access to justice by all citizens irrespective of their status. Some of the African leaders do not respect court decision. A sincere leader should respect court decision and ensuring free and fair elections and among others. In 1993 when the government in power annulled June 12, election in Nigeria. There were crises and conflict throughout the country, so many people lost their lives as result of the annulment by then the military regime of General Ibrahim Babangida government.

(vi) ***Equal Access to Qualitative Education:*** The importance of education to the socio-economic and development of a nation have been well articulated in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Education is the life wire to human and societal development, apart from imparting skills and knowledge in the citizens; it also

eradicates ignorance and illiteracy. With education many citizens will be empowered for employment into the areas of their specializations and competence, it makes labour more accessible across the globe and opportunities for survival are so much available to the educated citizens. Therefore, the Government in African continent should ensure that their citizens are given equal access to quality and qualitative education in their respective regions or states.

(vii) ***Provision of Employment for the Youths:*** the government of African continents should as a matter of urgency strive to provide gainful employment for their citizens especially the youths so as to reduce youth's incessant restlessness in the regions. The governments of African regions should encourage farming through mechanized agriculture, modern farm equipment, tools and technology should be provided for farmers at very low rates, by so doing will eradicate hunger, hence, equally enhances the economic empowerment of youths and as well eradicate idleness which is said to be the devil's workshop. The government should also establish industries and factories that will absorb the teeming graduates of higher institutions of learning; this will reduce youth's incessant restlessness in the African Continent. Therefore, governments in African states should provide gainful employment for all of their citizens especially the youths.

(viii) ***Poverty Eradication:*** Poverty can demean a man and affect his psychology negatively, without much argument; one may boldly declare that poverty is the root of all evil in Africa. A poor man who has been economically humiliated financially, traumatized may not be said to be in his right senses. Hence, Igbo adage says that "a hungry man is a mad man." He can sell, kill, destroy or commit atrocities and among others. The major policy instrument for peace and stability in African continent that is riddle with conflicts and wars is the eradication or at worst a reduction of the monster of poverty. This can be achieved in a number of ways as suggests in this study.

(ix) ***Remuneration of Workers:*** Government workers should be adequately remunerated while promotion should be based on competence and performance. Workers salaries and allowances should be promptly paid and promoted when due as this will go a long way at reducing hardship of civil servant and their families. The African leaders are found of misappropriation and embezzlement of public funds and have always starved their government much needed fund for payment of staff salaries and allowances. Therefore the leaders of African continent should humanly possible manage the scarce resources judiciously as to ensure that workers salaries and allowance are promptly paid as when due.

Conclusion

It is sad note that conflicts have caused a severe humanitarian crisis in African continent and this has hindered political and socio-economic growth and development in the regions. The unending political conflicts and wars in the continent have had lasting negative impacts on the socio-economic development of African States, because socio-economic developments cannot be sustained in an environment riddled with conflicts, violence, instability and insecurity. Therefore, as a way out of the problem of conflict and wars that have bedevilled African continent, some valuable solutions were suggested based on through analysis of the causes of the conflicts were drawn, that will bail African continent out of recurrent conflicts and wars in the regions.

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