
An Examination of the Factors Impeding Peaceful Coexistence in Kaduna State

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Abstract

This article examines the multifaceted factors contributing to the persistent challenges in achieving peaceful coexistence in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Drawing from a comprehensive analysis of existing literature and empirical data, it identifies ethnic, economic, and governmental failures as primary impediments. The study highlights how these factors intertwine to fuel conflicts, perpetuate poverty, and undermine political stability. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing effective strategies to foster lasting peace and unity in the region.

Introduction

Kaduna State has been a major hotspot for various types of communal conflicts, ethnic agitations, ethno-religious violence, kidnapping, gang-related violence, armed banditry, and farmer-herder conflicts, according to WANEP (2018). These conflicts have resulted in a severe humanitarian crisis, weakened social capital, and the breakdown of democratic norms and values. As noted by Adamu et al. (2017), Kaduna State has been plagued by conflict in one form or another since the early 1970s, with the southern region of the state serving as a flashpoint for these conflicts. The outcome of each conflict in the State is usually massive killings especially in the years 1987, 1992, 2000, 2011 (Adamu et al. 2017) and more recently in this year (2024). Despite various peace initiatives, the region continues to grapple with deep-rooted issues that hinder harmonious living among its diverse ethnic and religious communities. This paper delves into the core factors that impede peaceful coexistence in Kaduna State, providing a detailed analysis of their nature and impact. By dissecting these underlying causes, this study aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the conflict landscape and inform targeted interventions for sustainable peace.

Concept of Peace and Peaceful Coexistence

In the same vein, Dzurgba, (2007) defines Peace as freedom from quarrel, strife, conflict, rioting, disorder, hostility violence or war. He adds that “it is freedom from fear, anxiety, uncertainty disturbance or tension” and that “it is an atmosphere of calmness, security and safety”. Etymologically, peace which translates to “*pax*”, a Latin word meaning “freedom from civil disorder.” and the English word came into use in various personal greetings from c.1300 as a translation of the Hebrew Shalom (Zodhiates et al, 2008). The translation is however, imprecise because the verb means a lot to the Jews. Primarily it means “to be safe or un-injured in mind or body (Job.8:6; 9:4).” Shalom can better be described thus:

This word is normally used when God is keeping His people safe... it also means to be finished or to be completed Other meaning of this word could mean to be in peace with one another (Ps. 7:4-5), to make a treaty of peace (Joshua 11:19; Job 5:23).

In the same vein, the Wycliffe Dictionary of Theology (cited in Dogo, 2017:35) defines the Old Testament idea of '*Shalom*' as identical with the New Testament idea of '*Eirene*' (peace). Both mean completeness, soundness and wholeness. *Shalom/Eirene* both mean peace, health, wellbeing, and prosperity, not just the absence of violence.

Having established the foundation by defining peace, it is safe to assert that peaceful coexistence entails harmonious living between and among two or more parties, groups, and individuals especially in a society. This is a situation where peace prevails among coexisting groups or individuals within a setting or society having a common ground, free from chaos, mutual suspicion, and hatred.

Factors that Impede Peaceful Coexistence in Kaduna State

There are several factors that cause conflicts and impede peaceful coexistence in Kaduna State. Some of these factors are highlighted below:

Ethnic Factors: Ethnicity is derived from ethnic which is an adjective qualifying a group of people of the same race or nationality, sharing common and distinctive cultural affiliation. Ethnicity has unduly eaten deep into the fabrics of our Nigerian society such that it is negatively affecting the mutual co-existence among citizens of the same nation. Ethnic conflicts can have an important religious dimension. According to Salawu (2010), an ethnic conflict means, "A situation in which the relationship between members of one ethnic group and another of such group in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society is in lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion and fear, and a tendency towards violent confrontation" Religion is potentially a very important element of ethnicity. Garba and Anyawu (2012), state that, "some ethnic groups have their primary origin in religion. And the identification of an ethnic group is determined by common perceptions among its members". Therefore, conflict among these groups has an ethnic quality. According to Toure (2003), some of the reasons for conflict were to mainly to vent out their anger over certain injustice against the other group in order to claim rights over certain privileges in some ethnic groups, their clashes with most of their neighbour Hausa/Fulani were armed at reclaiming their farmlands and some "privileges" that were unjustifiably denied for example the clashes between the Kurama, Kataf and Hausa/Fulani their neighbours in Southern Kaduna States reveals that farmland is one of the serious factors in escalating a conflicts.

Economic Factor: Conflict is the most recognisable form of disrespect, a very public indicator that respect and understanding have broken down. Economic conflict is particularly explosive where such issues combine with a sense of injustice and perceived marginalisation in the distribution of resources such as land, economic power, employment prospects and many others. According to Paul (1971), it concerns the distribution of economic resources within a society, where perceived imbalance in distribution fuels deep rooted conflicts. Otite and Albert (2002), describe it in conceptual terms that conflicts arises from the pursuit of divergent interest, goals and aspirations by individuals and, or groups in a defined social and physical environment. In traditional terms, conflict is a struggle over values and claims to share status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralise or eliminate their rivals. In this sense, conflict may be conceptualised as a way of settling problems originating from opposing interests and from the continuity of society. The conflicts also have a basis in the structural injustice and socio-economic poverty prevalent in Northern Nigeria especially in Kaduna State. Both the Muslim and Christian élites are seen to engineer the conflicts by taking advantages of the economic deprivation of the ~~their~~ people. When people are asked what they are

fighting about, they inevitably turn to questions of one group having been given a chieftaincy title or some other privilege while their own group was not. Such positions imply access to government resources.

Government Failure: Kunhiyop (2008:109) opine that increased and ever-growing flow of ethnic conflict is “a response against the exploitive nature of government, a self-value and cultural identity and the endless changes and confusion of modern society and alienation which threatens the very roots of community”. Similarly, Akuya and Yakubu (2014:6-7) observed that the major cause of agitations between group’s particularly tribal and religious clusters in the nation is the obvious breakdown in governance. The successive administrations in the country have failed to ensure good and responsibility leadership in the country. As a result of this, Nigerians are disenchanted with the poor state of the country, and the declining standards of living of Nigerians. Therefore, to ensure good governance and responsible leadership in Nigeria, governments need to make policies aim at raising the condition of the people to a better standard of life that ensure justice, and human right.

Moreover, violence has been on the increase because there is an inadequate provision of public security by government apparatuses, such as the Police, State Security Service, Civil Defence and even the Army. State security apparatuses lack the professional capacity and moral rectitude to deal with issues of crimes, violence and other acts of indiscipline that undermine law and order.

Political Factors: According to Joseph (2004), many people believe that the conflicts are more political than religious. Essentially, be it for the benefit of Christian politicians or of Muslim politicians, there is political manipulation of religion since it is the best card politicians can use to get the support of the masses. Christians see the conflicts as strategies by traditional Hausa-Fulani. Muslims in their turn see Christians as the aggressors and claim that the politicization of C.A.N ushered in violence in Kaduna State. They claim that the C.A.N leaders aim to prevent Muslims domination by inciting Christians to violence.

Defeat in election is another big source of political conflict. Kaduna State politicians do not accept defeat in election. Victory is acceptable, but defeat is unacceptable. This means that political actors do not accept the reality of political competition which is naturally stiff. Therefore, whenever a candidate is defeated in an election, he rejects the results and resorts to confrontation which creates political crisis in his own constituency. According to Dzurgba (2002), Court judgment regarding election petitions or constitutional disputes may lead to political conflicts, especially when the court decision favours a candidate who has clearly been defeated in an election. A court verdict regarding a constitutional dispute may lead to a series of lawsuits. This may create a legal controversy. In the absence of justice, the aggrieved party may resort to violence and bloodshed by recruiting thugs, hoodlums, arsonists or assassins. Thus, political conflicts lead to large-scale destruction of lives and property.

Religious Differences: Religion has contributed greatly to the series of crises in Nigeria and in Kaduna State in particular. Daudu (2006), observers that; “Kaduna seems to be the only State in Nigeria that is sharply divided along religious lines. Kaduna politics has always been influenced by religion, ethnicity, and sectional affiliations. Since the attainment of independence, Northern Nigeria especially Kaduna State has always played the politics of religion and divide and rule system. Okafor (1997), opines that conflict can arise along the lines of religious affiliations, especially when people try to claim rights and privileges on the basis of their religious affiliations.

Religious intolerance is a blind and fixed mental and psychological negative attitude towards religious belief and practices that are contrary to one's cherished beliefs and practices. Such negative attitudes constantly manifest themselves in violent outbursts that spill over to the political and economic lives of the citizens. The inability to recognise and accommodate the views and opinions of others is therefore, one of the major sources of religious violence in Kaduna State. Kaduna religious adherents, especially the Muslims and the Christians, have demonstrated intolerant attitudes that result to violence Kukah (1989). It is well known that all religions involve specific intellectual beliefs. Each has a number of literatures held especially sacred which contain historical materials with which the validity of the doctrines are connected as well as their modes of propagation.

Implications of Lack of Peaceful Coexistence in Kaduna State

It is quite evident that lack of peaceful coexistence may result to several consequences, observable among these consequences includes the following discussed below.

Underdevelopment: Conflict in Kaduna has led to underdevelopment, retardation in educational development, so also infrastructural development, low investment profile, poor health care services, and poor social services. Every developed society or country wants to preserve what it has acquired or built over the years. Kaduna city as an example has gone through many religious crises which have caused the destruction of many buildings. Tudu Wada and Rigassa are inclusive communities of Kaduna, and many of the Christian magnificent buildings were destroyed because of religious violence. Many home owners in these areas are Muslims who got their means of livelihood through rent from Christian tenants. The Christians chose to live in these areas because they offered them opportunities for lucrative businesses. As a result of the persistent crises, all the Christian tenants in these areas had been forced to leave. Rigassa had a more pitiable situation because almost 40% of its resident population was Christian. After the crises, the tenants went to different areas of the city, especially to the southern part of the city where Christians are the majority. No good development could ever come to a place where there is no certainty of life and protection of properties.

According to Aku and Audu (2006), another feature of underdevelopment resulting from conflict is lack of social amenities. For instance, the Southern Kaduna area is highly underdeveloped. It lacks basic infrastructure and social amenities like good hospitals, schools and electricity among others. During violent conflicts, the few of the available infrastructure were destroyed.

Absence of sustainable Peace: According to Hanks (2000), peace is lawfulness, order, harmony, amicableness, goodwill, friendship, cordiality, non-aggression, non-violence, cease fire, respite and lull, suspension of hostilities alliance, appeasement and reconciliation. Similarly, Watkins sees peace as a condition or period in which there is no war, a state of freedom from disorder within a country with the citizens living according to the law of the land. It is a state of calmness; quietness and freedom from anxiety. Onwubiko (2002), opine that peace begins in the peoples' heart.

According to Kaigama (2006), there are two types of peace, positive and negative peace, positive peace is what we yearn for and should work for. It springs from the presence of justice throughout society with opportunities for all and, a fair distribution of power and resources, protection from harm and impartial enforcement of the law. Positive peace means the elimination of the root causes of war, violence and injustice and conscious effort to build a society that reflects these commitments.

Negative peace on the other hand is that peace that springs from an absence of direct or systematic violence. This does not mean that weapons are not easily available or social conditions of life have improved to the extent that hunger and disease have been drastically reduced. Negative peace has been identified as the sort of peace enjoyed in Kaduna State today. (Lack of peace leads to unhealthy relationship; some people vent their frustrations on others. They become unforgiving and fault finding, nothing any one does pleases them. They become bossy, unbearable and unpleasant to be with. When you don't have peace, you cannot deal wisely with any challenge that comes up in your relationship with people. A person needs to be at peace with himself before he/she can make peace with another person. Cain in Genesis 4; 8 lost the peace of God when his own sacrifice was rejected and Abel's own was accepted. He became stressed emotionally and instead of dealing with his attitude towards sacrifices with God, he chose to vent his anger on his brother to the point of killing him.

Loss of Lives and Property: Conflict has become a fear-inducing phenomenon among the people of Kaduna State. Often this violence has led to the brutal killing of innocent members of the public who have neither challenged nor obstructed the teaching of the religion of their persecutors, nor provoked the rioters in any way. According to Bitiyong (2000), violence has great negative impact on human beings. Conflict in Kaduna State has had devastating effects on inter-group relationships. Apart from the loss of lives and property, it has profound influence on residential relationships, leading to new trends in the polarization of communities. Individuals are denied the freedom of movement, hunger, starvation, hardship, family being divided, parents and children relationship suffer. Also, social activities which would bring about societal growth are all turned down.

Political Instability: Political instability is one of the effects of conflict, which has greatly affected the unity and peaceful co-existence of the people of Kaduna State. Bauna (2003), opines that political instability stems from the recurrent incidents of perceived social injustice and discrimination among citizens and the inability of the government to address the challenges of the masses. This can lead to wanton destruction of lives and properties and loss of substantial revenue by the government. Harrison (2000), explained that instability is a common phenomenon that continues to dominate the political terrain in Kaduna State. The process of gaining entrance into the corridors of political power is replete with violence and conflicts resulting from rivalry and suspicions among the various ethnic groups in Kaduna State. Kaduna State is still affected by injustice and oppressive system. The resultant effect of which is the weak instruments of the State and incessant struggle for political power. This in many instances is at the detriment of the masses and the development of the country at large. This is despite the abundant human and natural resources prevalent in the State. Politics in Kaduna State has always resulted to conflict which has made it difficult for the government to carry out its official duties.

Poor Social Services: The term social services or social welfare refers to the variety of programmes made available by public or private agencies to individuals and families who need special assistance. According to Ferhat, (2003), social service, also called welfare service or social work, means any of numerous publicly or privately provided services intended to aid disadvantaged, distressed or vulnerable persons or groups. The term social service also denotes the profession as engaged in rendering such services.

Dercon (2009), opines that both People and businesses are separated by vast distance in rural areas. People often have to travel for more than an hour to get to the nearest hospital, a grocery store, or School. Specialists therefore are often impossible to find in rural communities because there is limited demand for their services in less populated areas. When Specialists are available, they often have to charge more due to the increase cost of travelling and more time-

consuming Jobs. Since one of the most important responsibilities of social work is to refer struggling individuals to specialists who can help with a unique problem, the limited availability of specialists can make a social workers ability to make a difference.

Otsuka (2009), posits that shortage of human resources compel social workers in conflict zones to add more cases into their busy schedules. Individuals suffering domestic abuse outside cities, therefore, often receive a lower quality of care because social workers have less time to dedicate to an individual case. While social workers try their best to make optimal use of their limited resources, the reality is that staff shortages leave more individuals without the help they need. Other implications of lack of peaceful coexistence can lead to the erosion of national security due to destruction of lives and property of the citizens (Sani et al. 2015). Also, for instance, in situations where there is protracted conflict, access to land for agricultural production is reduced thereby leading to shortage in production and availability of food (Alawode, 2013; WFP, 2016; FAO, 2017).

Also, where the conflict escalates to the level of armed confrontation or open warfare, women become widowed and children become orphaned, and many others displaced (Alawode, 2013). As observed by Ohiorhenuan (2011) and Isah et al. (2018), conflict almost always affects the rate of growth of a country's economy as a result of the negative impacts on physical and human capital as well as disrupted markets and reduced trust.

Conclusion

The persistent conflicts in Kaduna State are a complex interplay of ethnic, economic, and governance-related factors. These issues, ranging from historical grievances and competition over resources to political manipulation and government failures, collectively undermine efforts towards peaceful coexistence. The study clearly indicates the significant impact of these factors on the state's stability and development. Addressing these multifaceted challenges requires a holistic approach that tackles the root causes of conflict, promotes equitable resource distribution, strengthens governance, and fosters inter-communal trust and understanding.

Recommendations

Based on the identified factors impeding peaceful coexistence in Kaduna State, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. **Promote Inter-Ethnic and Inter-Religious Dialogue:** The religious and political leaders should establish and support platforms for sustained dialogue and interaction between different ethnic and religious groups to foster mutual understanding, trust, and respect. This can help to dismantle stereotypes and reduce the impact of misinformation and hate speech.
- ii. **Address Economic Disparities and Resource Competition:** Government should implement policies that ensure equitable distribution of resources, particularly land, and create economic opportunities for all communities. This includes fair land reform policies, support for diverse livelihoods, and conflict resolution mechanisms for resource-related disputes.
- iii. **Strengthen Governance and Rule of Law:** Those in government should strive to improve governance by ensuring accountability, transparency, and responsiveness from government institutions. This involves strengthening the justice system, ensuring impartial law enforcement, and addressing corruption that fuels grievances and instability.

- iv. **Invest in Education and Peacebuilding Initiatives:** Government, educators and other relevant stake holders should integrate peace education into school curricula and community programs to promote values of tolerance, empathy, and conflict resolution from an early age. Support local peacebuilding initiatives and empower community leaders to mediate disputes and promote reconciliation.
- v. **Counter Misinformation and Hate Speech:** Government and other relevant stake holders should develop strategies to combat the spread of misinformation and hate speech through public awareness campaigns, media literacy programs, and responsible reporting. Encourage critical thinking and provide accurate information to counter divisive narratives.

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