Impact of Conflict Management on Sustainable Development

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Abstract

The research focuses on history, conflict management and sustainable development. Conflict is inevitable as far as the human race is concern. However, laying emphasis on just the conflicts without devising strategies and mechanisms for managing and resolving them would be a fruitless intellectual venture. It is also worthy of note that since conflicts are not scientific by nature of its cause, patterns of escalation or de-escalation, the strategies and mechanisms for managing them may vary according to different perceptions and worldview of the conflicting parties involved and even the third party as it may be in some case that involve dialogue which will lead to sustainable development. Different people use different strategies for resolving and managing different types of conflict. Most of the time, we appear not to be aware or sure of our actions or in-actions during conflict, hence we just do whatever comes naturally in our minds. But now we do have different strategies that have been suggested by intellectuals and approved by the international bodies and because they can be learned, we can always change it by learning new and more effective ways or employing to different effective ways of resolving conflicts .The researchers used quantitative methods which is basically secondary data. Relative deprivation theory was used. The researchers recommended the use of mediation, negotiation and dialogue in resolving conflict as that will lead to sustainable development.

Keywords: Conflict, Development, Sustainable Development, Peace Building

Introduction

Conflict has been studied over centuries by many scholars. But a more systematic study has been possible only since the twentieth century. This period marked the beginning of the appreciation of the fact that conflicts are part of man's existence; that is, conflict is inevitable as far as the human race is concern. However, laying emphasis on just the conflicts without devising strategies and mechanisms for managing and resolving them would be a fruitless intellectual venture. It is also worthy of note that since conflicts are not scientific by nature of its cause, patterns of escalation or de-escalation, the strategies and mechanisms for managing them may vary according to different perceptions and worldview of the conflicting parties involved and even the third party as it may be, in some case that involve dialogue. Different people use different strategies for resolving and managing different types of conflict. Most of the time we appear not to be aware or

sure of our actions or inactions during conflict; hence we just do whatever comes naturally in our minds.

Despite the stunning pace of technological progress and economic growth in some countries, we continue to live with growing inequalities and unacceptable levels of poverty. In many countries, inadequate social protection systems, persistent violence, institutional instability and environmental degradation create complex poverty traps. The Economic and Political Development (EPD) Concentration attracts diverse people from around the world who are committed to fighting inequality between and within countries, eradicating poverty and its causes and promoting inclusive growth and human development by expanding people's civil and political as well as economic and social rights and freedoms. To take on these global challenges, our curriculum equips researcher with a variety of skills in policy analysis, programme planning, monitoring and evaluation and advocacy. Thus, the researchers seek to examine history, conflict management and sustainable peace and development in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

Relative Deprivation Theory
Relative deprivation is the foundation of multiple theories like the frustration and aggression theory. In other words, when desires become legitimate expectations and those desires are blocked by society, people feel frustrated and aggressive because they feel deprived of something. There is bound to be conflict. This theory provides explanation to the causes of violent conflict in Nigeria; this is because when people or a group of people feel relatively deprived, their desires are being blocked and this may emerge from collective feelings of being denied something, this can lead to frustration and aggression which can lead to violent conflict. Furthermore, a relationship has been drawn between relative deprivation and violence. In this sense, the objective material condition is believed not to nurture violence, but rather the sense of deprivation in relation to others around them or their own past condition is believed to be responsible for violence with the intent to redress the situation (Dowse & Hughes, 1982). The greed and grievance analytical framework ascribes violent conflicts to grievances arising from limited economic opportunities, poverty and inequalities. There are two strands of contentions in this analytical framework. The first perceive violent conflicts as under-girded by irrationality originating essentially from hatred. In the second perspective, violent conflict is hinged on a number of grievances such as systematic discrimination and grows human rights violation, inequality in economic and political power or dearth or resources, especially in multi-ethnic state.

In this regard, violence is perceived as instrumental like any means for seeking redress. Violent conflict has also been explained from the industrial perspective. It is believed that the dominant factor that propels violence is economic benefits and commercial interest, rather than grievance. This presupposes that the preoccupation of the belligerents and insurgents is the economic spoils and booty that they appropriate from the protracted violence. Another theoretical explanation for the etiology of violent conflicts is systemic pathologies arising from the dialectical changes in the structures and

processes of society. According to Potholm (1979), cited in Deeka (2003), when a system does not deliver what its leaders had promised and the political elites continue to ask the masses to make sacrifices that the elites themselves are unwilling to make, much of the aura of legitimacy gained during the decolonisation period will be dissipated.

Concepts of Conflict
According to Francis (2006), conflict is an intrinsic and inevitable part of human existence. Conflict usually occurs as a result of perceived divergence among individuals or groups. It is of interest to note that conflicts are not only inevitable, but inherent in all interdependent relationships. They usually reflect the diversity and complexities of human societies and are not necessarily dysfunctional experiences. It is interestingly viewed by Louis Coser (1999) as the defining feature of the modern world.

Conflict is described as a process where a party within a system (an organisation or society) perceives that another party has negatively affected an issues that is important to it, such as its goals(s), expectation, results and method of operation (Robbins & Judge, 2009). A conflict, therefore, involves a person or a group creating, exercising or exerting influence and control over other in a way that re-orders or disrupts the existing arrangement, underlying all conflict situations is a struggle for supremacy or dominance in a way that assures narrow or personal economic and /or political benefit to the party exercising the control. Conflict according to Miat *et al* (2005) can be defined as the pursuit of incompatible goals by different groups. This definition essentially applies to any conflict, whether executed by the use of force or by peace means. Conflict is a process of social interaction and social situation, where interests and activities of participants (individual or groups) actually or apparently, confront, block and disable the realisation of one party's objective (Panic, 2008).

Conflict Management
Conflict management is the process of reducing the negative and destructive capacity of conflict through a number of measures and by working with and through the parties involved in that conflict. This term is sometimes used synonymously with "conflict regulation." It covers the entire area of handling conflict positively at different stages, including those efforts made to prevent conflicts by being proactive. It encompasses conflict limitation, containment and litigation. Conflict management includes dialogue, mediation, negotiation, avoidance, accommodation and compromise. This may include "conflict prevention" (Burton, 1990). The term "conflict management" is perhaps an admission of the reality that conflict is inevitable, but that not all conflict can always be resolved; therefore, what practitioners can do is to manage and regulate them (Petkovic, 2008).

Concept of Development
Development may be identified as a process in which a system or institution is transformed into stronger, more organised, more efficient and more effective form and proves to be more satisfying in terms of human wants and aspirations. It may be

distinguished from progress concerned with moral judgement for which it applies normative criteria (Bennett & George, 2015).

The condition of society in terms of its distance for the goal may be described as the level of its development. Thus, Nittelman (1988) has tried to define development as the increasing capacity to make rational use of natural and human resources for social ends; whereas underdevelopment denotes the knowledge which forestalls a national transformation of the social structure. Other important definitions of development also tend to convey this idea to more or less elaborate form. Thus, Bara (1957) describes development as a far reaching transformation of society's social and political structure of the dominant organisation of production, distribution and consumption which is Nigeria's history, experience and reality. According to Seers (1969):

> The questions to ask about a country's development are: what has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all three of these have declined from high levels, then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the country concerns. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worst especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result development even if per capita income doubled.

From the above excerpt, development, therefore, means the welfare, equality and sustainability of the people at large. Thus, the meaning of development is one that makes people the target or end of development. Development is thus the process by which people create and recreate themselves and their life circumstances to realise higher levels of civilisation in accordance with their own choices and values (Ake, 2001). From this context, development can be seen as multidimensional process involving major societal changes in terms of social structures, popular attitudes and national institutions, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and eradication of extreme poverty which is Nigeria history, experience and reality.

Conversely, Rodney (1972) sees development from the point of view of the individual in terms of skill acquisition and development, increased capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being. At the societal level, development entails the ability of man to take his destiny in his own hands. Therefore, development means an overall social process which is dependent upon the outcome of man's effort to subdue his physical or natural environment. Conversely, development at whatever level of analysis precludes unequal relations and contact between the forces of capital and peripheral nation-states.

Development has the following indices: low mortality rate, high level of literacy, low level of corruption, GDP, increase per capital income, human rights, security ,transparency and good governance (Henriot, 1979).

Concept of Peace Building

According to Agbalajobi (2019), peace building –is a development of constructive personal group and political relationships across ethnic, religious, class, national and racial boundaries. It aims at resolving injustice in non-violent ways and to transform the

structural conditions that generate deadly conflict. According to Hagen (2016), the involvement of women in peace building process is one that is not recognised nor applauded. The term 'peace building' remains elusive (Krause *et al* 2018; GFFO, 2021). According to Ibeanu (2012), peace is a process involving activities that are directly or indirectly linked to increasing development and reducing conflict; thus, peace relates to existing social conditions, rather than an ideal state or condition. It is a dynamic process and it is possible to precisely identify and study the factors that drive it. It is not a finished condition, but always a 'work-in-progress.' It is never finished because human societies continue to aspire to higher levels of development and less conflict. Peace increases or decreases, depending on objective socio-economic and political conditions. It can move from higher levels of peace to lower levels.

Galtung (1990) distinguishes between 'positive' and 'negative' aspects of peace. Positive peace means the absence of unjust structures, unequal relationships, justice and inner peace; while negative peace is the absence of direct violence, war and fear at all levels. According to (Ben, 2012), peace-building involves comprehensive processes, using various approaches to transform conflict towards more sustainable and peaceful relationships. The term thus involves a wide range of activities that both precede and follow formal peace accords. Peace building is a term describing outside interventions that are designed to prevent the start or resumption of violent conflict within a nation by creating a sustainable peace. Peace building activities address the root causes or potential causes of violence, create a societal expectation for peaceful conflict resolution and stabilise society politically and socio-economically (Bem, 1981). According to the British Army (1997, p. 2), peace building usually involves ''actions which support political, economic, social and military measures and structures aiming to strengthen and solidify political settlement in order to redress the causes of conflict. These mechanisms to identify and support structures that tend to consolidate peace, advance a sense of confidence and well-being and support economic reconstruction.''

Similarly, Rechler (1997) sees pre-conflict peace building as preventive measures that aim to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor; to promote and implement human rights and the rights of the minorities and to promote durable development and the realisation of a just and fair social order in which there is no discrimination based on race or sex (Monsuru, Adegboyega, Kasali, 2016; Karame, 2014: cited by Okoro, 2013). Therefore, the process of peace building encompasses all the stages of conflict, from the pre-conflict to the post conflict phase, with the aim of laying the basis for sustainable peace in conflict tom society. Mazurana & Mckay, cited by Akpan *et al* (20014) conducted a gender analysis of the meaning of peace building at the UN, NGO and grassroots levels. According to Rita (2015), peace building activities include measures to address conflict in progress and usually involves diplomatic action to bring hostile parties to negotiated agreement (Hennie, 2000).

Nexus between Development, Conflict Management and Sustainable Development
The concept of "development" cuts across many levels. It refers to macro issues (such as patterns of a nation's growth), as much as it refers to meso problems (such as river-basin plans) or to micro problems (such as local community development). All three levels-

macro, meso and micro, are interwoven. And at all levels, many different dimensions-economic, cultural, religious and gender affect and are affected by development. Development should be understood as a process, not a product. Societies are always changing. Some improve, while others fail. Development theory aims at explaining both processes. Development practice intends to provide tools that can be applied to entire societies or specific communities. Such interventions are intended to move communities or societies from a situation in which they are believed to be worse off to a situation in which they are assumed to be better off (Wallerstein, 1979).   Current links between development and conflict theory stress the provision of aid in cases of violent conflict. Peace building interventions after violent conflicts address the same concerns as development interventions. Clearly, development is at the core of post-conflict interventions, where the physical and social landscape has been damaged. In such cases, development assistance is provided.

Yet development aid goes beyond development assistance. Aid refers to general support for the improvement of Third World societies, which may or may not be, in violent conflict. Perhaps because development aid does not deal directly with violence, conflict and conflict resolution have not been topics of major concern to development theorists or workers. This, however, has started to change (Bell & 'Rourke, 2010).

The Millennium Development Goals illustrate how development is an interdisciplinary field, which implements programmes in various areas and deals with innumerable variables; such as economic, social, political, gender, cultural, religious and environmental issues. The field is further complicated because these variables are highly intertwined. The interconnection of development factors often causes further conflict escalation. For example, administrative chaos in under-financed governmental bodies often causes the transference of responsibilities from the central state to NGOs, local governments and the private sector. The result is that such organisations assume duties that may go well beyond their capacities, which causes further conflict; for example, NGOs, local governments and the private sector lack training in facilitation, mediation and negotiation, as well as the theoretical knowledge of conflict resolution. So conflicts escalate, with no one knowing what to do about it (Todaro, 1989).

There are few institutions in most developing societies that understand or engage in the practice of conflict resolution. But even when they do, they tend to work with inadequate win-win frameworks. In some cases, for example, negotiation through typical win-win processes is blocked because the powerful within poor communities are criminals. In Nigeria, criminal elements are able to exert full control over large territories, mostly within metropolitan areas, from where they traffic in narcotics and weapons. This is one of many reasons traditional interest-based, win-win negotiation does not work in many cases in developing countries. Social values are also often undermined by the official educational system, since information disseminated by books in public schools is embedded with prejudice and stereotypes that, for example, overvalue men in detriment of women.

Development aid tries to change such problems. These factors, among others, are the target of the Millennium Development Goals. However, in many instances, development interventions underestimate local politics, social realities and belief systems. These are strong factors affecting the opportunities for conflict resolution, which nevertheless have remained overlooked by those working in the field of development theory and practice. It is remarkable that conflict resolution theory and instruments are

also not taken into account either by indigenous organisations or by international development agencies. This is clearly evidenced by the Human Development Report 2003, published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The report reflects a deep concern with armed, violent and military conflicts such as interstate or civil wars. However, it does not consider other more subtle forms of conflict or the notion that conflict processes can preclude the achievement of development goals. An understanding of the nature and effects of international development illustrates the reason for this.

Relative deprivation refers to the feeling or experience of being deprived of something to which one believes to be entitled. It is when people are discontented when they compare their positions to others. This is based on the evaluation of what people think they should have compared with what others have- like opportunities, status or wealth. Relative deprivation theory by Ted Gurr stresses that sometimes people perceive themselves to be deprived relative to others and such perception leads to inter-group hostility, especially when conditions improve more slowly for one group compared to others (Lengmang, 2016). According to Gurr (1970), relative deprivation is defined as actor's perception of discrepancy between their value expectations and their value capabilities. It is the gap between that to which people believe they are rightfully entitled and to which they think they are capable of getting and keeping. Gurrr (1970) says "the idea of relative deprivation has been used to measure fairness, inequality or social justice or to explain grievance, social hostility or aggression.''

Conclusion

In order to successfully resolve conflict through negotiation, mediation and peace building, sufficient time must be given for proper analysis of the conflict. Thus, there is need to deal with the issue of good governance that will engender peace and sustainable development. More so, there is need for honest and sincerity on the part of the government in ensuring accountability and service delivery for the citizens. The mediator and negotiator should properly understand the dynamic of the conflict considering the interest, position, needs and fear of the parties in order to achieve peace and sustainable development.

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