Peace-building as a panacea for Ethnic Agitations and Militancy in Nigeria

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Abstract

Nigeria has been battling with many security problems ranging from ethnic agitations, militancy, Armed Robbery and Kidnapping as well as terrorism and insurgency. These security problems have been threatening the corporate existence of the country. Ethno-nationalism has taken over national integration; threatened national security, configuration and peace of the country as well as the foundation of oneness of the country as laid by the founding fathers and heroes past. The application of "coercive measures and stick" by the government to stem the tide has not yielded any meaningful result. Therefore this paper examines peace building as a panacea for ethnic agitations and militancy in Nigeria. The paper is a qualitative research that relies on documentary data to explore different literature on peace building as a strategy for resolving conflicts, while content analysis was used to systematically analyze the unstructured materials that contain relevant data for the paper. The paper found that ethno nationalism has led to agitations for self-determination and secession, resource control, religious caliphacy, political inclusion, political hegemony and equity in land resource usage. The paper concludes that it is only through peace building that Nigeria can wriggle itself out of ethnic agitations and militancy, enthrone national consciousness instead of ethno nationalism. We recommend that Nigerian governments from Local Government Council to the Federal government should always adopt peace building measures in handling ethnic agitations and militancy as well as other armed conflict in the country and not to resort to use of force only.

Keywords: Ethnic militancy and agitation, ethno-nationalism, peacebuilding, good governance, national security

Introduction

For decades now, Nigeria has been battling with a lot of security issues ranging from ethnic agitations and militancy as well as terrorism and insurgency. These security problems especially ethnic agitations and militancy have continued to threaten the corporate existence of the country. Ethnic nationalism has taken over national integration in the country, sparked ethnic militancy and agitations from various ethnic groups with the attendant consequences of threatening the corporate existence, configuration and peace of the country. Ethnic nationalism had brought another

dimension to the precarious security situation in the country with divergent objectives such as self-determination and secession, resource control, religious caliphacy, political inclusion, political hegemony as well as conflict over free access to grazing resources. The objectives of this paper are to examine factors triggering ethnic agitation and militancy in Nigeria, consequences of ethnic militancy and agitation to Nigeria National Security, effect of ethnic militancy and agitation on governance in Nigeria and to recommend on how peace building can reduce ethnic agitation and militancy in the country.

Odum (2018) states that agitation stands for public protests geared towards influencing changes in a law or in social conditions. Otite (2012) affirms that Nigeria's successful transition to civil rule in May 1999 unleashed a host of hitherto repressed dormant political forces such as ethnic militias and that unfortunately, it has become increasingly difficult to differentiate between genuine demands by these forces on the state and outright criminality and mayhem. Sandbrook (2000) cited in Otite (2012) posited that the Nigerian state has in recent times been at the receiving end of a dramatic upsurge of ethnic militias, and that it has generally been observed that this has also been the case in a significant number of African and Asian countries seeking to transit from the stage of electoral politics to the consolidation of democracy. Examples abound from Cote D'lvoire, Niger, Indonesia and Malaysia. The weight of evidence suggests that democratic openings have often aggravated ethnic and communal tensions in divided societies (Sandbrook, 2000 cited in Otite, 2012).

Paul *et al.*, (2017) observe that Nigeria as a nation has from its origin sowed the seed of marginalization and ethnic agitations; initially it was the North/South dichotomy in public service appointments, cries of power sharing, economic and infrastructural development distribution, States and Local Governments imbalance among others. Abubakar (2017) notes that this seed of disunity was sown at amalgamation and it is growing every day with waves of unrest in which erstwhile neighbours are pitted against each other. Akinola (2017) notes that ethnic squabble often results from poor management of differences in Nigeria's configuration, the possibilities of a major conflict were always evident in the contradictions of ethnicity, religion, culture and language that were cobbled together by the colonial masters. Mamma (2017) posits that the increasing drums of separatism being beaten by several ethno cultural and militant groups including the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB), the Niger Delta Avengers, Movement for the

Emancipation of Niger Delta, Northern Elders Forum, Arewa Youths Consultative Forum among others are irrepressible signs of the fractured state of Nigerian federation.

`   Ojogo (2012) maintains that ethnic domination is also evident in the arbitrary and discriminatory manner in which the Nigerian rulers from Hausa/Fulani and Yoruba ethnic groups have granted oil rights in the Niger Delta to their kinsmen. Osakwe (2017) posits thatethnic militant activities in Nigeria has become a disaster to the nation's socioeconomic progress as many ethnic groups want to fulfill their own interest at the cost of the nation, which happens to be the real truth about the circumstance of Nigeria. The disaster also exists in the form of politics of bitterness, culture of impunity, moral decadence, hooliganism and many more. Alao and Michael (2017) cited in Osakwe (2017) states that many circumstances often lead to ethnic conflicts in Nigeria such as; colonial legacy, boundary disputes, struggle for power and resources, failure of the traditional model of conflict resolution, poverty, perceived lack of sincerity and fair play on the part of government, manipulation by the elites in the society, ethnic and religious intolerance. All these shake the foundation of oneness of the country as laid by the country's founding fathers and heroes past. The application of coercive measure and stick by the government to stem the tide has not yielded any meaning result. Therefore, a new strategy needed to be adopted by government to fight against ethnic agitation and militancy brought about by rising ethnic nationalism in the country. Consequently, the need to apply peace building as a remedy for these agitations comes to a focus. Ethno nationalism had brought another dimension to the precarious security situation in the country with divergent objectives such as self-determination and secession, resource control, religious caliphacy, political inclusion, political hegemony and conflict over grazing resources. Since Nigeria's independence, ethnic agitation and militancy were among the problems bedeviling the country to the extent that they have added to the precarious security problems in the country and thus undermined the efforts of past leaders in building a united Nigeria. Ethnic nationalism, refers to a situation one's nation and nationality are defined in terms of ethnicity, with ethnocentric approach to various political issues related to national affirmation of a particular ethnic group Scholars have traced the origin of ethnic militancy to the way and manner Nigeria was put together as a country. According to Osakwe (2017), the problem of Nigeria's ethnicity and ethnic clashes has its roots from the history of colonialism, which forcefully brought various the ethnic groups to form the entity called Nigeria in the year 1914. Abegunde (2013) laments that colonization has adverse

effects on the structure, cultural belief, language, and autonomy of the various ethnic nationalities that constitute the Nigerian state.

Abegunde (2013) posits that agitations have manifested into militarization and violence conflicts among the people of the country with destruction of oil installations and in addition intra and inter-ethnic conflict, community and militia conflict, conflicts between militants and government agents. The same scenario plays out in the South East where the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and its militant wing the Eastern Security Network (ESN), Movement for the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASOB) held sway and had been battling the Federal Government with secessionist agenda while in the South West the OPC acts like the policemen of the region. Myetti Allah in the North encourages their herders' confrontation with farmers which has led to several clashes between host farmers and the herdsmen which has resulted to several deaths and loss of properties. However, in spite of efforts made by scholars in writing on ethnic militancy and agitations, most of such write ups have often concentrated on the effect of the phenomenon on National integration as well as its consequences on the socio-economic development of the country. No society including Nigeria can achieve economic development without peace. The only time peacebuilding was adopted in remedying ethnic agitation and militancy in the country was during the regime of late Umar Yaradua former President of Nigeria (through Amnesty Programme in Niger Delta region) but after that period, successive regimes such as that of Goodluck Jonathan as well as the current president Muhammadu Buhari have deviated from the use of the strategy in dealing with the meteoric rise of ethnic agitation and militancy in the country. It is against this backdrop that this paper examines the effects of ethnic militancy and agitation on good governance in Nigeria and peacebuilding as a panacea for ethnic agitations and militancy `in Nigeria.

Brief Literature Review

Conceptualizing Ethnicity

Ford and Harawa (2010) defines ethnicity as a social construct that is tied to race and used to distinguish diverse populations and to establish personal or group identity. Crossman (2019) notes that ethnicity is a concept referring to a shared culture and a way of life which reflect in language, religion, material culture such as clothing and cuisine, and cultural products such as music and art. Zagefka (2009) asserts that researchers have considered ethnicity when investigating phenomena as varied as acculturation,

discrimination, identity management processes, immigration, intergroup contact, prejudice, relative deprivation, social comparisons, stigma, terror management, and psychosocial health. Weber (2007) cited in Bos (2015) points that ethnic groups entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of external habitus or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration; this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation; conversely, it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists

`   Santos *et al.* (2010) asserts that ethnicity encompasses cultural factors such as nationality, tribal affiliation, religion, language and traditions of a particular group. Ethnicity lies within the cultural realm. An ethnic community is determined by linguistic and cultural affinities and genetic similarities. These communities often claim to have a distinct social and political structure, and a territory. Johnson (2000) cited in Ford and Harawa (2010) notes that ethnicity comprises two dimensions; the attributional dimension which describes the unique sociocultural characteristics of groups and the relational dimension which captures characteristics of the relationship between an ethnically defined group and the society in which it is situated. Okumagba (2009) observes that in Nigeria, "ethnic and religious groups have taken the centre stage and play prominent roles in the dynamics of governance of the Nigerian State and that ethnic based socio-political formations like the Ohaneze Ndigbo, Arewa Consultative Forum and the Afenifere are the most visible on the political arena. These groups have a penetrating influence. At the youth level, they are called ethnic militias, though the agenda and activities of these groups, that is the militias and the ethnic socio-political groups may not necessarily be related"

Conceptualizing Ethnic Militancy and Agitation

Akinboye (2001) cited in Lysias (2013) defined ethnic militancy as an act by a group that resort to defend and project the supposed interests of their ethnic group. Ethnic militancy according to the author emerged in the country due to the perceived marginalization of some ethnic groups by the Nigerian State. The basic factor that distinguishes an ethnic militia from other forms of armed groups like cults and religious fundamentalists is that they zealously defend and project the interests of their respective ethnic nationalities, by any means, including the use of arms (Gilbert, 2010).

According to Lysias (2013), "since the commencement of the 4th Republic in Nigeria in May 1999, one relatively permanent characterization of the country's political landscape has been ethnic militancy. Ethnic militancy according to him exacerbated insecurity; confronted the status of the State as the sole legitimate monopolist of the instruments of force and violence; exposed the weak loyalty and allegiance of the populace to the Nigerian nation-state project; and threatened its continued existence as a corporate entity. Abegunde (2013) argues that the proliferation of ethnic organizations and its mobilization has been a political instrument of the Nigerian elite since post-independence, the same way nationalism was in the decolonization battle, and in consequence, ethnic agitations have manifested in militarization, violent conflicts, intra and inter-ethnic conflict, community and militia conflict as well as conflicts between militants and government agents.

Profile of Ethnic militias in Nigeria

Osabiya (2015) identified some of the ethnic militias to include: Movement for Actualization of Niger Delta (MEND), Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), Odua People's Congress (OPC), the Egbesu Boys, the Niger Delta Volunteer Force, Movement for the Sovereign State of Biafra (MOSSOB), as well as Boko Haram.

Odua People's Congress (OPC)

Nolte (2007) posits that the Odua People's Congress (OPC) was formed after the annulment of 1993Presidential election which late Chief M. K. O. Abiola (a Yoruba man) won. The group was founded with the explicit political aim of safeguarding Yoruba ethno-nationalist interests' *vis-à-vis* the state. By fighting crime, and state institutions perceived to be implicated in the perpetration of crime, including the police and military, the OPC's vigilantes have undermined and challenged the state's security institutions. *n (2012) posits that the* Oodua People's Congress was formed by a group of Yoruba elites and artisans which included Dr. Fredrick fasehun (its first national leader), Aare Gani Adams (15th Aare Ona Kakanfo of Yoruba land), Ibrahim Atanda Idowu Abobanawo among others.

Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB)

Lasse and Dirk (2014) note that the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) is a secessionist movement in Nigeria, associated with Igbo nationalism, which supports the recreation of an independent state of Biafra. It was founded in 1999 by an Indian-trained lawyer Ralph Uwazuruike, with headquarters in Okwe, in the Okigwe district of Imo State. MASSOB agitates for a Republic of Biafra comprising the South-East and some parts of South-South region of Nigeria.·

Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) is another Biafra separatist organization in Nigeria. Its main aim is to restore an independent state of Biafra in the former Eastern region of Nigeria through an independence referendum (Allison, 2017). The group was founded in 2012 by Nnamdi Kanu a British Nigerian political activist known for his prominent advocacy of the contemporary Biafra Independence Movement (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2017). The group's objective is to restore the defunct Biafra, *albeit*, through peaceful means. However the group turned violent in recent times with the formation of Eastern Security Network the militant group of IPOB that recently launched attacks on military and para-military facilities in Imo Stat and other parts of South Eastern Nigeria. The group is believed to be the brain behind the unknown men criminal gang that has wreaked havoc on lives and properties of innocent people in the region especially Police formations.

The Niger Delta Avengers (NDA)

The Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) is a militant group in Nigeria's Niger Delta. The group publicly announced their existence in March 2016. The group's declared aims are to create a sovereign state in the Niger Delta and have threatened to disrupt Nigeria's economy if their aims are not met. The NDA claims its members are "young, educated, well-travelled and educated in Eastern Europe" (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2017).Makpor (2017) posits that the major claims of the NDA, is tied to the constant complains of the fact that the country's wealth is derived from the Niger Delta but little or nothing is contributed towards the development of local communities; socially, economically and environmentally. Consequently, the region has become a "moneymaking machine" but developmentally backwards.

Miyetti Allah

The organization is also called *Miyetti Allah* Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN)**.** *Kuna and Jibrin (2015) noted that t*he organization was founded in the early 1970s with Kaduna as its headquarters and that they became operational in 1979 while members terrorized civilians such as farmers in Nigeria since 2015. According to Kanam (n,d) the group regulates grazing activities and reduce incidences of conflict between farmers and herders with both formal and informal local meetings for fostering most collective actions. He also posted that the group is the earliest, most renowned and widespread pastoralists' organization in Nigeria. The group is the umbrella body of Fulani cattle rearers, whose agitation is for free access to land resources such as grazing resources in all parts of the country which has led to series of confrontations between the herders and farmers in Middle Belt region as well as in some states in Southern Nigeria

Concept of Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding according to Adenyi (2016) is a concept of conflict resolution propounded by the former United Nation Secretary GeneraL Boutrous Boutrous Ghali in a paper the former UN scribe presented to the United Nation Security Council in 1992 titled: "An Agenda for Peace" and which was defined as action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict, rebuilding the institutions and infrastructure of nations by civic way and strife and tackling the deepest cause of conflict; economic despair, social justices and political operation. Peacebuilding refers to all the efforts by individuals, groups, institutions and organizations to prevent violent conflict through peacemaking, promotion of human rights and rule of law; and where conflict had occurred, to effect reconciliation, rehabilitation, rebuilding and reconstruction of institutions, structures as well as empowerment so as to prevent re-emergence of conflict (Adenyi, 2016)

Peace building is the development of constructive personal, group, and political relationships across ethnic, religious, class, national, and racial boundaries. It aims to resolve injustice in nonviolent ways and to transform the structural conditions that generate deadly conflict. Peacebuilding can include conflict prevention; conflict management; conflict resolution and transformation, and post-conflict reconciliation (Kroc Institute for International Peace, 2020). Kroc Institute (2020) added that

peacebuilding becomes **strategic** when it works over the long run and at **all levels of society** to establish and sustain relationships among people locally and globally. Strategic peacebuilding connects people and groups **"on the ground"** (community and religious groups, grassroots organizations,) with **policymakers and powerbrokers** (governments, international organisations, corporations, banks among others). It aims not only to resolve conflicts, but to build societies, institutions, policies, and relationships that are better able to sustain peace and justice.

Theoretical Framework

Frustration Aggression Theory

Frustration Aggression Theory is a theory developed by Dollard *et al*. in 1939. The employment of this theory in the paper is to explain that ethnic militancy is often triggered by frustration that leads to aggression. The assumption of the theory is that aggression is the outcome of frustration and in a situation where the legitimate desires of an individual or group is deprived either by direct or indirect consequences of the way the society is structured, the feeling of disappointment may at the same time lead such a person or group to express their anger through violence that will be directed at those they hold responsible or people who are directly or indirectly related to them. The theory also states that theoccurrence of aggressive behavior always presupposes the existence of frustration and, contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression".Amaraegbu (2011) asserts that there is a thread of logical correlation between frustration, armed militancy and economic downward spirals in the regions. According to Abegunde (2013) frustration is not a sufficient, but a necessary condition for hostile and aggression. The application of the theory in this paper is to explain that it was frustration that leads to aggressive behaviors by various ethnic militia in the country. In Nigeria's situation, whenever some social movements are frustrated in achieving their aims, (which in most cases are approached illegitimately) by the state apparatus they resort to violence. An example is the case of IPOB in South Eastern Nigeria. Even when such group are having a genuine agitation, they tend to legitimize violence and aggressive acts as weapons to propagate their demand; an example is the case of the Niger Delta militants. In another development, aggressive acts are applied as a reaction to frustration by a host community against settlers when the latter threatens lives and properties of the host community. This has led to several violent clashes between Fulani herdsmen and

farmers in various parts of the country. Another example is the case of Boko Haram insurgents who resorted to terrorism, insurgency and rebellionagainst the Nigeria State following the gruesome murder of their late leader. In the Southern part of Nigeria, marginalization in the scheme of things especially political appointment, infrastructural development and insecurity fuelled militancy in the South East while in the South West, the long period of military rule coupled with bad governance and extrajudicial killing of prominent Yoruba people lead to the establishment of Odua People's Congress (OPC).

Data Analysis and Discussion

Factors that trigger ethnic agitation and militancy in Nigeria

Ethnic agitations and militancy are the creation of elites in the country. These elites "operate behind the curtain" and sponsor agitations which they use as a weapon to achieve their political and economic objectives. The elites misinform their members especially the youths about the state of affairs in the country thus eliciting their anger which results to violent expressions Supporting this position, Abegunde (2013) notes that agitation for resource control either political or economic has a direct correlation with ethnic militancy. Gilbert (2010) in an earlier study founded that ethnic militancy is sponsored by the elites for the articulation, prosecution and actualization of the political and socio-economic goals of their respective ethnic group/region and that this is a weapon deployed for the enhancement of the fortunes of respective ethnic nationalities while Obianyo (2007) blamed the parochial behaviour of hegemonic ruling class, especially those played along the lines of ethnicity as the factor that triggers ethnic militancy. What the positions of the two authors suggests is that the cause of ethnic militancy is that elites in major ethnic groups use the militia to agitate for their socio economic and political inclusion and when this became unachievable, those militia will be deployed to confront government so as to achieve their parochial interest.

Other factors that trigger ethnic agitation and militancy in Nigeria include proliferation of ethnic organizations, unemployment, poverty and corruption, religious differences, agitations for socio economic and political inclusion, the social resources of the Nigerian State, neglect by successive governments, perceived marginalization of some ethnic groups as well as Nigeria's ethno cultural diversity. Supporting the above, Suleiman and Suleiman (2019) previously found that unemployment and poverty and high rate of

corruption in Nigeria has been identified as a major cause that triggers ethnic militancy and its associated violence in the country.

Consequences of ethnic militancy and agitation to Nigeria National Security

The consequences of ethnic militancy and agitation to Nigeria's National Security include: insecurity in the country, political violence, lack of trust among leaders, loss of lives, destruction of properties, threat to corporate existence of Nigeria, over militarization of the country, population displacement, negative image crisis. In support of these, Suleiman *et al.,* (2019) said that the emergence of ethnic militias and their violent routines has posed a significant threat to security inside Nigeria. The implication of this is that since there is no external aggression against the country, the security forces especially the Armed Forces that were constitutionally bound to protect the territorial boundaries of the country now resorted to fight against local militants which has left scores of them dead while the civil security organizations such as the Police, Civil Defense and the Department of State Security Services have been overstretched in their bid to curtail these militants most of whom carries superior ipower. The recent clash between combined forces of Nigeria's security apparatus against the Eastern Security Network (ESN) comes to mind and which has led to series of injuries and deaths on both the militants and the security forces, for example the recent killing of one Ikonso the ESN Commander in Imo State South East Nigeria by the combined security forcesis one of the numerous examples.

Other consequences of ethnic militancy and agitation to the country's Nigeria National Security are under development, undemocratic instability, secession and self-determination agitation, enmity and hatred among Nigerian, creation of bad image for Nigeria, scare foreign investment in the country as well as proliferation of arms and ammunitions. Olaniyan and Omotola (2015: 11) informed that:

> the unguarded ambitions of some ethnic entrepreneurs in the struggle against an "out-group" has resulted to "intra-group" contradictions, with telling destabilization effects on the group, loss of lives and properties; population displacement; negative image crisis; underdevelopment; democratic instability; all of which culminate in national insecurity.
> The implication of these findings is that ethnic militancy and agitation threatens

Nigeria's national security. In other to combat this ugly phenomenon, the Nigerian State have been using coercive means to checkmate the activities of these militants in order to maintain security of lives and properties of Nigerians.

Effects of ethnic militancy and agitation on good governance in Nigeria.

Even though the demand of some ethnic group are germane, ethnic militancy and agitation affects good governance in Nigeria. Notwithstanding the fact that the country has been going through some levels of bad governance as a result of maladministration, corruption and ineptitude of successive governments in the country, ethnic militancy and agitation distracts people in governance and weakens national integration. The resources that would have been used for the provision of basic amenities to people, fight against scourge of diseases such as HIV/AIDS, Coronavirus among others, checkmate the activities of criminal elements in the country, mitigate the impacts of climate change among others are diverted towards curtailing ethnic militants and in some cases diverted for personal use in the name of procuring arms and ammunition. There were allegations in the press that some members of Jonathan Goodluck regime diverted money meant to procure arms for their private gains. As of the time of writing this paper, media in the country have been reporting about alleged diversion of funds meant for buying of arms and ammunitions for the armed forces where some military chiefs that served under the current regime of Muhammadu Buhari were alleged to have looted such fund.

Peace building strategy as a remedy for ethnic agitation and militancy in the country

Peacebuilding addresses issues of human rights, economic prosperity, and environmental sustainability as well as violence. Peacebuilding stretches across generations. While it engages immediate crises, strategic peacebuilding recognizes that peace making is a long-term vocation that requires the building of cross-group networks and alliances that will survive intermittent conflicts and create a platform for sustainable human development and security (KIIP, 2020)

Peace building through redistribution of national wealth will help to reduce agitation in Nigeria. This is because peacebuilding removes the underlying causes of violent conflicts, ensures reconstruction of conflict-ridden societies, leads to national integration, and government of national unity. Through peacebuilding the bond of unity hitherto existing in the country will be revived. Government of Nigeria need to be proactive in dealing with ethnic militancy and agitations in the country by applying dialogue first with these organizations through their leaders and elites from the zone where they emerge. The implication of this engagement is that it will give Government the opportunity to

understand the grievances of the group and how to address them. Another potent weapon to fight against ethnic politics is equitable redistribution of national wealth and adherence to the principle of federal character as enshrined in the constitution, this will give all the major ethnic group a sense of belong to the one Nigeria project.

Folami and Chamberlain (2017) agreed with our position here and argued that redistribution of oil wealth among the ethnic groups would contribute to enduring peacebuilding. Allegations of marginalization has been one of the instruments used to fuel conflict and agitation in a diversified entity like Nigeria, therefore, creating a conducive political environment where citizens can freely and securely participate in the political process will help to stem the tide and reduce ethnic agitations in the country. Aghamelu and Aghamelu (2016) agreed with our position and opined that Nigeria's political sphere is turbulent because many citizens do not participate in the political process and policy formulation process of the country, so they appear to be left out on the scheme of things. The authors suggested that Government should create opportunities for participation, either to sustain or to complement core institutional opportunities. On the other hand, the citizens should perceive the participatory opportunities as meaningful, thus furthering the interests and needs that are intended to be addressed through the generated opportunities and thus peace will be built. Also, in agreement with the position of this paper, Ikelegbe and Onokerhoraye (2016) avers that peace building will help to reduce agitation in Nigeria because peace building seeks to establish or build long term peace, prevent a relapse into violence; remove the underlying causes of violent conflicts. It will create conditions conducive to reconciliation and recovery and construct durable structures of peace between the state and the agitating group.

In the same manner, leaders of various ethnic group in the country have similar role to play; they should always seek for opportunities for dialogue instead of brainwashing their youths with propaganda machinery and false alarm, and thus equip them to resort to violent acts in a bid to achieve their needs. When these leaders learn to be tolerant and accommodating so that national integration which has been taken over by ethnic nationalism can be enthroned, there will be peace in the country. When these leaders of various ethnic group stop making provocative statements that will spark negative reactions from other ethnic group peace will be built in the country. If the resources these leaders use in purchasing illegal arms and ammunitions for their teeming youth population to engage government or members of other ethnic group violently are

channeled into useful and productive venture, peace building will be achieved in the country.

Nigerian Press who are also agents of peace building has a duty to adhere to the ethics of journalism by not blowing simple matters of national importance out of proportion through "yellow journalism". It is the contention of this paper that yellow journalism by Nigerian press contributes to the problem of ethnic agitations and militancy in the country. The practice of quoting "unconfirmed sources, sources who pleaded for anonymity among others" in their write up to conceal the source or identity of makers of fake information needed to be stopped by the Press. To achieve this, they should first of all investigate a news report properly and get it from genuine sources, by so doing they are contributing to peace building in the country. The swarm of Civil Society Organizations existing in the country who are also agents of peacebuilding have a part to play in the peace building process by always engaging those in authority constructively and reading in between the lines before they take any position on national issues. Our analysis so far has shown that peace building requires the involvement of both governmental and non-governmental organizations for peace to be achieved in the country and as a panacea for ethnic agitations and militancy in the country.

Conclusion

There cannot be any other method of achieving peace in a conflict situation other than to build peace. Peace building helps to identify potential triggers of conflict in the form of early warning and brings parties in a conflict together for dialogue and discussions on how to achieve peace. To peacefully reduce ethnic agitations and militancy in the country, the process should start the moment it is found that a particular group is making a genuine demand and not when such group resorted to taking up arms against the State, however where the later becomes the option, there is need to engage them constructively so that grey areas will be resolved. The paper has examined factors triggering ethnic agitation and militancy in Nigeria, its consequences to Nigeria's National Security, it's effect on good governance in the country and identified how peace building can reduce ethnic agitation and militancy. The paper concludes that successive government in the country should adopt good governance and peace building measure to reduce ethnic militancy and ethnic agitations in the country by ensuring equal redistribution of national wealth, equitable sharing and allocation of political and bureaucratic offices as well

formulation of policies that will lead to national integration. There is need for successive regimes in the country to enthrone Government of National irrespective of the political party(s) in power.

Recommendations

We recommend that Nigerian governments from Local Government Council to the Federal government should always adopt peace building measures in handling ethnic agitations and militancy as well as other armed conflict in the country and not to resort to use of force only. Government and militant groups should explore both pre and post peacebuilding strategies in dealing with issues concerning ethnic agitations and militancy in the country. Furthermore, non-governmental organizations such as the Press and Civil Society Organisations in the country should also join in working towards peace building in their respective area of jurisdiction.

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