# Ethno-Religious Conflict and National Integration in Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and Way Forward

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## Abstract

Ethnicity and religion have emerged as major political forces in Nigeria, being a multi-ethnic and multi-religious nation. Interactions and conflicts among ethnic groups in Nigeria to a great extent influence and determine in varying degrees the nature and course of development. There is no gainsaying that ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria are products of the country's amalgamation in 1914. Using the descriptive method of data analysis, the paper argues that political conflicts in Nigeria stem from issues such as resource sharing, electoral and leadership crisis among other issues and has devastating effect on development in the country. The paper is anchored on the instrumentalist theory and recommended that the federal government needs to articulate a medium through which the various ethnic groups can be heard. Equity should be considered in handling the affairs of the various ethnic groups, government should design more programmes to tackle poverty, government should reduce the use of military force in quelling crisis and the judiciary should be given adequate power to adjudicate ethnic matters.

**Keywords***: Ethnicity, Religion, Conflicts.*

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**Background to the Study**

Nigeria as a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural state cannot be devoid of conflict. Conflict is an inevitable friction in every society. As people relate with one another in a given society, there are bound to be disparity or conflict of interest which causes disagreement among them. It constitutes one of the greatest challenges to human relations and development in Nigeria as she has witnessed a lot of violent eruption among her various ethnic, religious and cultural groups. Since millions of Nigerians who are multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural coexist, conflicts and quarrels are bound to occur among them from time to time. These assumptions are premised on the assumption that inter-ethnic conflicts in such societies emanate from elite competition for power and authority. Conflict is intrinsic to all societies and associations due to the perpetual competition for authority within such groups (Dalrendorf, 1958).

It has not been possible in stating the precise ethnic composition of Nigeria, however, at a rough estimate, one may regard the Hausa/Fulani as making up appropriately 29% of the population of the country; Yoruba 21%, the Igbo 18%, while the remaining ethnic groups comprise of the remaining 32% (nations.geographic.com).

According to Babawale quoted in Aduba (2011)

> *Nigeria is an archetypal/plural society characterized by divergent language, cultures, ethnic groups and geographic regions. The realization, that a society as diverse as Nigeria maybe difficult to manage administratively, partly informed the decision to adopt the Lyttleton Constitution of 1954 which formally inaugurated the practice of federalism in Nigeria. Unfortunately, the Nigerian federal structures so inaugurated was an unbalanced and lopsided one in which the Northern Region emerged as a bigger entity than a combination of the entire population of the Eastern and Western Regions. The struggle for power sharing was reduced to a struggle of hegemony among the three main ethnic groups, namely, the Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo. In the course of this struggle, those who fall outside the three main ethnic groups were regarded as minorities and were marginalized not only in the allocation of power but of resources as well (pp240-241).*
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While some diverse countries of the world have taken advantage of their diversity, it has remained an insurmountable difficulty in Nigeria. The nation's diversities have continued to threaten both the unity of the country as well as the deepening of her democracy, thereby making the future of the country unpredictable (Adetoye and Omilusi, 2015). Diversity in culture in Nigeria has thus produced a breeding ground for calamity which is in turn dragging the country backwards. These problems which emanated as a result of ethnicity have negatively affected the political, economic, social and cultural development of the country.

The intense communal and religious conflicts in Nigeria have led to the formation and operation of several militia groups, prominent among which are: the Bakassi Boys, Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASOP), Odua People's Congress (OPC), Egbesu Boys, Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) and Boko Haram (Alegbeleyi, 2014).

The persistent ethno-religious crisis in the country and the danger it poses has further depreciated the economy of the country. So much funds and attention have been channeled towards this particular course even when there has been hardly any form of respite. For instance, lots of funds have been channeled towards rebuilding areas that were destroyed during the different crises as well as taking care of displaced people kept in the internally displaced people's camps. Not to be left out is the Amnesty programme organized by the government to pacify the youths and also stop them from engaging in harmful crises.

The restiveness in the Niger Delta occasioned by military activities has some far reaching negative economic implications in the country. For example, the amount of barrel of crude oil the country produces have dropped significantly. The post-election violence in the 2011 general election was also a testimony of one of the orgies of violence in the country in which so many lives and properties were lost, especially in the Northern part of the country. Most of this violence is blamed on unemployment, poverty, corruption, wide income gap between the rich and the poor and social injustice among others.

This paper will thus analyze some ethno-religious and political conflicts that have threatened peaceful co-existence in the past as well the problems they have posed to undermine national development.

**Conceptual Clarifications**
**Ethnicity:** Ethnicity is a situation in which individuals in a particular ethnic group consider themselves or are considered by others to have a common affinity which distinct them from other groups (Alegbeleye, 2014). It could also be defined as a gross of ethnic identity, sharing the same cultural and historical antecedents (Adebayo in Alegbeleye, 2014) and as a social formation predicted on culturally specific practices and unique symbols (Osaghare in Alegbeleye, 2014).

**Conflict:** Conflict as a term has varied definitions and understanding. It involves clash, contention, confrontation, battle, rivalry and controversy between individuals and groups (Uhumnwuangho and Epelle in Abagen, 2016). S. I. Ebolon sees conflict as "a fight, a struggle or a quarrel between individuals or groups within the framework of group processes. It equally refers to opposition or disagreement between groups or within the factions of a group". Ifediora in Ikeke perceives conflicts as quarrels, fights or struggles between interest groups and as one of the inseparable consequences of man's interaction with fellow humans and his environment'. In this case, conflict can be seen as both violent and non-violent. It is also an action that is oriented intentionally to carryout actor's own wish against the resistance of the other party or parties (Weber in Adetoye and Omilusi, 2015). It can also be seen as a struggle over status, power and scarce resources in which the sole aim of the parties involved are not only to gain the desired value but also to neutralize, injure or eliminate rivals (Coser in Adetoye and Omilusi, 2015).

Basically, conflict entails any form of struggle, whether violent or non-violent which is aimed towards outdoing a second party or parties in order to achieve an end of securing either non

material objects like religious, culture, language or material objects such as money, employment, positions, properties and so on.

Conflict theorists stipulate that "conflicts whether political, economical, ethnic or religious are often influenced or motivated by disparity rather than similarity among the people especially unequal ones. Karl Marx wrote in 1937 in the "Communist Manifesto" that "the history of all existing society is the history of class struggle". In other words, be it agrarian, feudal or capitalist society, conflict is inevitable because of class differences (Adetoye and Omilusi, 2015). Conflict can therefore be regarded as being inherent in all human relations.

**Religion:** Religion according to Edward Bornet Taylor can be defined as "the belief in spiritual beings". He regarded these spiritual beings as sacred. By sacred he meant 'beings set apart and forbidden, belief and practices which unite into one single moral commencing called a church and all those who adhere to them". (Wikipedia online). There are several problems in trying to make a definition of religion that is not overly vague and general. By their nature, religion tends to motivate other aspects of human behaviours beyond the normal. Religion thus originates in an attempt to represent and order beliefs, feelings, imaginations and actions that arise in response to direct experience of the sacred and the spiritual beings (Connelly, 1996).

**Ethno-Religious Conflict:** Ethno-religious conflict is a situation whereby conflicting groups define themselves along ethno religious lines; in this case religious or ethnic identities create sharp distinctions in communities and encourage group mobilization. These distinctions lead to suicide bombings and ethnic cleansing so to say. Ethno-religious conflicts occur in communities with long histories of tensions resulting especially from deprivation of economic and political rights. According to Salewa (2010), relationships between members of one ethnic or religious group and another of such group in multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies is riddled with lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion, fear and violent confrontations.

**Theoretical Framework**
This work is anchored on the theory of instrumentalism. It was first introduced by Pierre Duhem and Ernst Mach in 1906. They were philosophers of science whom believed that scientific theories are merely tools for predicting phenomena and are not true descriptions of the real world. John Dewey, in 1926, popularized instrumentalism as he asserts that the worth of thoughts, theories and concepts are not measured by whether they are true or false or whether they correctly depict reality or not but by how effective they are in explaining phenomena. He further states that they are instruments for solving practical problems. He asserts that ethnicity could be used as a tool to achieve goals. People who share same ethnic and religious identities can easily and effectively organize and mobilize one another in order to influence public policy. Instrumentalists also argue that people of same ethnic and religious groups share common histories, languages and customs and thus feel a strong cohesion which creates ties or bonds with ethnic activists and political entrepreneurs, this circumstance makes it uneasy to convince such a people to commit violence (Yeghiazar,2018). In other words, there is bound to be disagreement, chaos and violence amongst a people who do not share common languages, customs and religion.

## History of Ethno-Religious Conflict in Nigeria

Ethnic and religious issues have been on the increase in Nigeria. Conflicts or crisis have existed in Nigeria since the colonial era and instead of reducing, more ethnic and religious groups spring up from time to time to air their grievances and agitate for such. The dominant and minority ethnic groups treat each other with suspicion and the different religious world view clash at the slightest provocation (Olu-Adeyemi in Adeloye and Omilusi, 2015). Ethno-religious conflicts can thus be understood as part of the historical process of the economic, political and religious imperialism of Africa by the Europeans. Many scholars have traced the provenance of this unwholesome phenomenon to the colonial conquest and colonization of Africa which made it possible for the colonial authority to aggregate hitherto desperate and autonomous social formation as part of the artificial state formation process (Abagen, 2013). The British colonial administration introduced form of order by amalgamating the various ethnic and social groups in Nigeria under one umbrella. This amalgamation was hastily done to propagate their selfish interest without taking into cognizance the differences between these ethnic groups and their needs to know if they are reconcilable. Religious conflict was also fostered by the spread of Islam in the North by the Arabs and Christianity in the South by the European Missionaries. The manner in which the colony was administered and how the different identities were managed is important in appreciating its ethno-religious configuration and the continuing silence of politicized, violent and destructive identities (Abagen, 2013).

By the amalgamation, the different ethnic groups, entities, regions, ethnicities or nationalities were compelled to unite as one nation without prior information, contact with each other and against their will (Ugorji, 2016). Religion plays a critical role in the Nigerian society and has expressed itself as a potent force in the geopolitical development of the country. This force that was used to unite Nigerians is the same force that has led to numerous conflicts in the country. Nigeria has been engulfed in numerous religious conflicts between 1980-1994 (Warner, 2012 in Haldun and Odukoya, 2016).

A proper amalgamation usually seeks the consent of the groups involved whereby the amalgamated groups, regions or nations were given an opportunity to decide whether or not they would like to merge with others in a united nation. This form of amalgamation places emphasis on the ethical principle of respect for persons or groups and treats these groups as autonomous entities with certain inalienable rights, for example, the right to self-determination, territorial autonomy and integrity as well as preservation of cultural identity and heritage (Ugorji, 2016). Respect for these groups' rights presupposes that before an amalgamation is executed and implemented, the groups ought to have clarity and full understanding of the terms, expectations, implications, risks and opportunities that are associated with it. The groups' consent to be a part of a new nation should be a well informed decision based on the complete availability of needed information, their full understanding or comprehension of the information provided and a condition or situation that encourages free voluntariness and discourages coercion or influence of power (The Belmont Report, 1979 in Ugorji, 2016). The various ethnic groups were rather coerced to become a one Nigeria without prior information. Amalgamation was totally carried out against their will. The British

colonial administrators orchestrated the Amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates into a nation against the will of the groups involved.

Till this date, this forced amalgamation of the country has a looming effect on the country, which includes ethnic conflicts. Cesaire, strongly believes that "societies were drained of their essence, cultures were trampled underfoot, institutions undermined, lands confiscated, religion smashed, magnificent artistic creations destroyed, extraordinary possibilities wiped out". All these negative effects of colonization occurred mainly because the indigenous people and the lands were uprooted, divided and coerced to unite without their consent (Lemert in Ugorji, 2016).

Historically, identities played significant roles in the Nigerian political processes during both the colonial period and in the post-colonial era. The colonial administration instilled a spirit of ethnic consciousness whereby both the ethnic and religious groups recognize themselves against others. They thus, allowed for the emergence and aggravation of an 'us' versus 'them' syndrome, where Muslims were pitted against Christians, Northerners against Southerners, Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo against each other and so on (Adefemi Okpanachi in Haldu and Opeyemi, 2016). Ethnicity has overtime become the basic way through which Nigerians are identified. A man from the north is known as a northerner or a Hausa man and not a Nigerian. A survey conducted in Nigeria by Lewis and Bratton found that almost half of Nigerians (48.2%) labeled themselves with an ethnic identity compared to 28.4% who labeled themselves with respect to class and 21% who identified with a religious group (Osaghae and Suberu, 2005).

## Causes of Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Nigeria

Over the years, Nigeria has experienced several conflicts that have haunted the country. These conflicts have shaken the foundation of Nigeria in varying ways. These conflicts can be seen from different dimensions and they are political conflicts, socio-cultural and religious conflicts and economic conflicts.

Political conflicts in Nigeria include issues regarding resource sharing, electoral and leadership crisis. The 1964 electoral crisis marked the watershed in the nation's political history. The political and electoral manipulation in the old Western Region escalated to other parts of Nigeria and led to a national crisis which eventually became part of the problems that culminated in the military coup, which terminated the First Republic and later led to the Nigerian Civil War. While the First Republic collapsed as a result of factors arising from regional intra-party crises, the Second Republic also collapsed under the same circumstances (Otite in Afegbue, 2010).

One of the major causes of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria is selfish interest of our political leaders and public offices holders who often tend to use their offices to mobilize their people based on ethnic lines in order to achieve their selfish political and economic interests. These leaders misuse ethnicity by appealing to the sentiments of the people from their ethnic groups to fight for particular so-called ethnic cause but which actually tend to satisfy the personal interests of such leaders.

Religious extremism, fanaticism, aggressive evangelism, incitements, selfish interests of religious leaders, and intolerance have also culminated into conflicts and therefore caused tension and instability in the Nigerian polity and have been a stretch of inter-ethnic and inter-communal conflicts. Inter-ethnic conflicts have become an issue that has refused to go away and it is prominent among ethnic militias like the Odua People's Congress (OPC), Arewa Youth Forum (AYF), Boko Haram, Bakassi Boys, Egbesu Boys, MASSOP in the East and the sub- nationalities in the Niger Delta region. Other formation and goals merely reinforce the primordial ethno-political agenda of the ethnic groups they represent. These ethnic militias cause many harms by instigating violence, abusing human rights including illegal arrest, detention and execution of innocent citizens. There have been religious uprisings in the Northern part of Nigeria especially since 1981, when the country witnessed Maitasaini Religious Uprising notably in Kano and Kaduna. Many other religious riots have taken place in other Northern states such as Zaria, Kafanchan, Maiduguri and Jos (Agagu in Afegbua, 2010).

Unfavourable government economic and industrial policies are also a major source of conflict in Nigeria. Most ethno-religious conflicts are not unconnected to economic reasons. Economic conflicts have taken a totally different path in Nigeria where militia carryout unimaginable acts in the name of fighting for their economic rights. This is majorly the government's fault because of the unfavourable economic and industrial policies on ground. The ruling elite circumvent established ideas, principles and compromises that are supposed to be the guiding post for the play of politics. The end result is therefore massive underdevelopment and psychological attachment of the people to their primordial enclaves for survival. The state has consequently lost its enviable place and is therefore irrelevant to the lives of the people. Those harsh economic realities have pushed people to their ethnic, religious, commercial and cultural enclaves (Abagen, 2013).

In the past, disagreements were usually arbitrated at family or traditional institutional level. This is not to be anymore as we have seen how disputes among neighbouring ethnic groups spiraled into all-out wars with maximum damage of genocidal proportion. In many cases, the disputes would become a political tool to be used for personal and group agenda by those who seek to profit from the conflicts that have engulfed an entire nation (Punch, 2016). Corruption negatively affects the development of the country. The appropriation of state resources by certain hands makes poverty and bitter anger inevitable aspects of daily socio-economic and political routine. Though corruption is not peculiar to Nigeria, many sources call it the bane of the country (Dike, 2005 in Haldum and Opeyemi, 2016). Poverty and injustice caused by corruption weaken any sense of mutual tolerance, social solidarity or coexistence, while reawakening social hatred, radicalism and violence (Haldum and Opeyemi, 2016). Corruption thus cannot be ruled out of the causes of ethno-religious crisis. In fact, it is one of the major reasons these conflicts occur.

Failure of the government to pay adequate attention to trigger factors and early warning signals of crises and conflicts are some of the causes of political violence. For instance, when Boko Haram activity started in Borno, the state government did not give it much attention

before it degenerated to what it is today. The proliferation of small and light weapons in the country occasioned by the non-surrendering of these weapons by soldiers who took part in ECOMOG and other peace support operations found their ways into the hands of the militants and terrorists. Yet, the porosity of the nation's borders has made it a safe haven for indiscriminate importation and smuggling of arms and ammunitions into the country (Alegbeleye, 2014). Negligence on the part of government aided most of these conflicts which have destroyed millions of lives and properties as well as left negative effects that have continued to haunt the country. In fact, helpless Nigerians who reside in the areas that are often attacked have become shadows of themselves, some of the areas and villages which used to boom socially and economically have become desolate and inhabitable.

Most of these ethno-religious conflicts happen in the Northern area and the Middle Belt states. The Hausa or the Muslim Hausa and the Fulani have orchestrated and continued several notorious conflicts in Nigeria till this day. In conflicts of this nature occurring along the convergence of ethnic and religious lines, it is often difficult to tell the differences between religious and ethnic crises because the dividing line between them is smaller than thin (Haldum and Opeyemi, 2016). Crises of this nature include the Kafanchan-Kaduna crises between 1980- 1990, Kaduna Muslim Riot of 2000 and Jos Muslim Riot of 2001. So many other ethno-religious conflicts have occurred in Nigeria and they include the Oro Cultist Crisis in Sagamu Ogun State. In July 1999, the Oro cultists claimed that Hausa women came outside their abode when they were with their grove (Kura, 2010). This culminated into a key destructive crisis. The Yoruba and Hausa were killed in large numbers. In response, Hausa in Kano started killing the Yoruba there and it was disastrous. The October 2000 Lagos Kano (Idi Araba/Okoba) conflicts also caused mayhem in Lagos. So many Yorubas were killed over an issue relating to the use of toilets by Hausa inhabitants. The Odua People's Congress (OPC) retaliated by causing more violence (Kura, 2010 in Haldum and Opeyemi, 2016).

The ethnic friction between the Tiv and Jukun people, which occurred in September 2001 was also very devastating. The Tiv soldiers slaughtered 109 soldiers at that time and claimed they were Jukun who pretended to be soldiers. There is also the lingering conflict between some Fulani and Tiv who have been fighting over land ownership at the Benue and Nasarawa border. So many lives have been lost. Both the military and civilians have been maimed in the course of this conflict, especially in Agatu Local Government Area of Benue State. These killings have persisted. It has existed for over seven years and resulted from arguments between the Agatu and the Fulani over the Fulani's' cows destroying their crops in their farmlands while grazing. Till this day, the Fulanis are slaughtering the Agatus for fighting over their farmland. Most recently is the massacre of 109 villagers killed in Guma and Logo Local Government Areas by the Fulani herdsmen on the 11th of January 2018. 55 people were also killed in Taraba State, 36 in Agatu Local Government Area, 5 in Ughoha and Odiguete communities in Edo State and 9 people in Opada and Tyada villages in Kogi State (Obahopo, 2018).

Not to be left out is the Boko Haram crisis which is on-going. This group started a bloody campaign to impose their existence, Islamic regime based on Sharia in the Muslim North of the country. Till this day, the Boko Haram conflict can hardly be regarded as religious or ethnic

one since the Muslims are also maimed by this terrorist group. The Niger Delta conflict cannot be left out. It has claimed so many lives of both the civilians, expatriates and even the military. All these conflicts have caused irreparable destruction in the country.

**Consequences of Ethno-Religious Conflicts**
Ethno-religious crisis have had far reaching consequences on the Nigerian populace as well as the country itself. It has greatly threatened the existence of the country to a point of pity. Nigeria as a sovereign state has its political objective and philosophy which is democracy and national integration, but the various ethno-religious conflicts and their attendant destruction of lives and property, political instability, insecurity and socio-economic underdevelopment indicate that the goal is unrealizable (International Crisis Group, 2010 in Abagen, 2013).

Loss of precious lives is one of the attendant effects of ethno-religious conflicts and this has greatly plagued the country. Violent crisis have destroyed so many lives which ordinarily would have served as a greater labour force to the country. This has also contributed to the underdevelopment of the country. Nigeria is also no longer viewed as a country where children can be educated without the fear of them getting hurt. The issue of Boko Haram kidnapping of Chibok girls from their school hostels is still a looming one. Though some of them have been released, the where about of a number of these girls is still not known. Some are even alleged to have died in captivity while a good number of them have been put in the family way by the Boko Haram members. During the period these girls were kidnapped, some other schools were also invaded in which many children lost their lives. In February 2018 a faction of the jihadist Boko Haram movement, seized 113 children from Dapchi, Yobe State in north east Nigeria. It later released 107 of them. Five reportedly died while one of them is still in captivity.

Another consequence of ethno-religious conflict in Nigeria is poverty. Poverty has taken a great toll on the people whose villages have been invaded during the conflicts. In the Boko Haram case, a lot of villages which were attacked were rendered desolate and the survivors have been taken to the Internally Displaced People's Camps (IDPC). These camps are unhygienic and lack so many basic facilities since they are not being adequately funded by the government. The people are thus left impoverished. In Benue State, the Agatus who are being maimed by the Fulani are mostly fleeing from their homes and becoming stranded. Their farmland which is the mainstay of their economy is constantly destroyed by these herdsmen, leaving them helpless and impoverished.

The Nigerian government has also lost a lot of funds and revenue due to these crises. Tax charges and rates on varied items by the local government cannot be collected during violent crises, implying loss of revenue for development purposes (Ajakaije in Afegbua, 2010). During the Niger Delta crisis, many pipelines were vandalized, therefore causing great loss of crude oil and revenue. Many companies that operated in that region closed down while some relocated out of Nigeria and this has also greatly affected the national income generation. Till date, some investors have refused to relocate back to the Niger Delta because of uncertainty and insecurity. Violent conflicts in Nigeria have also retarded foreign investment inflow and

growth. No foreign investor will be encouraged to invest in an unstable economy. The presence of relative peace, security and stability is a cardinal motivational factor for foreigners (Afegbua, 2010).

Majority of the people have left their crises ridden areas to take refuge in other places as refugees. Thus, funds which should have been allocated for developmental purposes are channeled towards this course in providing them with social amenities. Funds are also allocated for security purposes. Huge amount of money is spent on equipping the various security agencies with newer and more sophisticated weapons to combat insecurity in different parts of the country.

**Conclusion**

Ethno-religious crisis is a menace that has lingered in Nigeria and has haunted and threatened her existence. This unbearable and seemingly unresolvable situation emanated from the forced amalgamation of the various parts of Nigeria, with a diversity and difference in culture and religion, without the consent of the various groups. The unacceptability of the forced unity culminated into dissatisfaction amongst the groups, mainly due to political and economic inequality, which prompted the formation of different militias, cultural and religious groups that have meted out violence and destruction in Nigeria and on Nigerians. These actions have had dire consequences, such as poverty, loss of lives, loss of funds by the government, instability in government and restiveness in the society. Ethno religious crisis thus, is a major lacuna that has eaten into the fabric of the Nigerian society today and must be addressed.

**Way Forward**

Ethno-religious conflict has taken its toll on the country. It has caused more harm than good and thus needs to be tackled. In order to reduce and subsequently quell this menace, several measures should be taken.

Firstly, the Federal Government needs to articulate a medium through which the various ethnic groups, whether the majority or minority should be heard. In this case, the culture of dialogue must be imbibed by the government, whereby chances are given to all the ethnic groups to air their grievances. In that way, the groups will feel that the government has the ability to listen and also it would be easy for the government to tackle some of their problems. Diplomacy must be a watchword if the issue of ethno-religious crisis would be tackled.

Corruption is a menace that has eaten deep into the fabric of our society today. Most political leaders are unapologetically corrupt. So many of our leaders use the privilege of their offices to embezzle and accumulate primitively, even while the country is going through hardship. In order to minimize these conflicts, leaders must be accountable for all dealings in their various offices. Equity should also not be left out especially between ethnic groups. Some ethnic groups shouldn't be more favoured because they have their people at the helm of affairs of the country.

All the ethnic groups must be equally represented. Leaders should also shift focus from what they can personally benefit from the country and rather turn their focus to how they can enhance the country's development by discussing and propagating developmental programmes and projects.

Poverty has also taken its toll on the country and has led so many youths astray. Most of these dubious political leaders because of their ulterior motives use the opportunity to brainwash and instigate the youths into violent killings and destruction of properties, all in the name of fighting for their rights. Government should thus design programmes that will help reduce poverty in the land to the minimal level. The youths should be empowered economically in order to shift their focus from societal ills.

Government should also reduce the use of the military force to quell crisis, but should rather endeavour to move quickly when an impending danger is noticed to prevent such from skyrocketing. If the Boko Haram saga had been given the utmost attention it deserved in the 1980s, it wouldn't have skyrocketed to this dangerous level. The government should also endeavour to set up functional committees charged with the responsibility of looking into such cases diplomatically. The judiciary should be given adequate power in order to adjudicate fairly on ethnic matters. By so doing, it will win the confidence of the people and as a result, the people will stop taking powers into their hands but will rather rely on the judiciary for justice.

The practice of true federalism should be put into cognizance by the federal government. If states are empowered or given adequate power to run their affairs, they would be able to measure up to the yearnings, aspiration and expectation of their people, thereby reducing frictions between ethnic groups since they won't be looking unto the federal government for allocation.

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