The Role Plateau Peace Building Agency and the Importance of Conflict Resolution

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Abstract

The importance of conflict resolution cannot be over emphasized considering its enormous impact on the society. Conflict is normal and natural with society but becomes abnormal when it proves intractable to resolution. The study examined the importance of Bureau for peace and conflict resolution and the importance of conflict resolution. The objective

of the study is to examine the role of Bureau for Peace and Conflict Resolution and the importance of conflict resolution, to examine the best conflict management modes or styles that can be used to resolve conflict, to identify the effectiveness of dialogue and mediation as a tool in managing conflict. Human Needs Model Theory was used for this study. The finding of the study reveal that government is able to achieve sustainable peace as a result of her community dialogue, mediation, all-inclusive government as well as effective and efficient military intervention. The recommendations for this study is that none violent conflict management approaches such as dialogue, mediation and negotiations should always be adopted by government at all levels in resolving or management of conflict. traditional military intervention should be used as measures of last resort hence almost all conflicts are amendable to peaceful resolution, government at all levels should have political will to tackle immediate and remote cause of conflict in the society.

Keywords: Bureau for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Conflict Resolution

Introduction

Nigeria has played host to different types of conflict, especially since the beginning of the fouth republic, critical amongst those is ethno-religious conflict, whose centrifugal tendencies potent dangerous vortex for the cooperate existence of the country (Idahosa, 2013). Conflict is natural with societies it becomes dysfunctional when it proves unsusceptible to resolution. Samson (2005:13) conflict management is process or an act geared towards reducing negative and destructive capacity of conflict through various means or measures and by working with and through the stakeholders (parties involved in a conflict). The importance of conflict management cannot be over emphasized considering its ability to control, regulate, limit and transform conflict for positive peace (Oyedolapo, 2013). This study on the importance of Bureau for peace and conflict resolution in conflict management was keenly adopted to exploit the various peace and conflict management mechanisms initiated by Government to maintain and sustain peace.

The continual manipulations of those socially constructed categories triggered violence in the city, consequently, effort at peace building within the ethno-religiously divided city, have defied real and apparent solutions so far on the one hand, government responses to the recurring conflicts have been widely perceived as ineffective, while on the other hand, the non-committal stance of the warring factions has given momentum to the collective destruction going on in the city (Idahosa, 2013).

Peace is a political condition that ensures justice and social stability through formal institutions, practices and norms (Miller and King 2003). The importance of peace and conflict management cannot be over emphasized especially if we consider principles of peace like that of Ahima. Which sees peace from the concept of non-violence or non injury to all aspects or forms of life be it man, animal or plant.

Peace equally means the "pursuit of truth" or insistence on the truth (Gandi, 1928:36) conflict is a normal and aspect of relationships. As human beings, we are primed to respond to stress with a fight or harsh response. Often, neither of the choices is appreciating. Therefore, we need to find a way to address conflict that is direct and assertive which also can be respectful and diplomatic (Joyce, 2013).

The peace being enjoyed in Plateau state seems to be attracting people and events to the state (Nigeria Pilot, 2016). On assumption in office, Governor Lalong set up a 14-man Fulani/Berom peace committee to reconcile their differences towards lasting peace. "They have all poured out their minds and you will be surprised at how opened they have been to each other. They all have to leave in peace." Primetime News (2015) the Plateau state commissioner for commerce and industry, Hon. Ezekiel Daju, has linked the moderate achievement in the state to the relative peace been enjoyed in the state. According to Daju, peace is the hallmark of developmental and infrastructural development (Today.ng.news, 2016). The importance of Plateau Peace Building Agency is tantamount to the third party intervention in conflict resolution. Burseghyang and Karaev (2004) defines third party as a process which an intermediary or as a third party facilities or enforces a mutually acceptable settlement between the two conflicting parties, negotiation and proposing settlement to a conflict. Another perspective to the

importance of peace is that we belong to one another (Justin, 2012) as such; they should be no room for conflict.

In a speech delivered in Oslo, IMF Managing Director Dominique Strauss-Kahn urged policymakers to focus on economic stability to help underpin world peace. Talking about the importance of peace management in our society, there is a relationship between economic stability and peace if you lose one you are likely to lose another (Dominique, (2009). Strauss-Kahn reminded the audience that the current global crisis was the deepest and broadest since the Great Depression, and that the bold decisions taken by policymakers worldwide were instrumental for the economic recovery we are seeing now. "In the face of crisis, countries came together to face common challenges with common solutions, focusing on the global common good. We saw this in fiscal policy, in monetary policy, and in financial sector policy", Strauss-Kahn said. He continued explaining why peace is a necessary precondition for sustained economic growth. For example, in many areas of the world, there is potential risk to higher unemployment or lower purchasing power. Unfortunately, economic marginalization and destitution are catalysts for social unrest, political instability, breakdown of democracies and even war. Strauss-Kahn told the audience that, in a sense, the IMF's collective efforts to fight the crisis cannot be separated from its efforts to guard social stability and to secure peace.

Peace is a necessary recondition for trade, sustained economic growth and prosperity, ultimately peace and prosperity feed on each other (Dominique, (2009).

Conceptual Clarifications

Plateau Peace Building Agency (PPBA)

On the 2nd of February 2016, the Executive Governor of Plateau State, Rt Hon Barr Simon Bako Lalong established the Plateau Peacebuilding Agency (PPBA) through an Act of Legislation as a proactive response to the repeated cycles of violence that spanned over two decades. This dedicated government agency is non-partisan, non religious and non-ethnic serving as a hub for the effective coordination of all conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts in Plateau state.

Plateau Peacebuilding Agency is a platform for continuous engagement with all state and non-state actors on the scene. The stakeholders work together to resolve conflicts and prevent new ones. Through systematic dialogue, mediation, conflict transformation, peace education, sensitization, advocacy and community outreaches, they speak to strengthening community social cohesion and strengthening of structures that promote and enable healing, forgiveness and reconciliation.

The creation of PPBA is also a crucial step in the effort to adopt and develop a comprehensive approach to conflict transformation, post conflict rehabilitation, reconciliation and recovery. The philosophical and operational principles of the agency draw significantly from ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework. It also speaks to the first item on the Rt. Hon Simon Bako Lalong's five pillar policy thrust- Peace, Security and Good Governance.

The Plateau State Peace Building Agency (PPBA) is an institutional framework established by law to respond to the challenges of peace and security in the state. Their mandate is to promote the culture of peace and harmonious coexistence, among the various ethno-religious divides on the Plateau. They operate through strategic partnerships with state and non-state actors, they also coordinate conflict resolution and peace building interventions of stakeholders who work in and around the issues of Peace Building and conflict prevention. They believe in the creative engagement of young people and gender mainstreaming in peace building efforts as a panacea for building lasting peace in their communities, thus they constantly evolve strategies for youth and women empowerment, and also assist vulnerable groups to be useful to themselves and their societies. They are non-partisan, non-religious and non-ethnic, and their work is all geared towards building a safer and more stable plateau that is at peace with itself and the rest of the world.

Vision for the future: *"A united, stable and all-inclusive Plateau at peace with itself and the rest of the World".*

As a dedicated institutional mechanism to fill the gap in the state architecture for Peace, the functions of PPBA includes the following:

a. Promote the culture of peace and harmonious co-existence among diverse ethnic and religious groups in the state.
b. Develop a functional arrangement for coordination and cooperation between government and CSOs, NGOs, CBOs in the field of conflict prevention, peace and security through policy dialogue, research, and the development and implementation of peace and conflict prevention programs.
c. Facilitate conflict settlements through multi-track diplomacy and negotiations, conflict resolution training, mediation services, and peace education.
d. Develop collaborative partnerships with international organizations and donor agencies working on and around issues of conflict prevention and peace building.

Other functions includes:

i. Coordinated Advocacy, Training and Facilitation.
ii. Conflict Mediation and Settlement.
iii. Inter-Faith, Inter-Party and Inter-Communal Dialogues.
iv. Peace Education And Countering Violent Extremism.
v. Humanitarian Interventions.
vi. Post-Conflict Rehabilitation, Healing and Reconciliation.
vii. Research and Policy Formulation on Peace and Conflict Related issues.

Principles of PPBA

i. Fairness, Equality And Justice
ii. Non-Partisanship
iii. Inclusiveness
iv. Neutrality
v. Dignity Of All People
vi. Interdependence
vii. Accountability
viii. Non-Violence

Thematic Areas of Focus

i. Research Partnerships and Coordination
ii. Natural Resource Management
iii. Peace Education
iv. Gender And Youth
v. Post-Conflict Rehabilitation And Recovery

Conflict Resolution

Conflict Resolution is a process that is predisposed to new beginning, by using various conflict management mechanisms such as peace building, peace talk, mediation and dialogue etc Samson Ebimaro, (2008).

Conflict resolution is a skill that benefits professionals across all types of career paths. What makes this true? Simply put, interpersonal conflict can occur in virtually any setting, from office jobs to in-field work. Understanding how to deal with interpersonal conflict, reconcile emotions and reach an understanding are valuable practices that boost well-being and productivity and all of these techniques are learned through conflict resolution. Conflict resolution is more than just a single technique for understanding the difference between mediation and arbitration. This complex skill set can lead to a rewarding career. It's more than just navigating difficult conversations. Read on to learn more about what conflict resolution is and why it's important (Jacob, 2022).

Overview of Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution is the process of ending a dispute and reaching an agreement that satisfies all parties involved. Since conflict is an essential part of being human, effective conflict resolution is not designed to avoid disagreements. Instead, conflict resolution skills are used to facilitate discussions, increase understanding and control emotional responses.

Some of the most common cognitive errors that lead to unproductive or unresolved conflict include:

Self-serving fairness interpretations

This term refers to the process of one or more parties deciding what is "fair" from a biased point of view. In workplace conflict resolution, you'll learn skills that help you discuss conflict from a more neutral stance.

Overconfidence

Overconfidence when arguing or disputing a matter can lead to undesirable outcomes. While overconfidence in a personal disagreement may simply cause embarrassment, this cognitive error can be even more detrimental when dealing with legal issues—particularly when you are ill-prepared for the argument at

hand. Overconfidence also prevents one or more conflicting parties from seeing the other's perspective, which is an issue that workplace conflict resolution aims to resolve.

Escalation

Escalation tactics can prolong a dispute for longer than necessary, thus making an agreement even more difficult to reach. In a personal dispute, escalation may involve one party raising the stakes of the argument, or bringing in additional issues that exist outside of the situation at hand. In legal terms, escalation refers to increasing charges or spending more money on litigation.

Avoidance

Avoidance is the practice of circumventing conflict. Examples of avoidance may include bottling up emotions, changing the subject when an issue is brought up, or physically leaving the situation altogether.

Blaming

Blaming refers to the tactic of one or more parties ridding themselves of responsibility for a disagreement—thus placing all the faults on the other party. When blaming is used during a conflict, it can be difficult to get both parties to agree on how they played a role in the situation. When one party looks down upon the other from an inaccurate moral high ground, a real resolution is virtually impossible.

Emotional volatility and insults

Finally, we have one of the most common and destructive cognitive errors found in conflict resolution: emotional volatility, often expressed through insults.

When one or more parties resort to inflicting emotional (or even physical damage) on the other party, the chances of reaching a calm and reasonable agreement decrease drastically. Not only does emotional volatility make for a hostile discussion environment, but insults can also lead the other party to withdraw entirely.

How Conflict Resolution works

The practice of conflict resolution involves a number of different methods. Resolving conflict may be done privately through negotiation between parties, or through the use of a neutral third party, such as a counselor or mediator.

Conflict resolution techniques commonly used in conflict resolution situations include:

i. Active listening

At the heart of every conflict resolution strategy is active listening. Active listening refers to the practice of focusing on what the other party is saying, then including their message when making your own statements. Having active listening skills not only facilitates discussions and increases mutual understanding, but also allows each party to feel heard.

Here are some examples of active listening skills:

a. Stress management
b. Managing emotions
c. Articulation
d. Negotiation
e. Decisiveness

ii. "I" statements

"I" statements are used to prevent blaming and unfair accusations when arguing. This is because each party may feel like the other has done something, but they cannot prove this to be true. Instead of claiming that the other party acts or feels a certain way, instead, the party will approach their statement by speaking from their *own* experience.

iii. Emotional regulation

Emotional regulation is used to prevent volatility and insults when managing and resolving conflict. By leaning on emotional intelligence and putting the right expectations in place, and utilizing anger management skills, both parties can reach an agreement calmly without letting emotional reactions influence the outcome.

Here are some examples of emotional regulation skills:

a. Staying calm
b. Stress management
c. Empathy
d. Sincerity
e. Handling difficult personalities
f. Understanding
g. Patience
h. Self awareness

iv. Communication

Effective communication skills are the foundation of conflict resolution (and every healthy relationship). Not only does clear and proper communication help resolve personal and professional problems, but it can also *prevent* similar situations from happening in the future.

Here are some examples of essential communication skills:

a. Verbal and nonverbal communication
b. Articulation
c. Persuasion

v. Assertiveness

Although it may seem counterproductive, reasonable levels of assertiveness can be beneficial when performed calmly. This is because assertiveness pushes people to address their feelings and voice their expectations of the other party, rather than avoiding conflict altogether.

Here are some examples of essential skills:

a. Decisiveness
b. Fairness
c. Self control
d. Management
e. Voicing and accepting opinions

vi. Apologizing

When necessary, the final step to an effective conflict resolution process is knowing when to apologize. It's important to note that successful conflict resolution will bring both of the involved parties to fully understand what they've done and why an apology is needed, rather than simply going through the motions to end the conflict.

Importance of Conflict Resolution

Proper conflict resolution skills are designed to keep disagreements from escalating while continuing to discuss each point of view and eventually reach a collaborative conclusion. By using conflict resolution skills, you'll be better equipped to learn from and teach others in both professional and personal realms.

i. Building Relationships

Personal and professional relationships can often suffer from unresolved arguments. If two or more parties struggle to resolve their conflict, these feelings may lead to explosive behaviors and resentment later on. Communication, emotional awareness and empathy are crucial elements of conflict resolution that can lead to high-functioning and more satisfying relationships in all aspects of life. Rather than simply dismissing a relationship after a rough patch or argument, conflict resolution techniques can help you strengthen these relationships and prevent these issues in the future.

ii. Goal Achievement

Ongoing conflict situations may stand in the way of completing goals, particularly in business relationships. When arguments arise in the workplace, productivity typically declines. It can be difficult to focus or work together on a project when underlying conflict is present. Resolving these issues at the root can lead to greater efficiency and goal achievement. In order to pass personal and professional milestones, it's important to utilize conflict resolution skills—particularly the ability to compromise, negotiate and move forward after a disagreement.

iii. Enhancing Commitment

Conflict resolution can help bring people together once an issue is put to rest. One of the most important elements in conflict resolution is choosing to tackle

problems as a team, rather than attacking each other. This technique is a wise way to enhance each party's commitment to the process, and avoid greater feelings of defensiveness. While conflict can be destructive, it can also be a sign of strong commitment and emotional attachment. By working with these feelings, each party can gain a better understanding of one another's goals and lead to greater dedication and loyalty moving forward.

iv. Generating New Insight

Resolution is important, but so is conflict in itself. When people have differing perspectives, this can open the door to new ideas, innovations and ways to solve a problem. Proper conflict resolution skills are designed to keep disagreements from escalating while continuing to discuss each point of view and eventually reach a collaborative conclusion. By using conflict resolution skills, you'll be better equipped to learn from and teach others in both professional and personal realms.

Some methods of preventing conflicts are:

It is worthy of note that conflict is natural and normal in human all human relations. But what is abnormal is when the conflict becomes intractable and resistance to resolutions.

i. Inter- Religious Dialogue

It equally refers to interfaith communication. According to royal Institute for Interfaith Studies, it is the process of communication, sharing, borrowing and adaption of two or more religious inclinations. The aim is to smoothen out differences and emphasize the common ground. People are encouraged to learn and emphasize living together based on good deal of information contact and exchange of views (Monsuru, 2007). Strict adherence to the underlying root causes of religious violence, should be exposed and addressed. They are: religious ideology; that is the dogmatic belief or value system in contrast to other religious beliefs should be addressed for social to tolerance. The influence of the invisible hands; the policy makers have forgotten that the so-called religious conflicts are articulated by the political elites and prosecuted by the down- trodden or the poor whose basic aim is not always to demonstrate their religious imperative or obligations but to kill and loot for economic survival. So, religious crises are basically fought by the poor for selfish interest in Nigeria.

ii. Trust Building

It is a big task which allows high level of sincerity. In the mode and conduct of post conflict relationship of ex-combats. Until natural suspicion filter way in relationship and altitudes of ex-combatants, peace cannot be achieved good governance and political will. Government at all levels should address social ill of structural imbalances, social disenchantment, marginalization and lack of transparency and rule of law. Government should equally demonstrate political will and come out with categorically statement against all form of religious bigotries, chauvinism.

Theoretical Framework

John Burton: Human Needs Model

John Burton's work is of immense significance in the field of human needs model. He argues when an individual or group is denied its fundamental need for identity, security, recognition or equal participation within the society, protracted conflict is inevitable. To resolve such conflict, it is essential that needs that are threatened be identified and subsequently restructuring of relationships or the social system take place in a way that needs of all individuals and groups are accommodated. For instance, this model can be useful in the case of Maldives where there are restraints on freedom and participation of its citizens in political life.

Literature Review

The costliest commodity in the world today is peace. Conflict is obviously the most daunting and taunting threats to humanity. In spite of this social puzzle, man has not done enough to proffer lasting solution to this threat to humanity. Conflict is natural with society but becomes dysfunctional when it proves unsusceptible to resolutions (Samson, 2008-13).

Another centrifugal forces militating against peace and conflict resolutions is traditional military intervention, in quelling armed conflicts, which may quench the war without the battle, others are bad governance and lack of rule of law. In a society where they are structural imbalance, peace is elusive. Marginalization, policy of exclusion, poverty as well as injustice usually attracts conflicts. Window dressing approach of government is a big problem in conflict management.

Lasting peace has always been a fruitless effort in Nigeria due to some clandestine factors. For example, the successive solutions or strategies adopted to address religious conflict in Nigeria have achieved very little because most of strategies failed to address some underlying root causes of the conflicts. The policy makers have forgotten that the so called religious conflicts are articulated by the elites and prosecuted by the down trodden or the poor whose basic aim is not to demonstrate their religious imperatives but to kill and loot for economic survival (Monsuru, 2011; 17).

It is safe and germane to conclude here that until government at all levels show genuine commitment to peace and conflict management by addressing fundamental root causes of conflicts, if not, peace may still be elusive in the society.

Methodology

The data used for this study were collected through both primary and secondary source.

The researcher used both primary and secondary sources of data collection in order to achieve a successful data collection. Chi-Square method was used to test the hypothesis formulated. Chi-square is also used because, the intention between the observed and expected frequency of a given data. The data collected from the respondents with the aid of questionnaire was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 17.0 Version.

Discussion of Findings

From the study, a number of findings were made. The study shows that ethno-religious crisis is mostly responsible for the conflict. The study also shows that the impact of the conflicts include among other things, lost of lives and properties, lost of job, lost of businesses, and the feelings of insecurity among the citizens, psychological trauma experienced by the victims, apprehension among the people because of repeat victimization, loss means of livelihood, homes and properties, hopelessness, loss of friends, relatives, family and bread winners of the family are other consequences of the conflicts. The findings also reveal that government is able to achieve sustainable peace as a result of her community dialogue,

mediation, all-inclusive government as well as effective and efficient military intervention.

Conclusion

Conflict is natural with societies; it becomes dysfunctional when it proves unsusceptible to resolution. The conflict management initiative of Plateau State Bureau for peace and conflict resolution which adopted dialogue mediation all-inclusive government as well as military intervention brought durable peace to the once conflict-ridden state. It is safe to conclude here that conflict is better resolved or managed through nonviolent approach. The traditional military approach of balance of power which may end the war but cannot end the battle should be discouraged.

Recommendations

1. None violent conflict management approaches such as dialogue, mediation and negotiations should always be adopted by government at all levels in resolving or management of conflict.
2. Traditional military intervention should be used as measures of last resort hence almost all conflicts are amendable to peaceful resolution.
3. Government at all levels should have political will to tackle immediate and remote cause of conflict in the society.
4. All inclusive government, power-sharing approach should be adopted to give aggrieved parties sense of belonging.
5. Justice equality and fairness should be given top priority in all forms of peace and conflict resolution in the society.
6. Political, religious and ethnic differences should be discouraged in conflict resolution in the society.

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