[Panel One]

**PEACE-BUILDING EFFORTS IN THE NORTH-EAST: WHAT NEED TO BE DONE**

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**A paper presented at the First Annual Conference of Nigerian Political Science Association [NPSA] North East Zone, Hosted by Department of Political Science, Federal University of Kashere 24th to 27th April, 2018**

**Abstract**

*In recent years close to a decade now, peace has eluded the North Eastern part of Nigeria particularly Borno State which was hitherto been referred to as the “Home of Peace”. The search for peace has become a herculean task, though not limited to Borno state which is worst hit by the activities of Boko Haram insurgency. By extension, the activities of the insurgents spilled over to the neighboring Yobe, Gombe, Bauchi, including some attacks claimed by Boko Haram in other parts of the country. Similarly, a new dimension of communal and ethnic clashes between farmers and herdsmen in Taraba and Adamawa States in the region calls for a proactive measures. This paper looked into the Peace-Building Effort in the North East and What Need to be Done, with the objective to evaluate certain measures taken by government so far in either short or long term plan. The paper contend that, peace-building is a continued process which requires a robust and indeed pragmatic approach in curving violence and other forms of conflict afflicting the region in the post-conflict situations. Thus, the paper recommended that; there is need for increase budgeting and tracking its spending so as to ensure efficient fund utilization in addressing human security and the plight of the vulnerable.**There should be effective and proper engagement of Community Based Organisations, traditional and religious leaders as critical stakeholders in the peace-building process. Government should facilitate post-conflict trauma centers and rehabilitation of the survivors and subsequent reintegration.**Government should expedite action on reconstruction and rehabilitations of critical infrastructure like schools, health facilities, public buildings etc as part of long-term plan in peace-building mechanism.**Internally displaced persons should be encourage to return to their towns and villages that are liberated from the insurgents.*

**Key words: *Peace-Building, North East, Boko Haram, Insurgency, Conflict***

**Introduction**

*As students of politics and political science, we should and we do care about events which leads to war, instability and international tension as well as events which leads to equitable interdependence, integration, peace, improvements of quality of life, reduction of colonialism and so on*

[Azar 1986]

The North Eastern region was part of the defunct Northern region in the colonial era and the period preceding it up to 1967 when it was carved as the North Eastern State in one of the first political restructuring in the post-independence period. Subsequent balkanization of the country further dismantle the political space as a bigger entity, thus, at present, it is made up of Six States of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe. Indeed the region is blessed with vast arable land amounting to about 1,794,400 ha under cultivation according to National Bureau of Statistics [NBS, 2018]. Unfortunately a sizeable portion of this arable land could not be cultivated due largely to displacement of many villages and towns especially in the most affected states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe by Boko Haram insurgency. The consequences rendered this arable land uncultivated, thus, in the midst of the insurgency in 2012, the region was the second highest in poverty ranking by six Geo-Political zones of the country just after the North West [NBS 2012].

In view of some of this impediment to development, the search for peace becomes necessary. Peace is said to be an intangible commodity with a priceless tag, which once shattered, gaining it back requires huge investment in terms of human and material resources. Therefore, absence of peace implies that a given community, region or country has been inflicted with instability particularly if the nature of the conflict is overtly violent in character. Johan Galtung, a leading scholar on peace, popularized what he refers to as ‘negative peace’ and ‘positive peace’. Emphasizing that, positive peace is the absence of physical hostilities while negative peace is the absence of structural violence imbued in the society (Galtung, 1990). Nonetheless, violent conflicts usually take its toll on both material and human lives living the survivors with scar and gory tale of psychological trauma.

However, in recent years, clocking to a decade now, the intangible commodity of ‘peace’ have so far eluded the North Eastern part of Nigeria due largely to the activities of Boko Haram insurgency particularly in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States that crippled the socio-economic development of the region in terms of farming, fishing, education, health, infrastructure among others. It is worthy of note that prior to the advent of the Boko Haram insurgency in the North East, other forms of conflict do occurred on both small and large scale be it communal, ethnic or religious or to a very large extent the emerging trend of herders/farmers skirmishes which has become a defining moment of social relations between and amongst myriad of ethnic groups.

Be that as it may, the phenomena of conflicts and indeed the questions of terrorism and insurgency is a global concern, owing to the fact that communities, societies, states and nation-states have experienced or are experiencing one form of conflict or the other, be it an overt or covert conflicts as the case may be.

The paper scrutinized Peace-Building Effort towards a sustainable peace in the North East and what need to be done in a sustained manner in terms of investment that would eventually mitigate and contain the remnants of the insurgency and other forms of conflicts in the region. It also aims at underscoring the Prospects and the challenges in post conflict peace-building, management, reconciliation, mediation and resolution in a more robust and pragmatic way possible. The paper is structured into six sections, beginning with the introduction then a section on understanding concept of peace-building after which is the review of some peace-building approaches/perspectives. It is followed by the discussion on peace-building efforts in the north east from the conflict transformation approach, conclusion and recommendations are the last part of the paper.

**Understanding Concept of Peace-Building**

Let me begin with a quotation from the former Nassarawa state Governor Abdullahi Adamu during the Northern peace conference in 2004, tagged Peace-Building and Conflict Resolution in Northern Nigeria held at Arewa House, Kaduna, who posits that;

*The search for peace is a commitment, progress for peace is critical to all human societies. Its absence has disastrous and enormous consequences. But we cannot search for peace outside ourselves as it resides in the minds of men and women. Wars and disagreements begin in the mind. The same mind that hatches wars and disagreement also hatches peace…* [Adamu in Yakubu and Bobboyi 2004 p8].

The concept of peace-building is credited to the former United Nations [UN] Secretary General, Boutrous Boutrous-Ghali in his effort to provide a conflict resolution strategies and mechanism. In his capacity as the UN Secretary General, he issued a UN agenda for peace in 1992, with the task before the UN and peace practitioners to undertake among others; preventive diplomacy, peace-making, peace-keeping and peace-building. Consequently, by mid 1990s, research efforts on this new UN agenda showed that, it is increasingly becoming difficult for parties to implement it on their own without oversight and assistance from international actors [Hampson, 1996]. The focus of this paper in centered on peace-building efforts in the North East, hence, other concepts as outlined above would only be mention for reference and clarity as the case may be.

Though the concept of ‘Peace-Building’ has been attributed to Boutros-Ghali, however, prior to the UN report in 1995, the concept was essentially restricted to activities designed to consolidate peace in post-conflict countries in order to avoid relapse into the circle of conflict [Karbo 2008]. Similarly, another refutable diplomat in person of Kofi Annan in his Agenda for Development [2004], Annan argued that, the requisite for peace-building effort is pegged on a sustained cooperative work on the underlying economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems [Annan 2004]. In view of the above and other empirical studies on peace-building, certain shortcomings were quick to be identified, that it has utilized a limited and narrow analysis which more often focuses on short term measures of transitions.

This view is shared by Ali and Mathew [2004] concurring with the fact that, short term peace-building processes as proposed in the preceding agenda and other independent studies, argued that;

*Emphasis on short term measures such as signing of ceasefire, the demilitarization and reintegration of former combatant, the resettlement of displaced persons among others [sic] are not sustainable with greater potentials for relapse* [Ali and Mathew 2004]

Studies as conducted in post-conflict societies such as Angola, Somalia and Sudan have proven the weaknesses of the much emphasise political aspects of the complex process of building sustainable peace [Karbo 2008]. Derivable from the above, Karbo is of the view that;

*Peace-building should be much more than designing interventions at the political and economic levels…he further assert that…peace-building must be designed with a view to addressing the fundamental causes and conditions of the conflicts* [Karbo, 2008 p144]

Karbo also believes that, peace-building requires a sustained processes of designing programmes that address the security and political realities of the country in question as well as looking at measures that would transform the personal, social, economic and cultural relationships of that community. It should be noted that Karbo [2008], Ali and Mathew [2004] intellectual discourse on peace-building is in an attempt to provide a departure from the liberal-peace approaches to peace-building which they criticize as short-term and unsustainable and they viewed it from the larger context of Africa.

Their point of argument suggests that, the age long peace-building practice in Africa as they view is in contradistinction with the exportation of imposition of peace-building and development interventions based on the liberal peace-project. Further arguing that, the ultimate of peace-building in African context or any sphere of post-conflict society, is the rebuilding of relationships, asserting communal responsibilities and solidarity [Karbo 2008]. Rebuilding of relationship as posited here is in tandem with conflict transformation approach which has been extensively discussed by Karbo alongside other perspectives like the structural conflict approach.

**A Review of Some Peace-Building Approaches/Perspectives**

The North Eastern region has long historical records from many centuries ago, in Kanem Borno, the Kwararrafa adventurers, the Fulani encounter with Borno as well, are in the record history of the region. The inhabitants are well known for bravery, deep rooted cultural practices across the myriads of ethnic nationalities. Be that as it may, the outburst in the activities of Boko Haram in addition to communal clashes between the pastoralist and the farmers in recent time has totally crippled the socio-political and economic fabrics of the North East, though it is in record that the region prior to this time had a similitude of ideological conflict in Borno and Yola religious violence in 1980s popularized as Maitatsine uprising. However, that was properly contained and managed appropriately.

Consequent upon this synopsis, it is pertinent at this juncture to look at some perspectives in analysing the peace-building efforts in the North Eastern region bearing in mind the focus of the paper. There are a number of peace-building approaches or perspectives which includes;conflict transformation approach, Structural peace-building approach, Non-governmental organisation and peace-building approach and lastly Peace-building and DDR respectively. Nonetheless, the paper provide an overview of these approaches as theoretical basis and then dwell on the practical peace-building efforts in the North East by both the government and the international donors.

The first approach dwells extensively on transforming relationship as basis for peace-building. While the structural approach posits that, conflict is characterized by weak political and administrative institutions which further compound the decaying economic infrastructure, high levels of international debt, poor and weak legal framework for tax policy and collection mechanism, highly unsustainable military expenditure and indeed high levels of human and capital plight [Ball 2005]. The third approach recognized the role of the NGOs in peace-building, though citing examples in Somalia and elsewhere with destabilizing side effects including the resort to violence when NGOs and CBOs do more harm than positive, as such exacerbating violence [Karbo 2008]. Consequently, the last approach which is demobilization, disarmament and reintegration is believed by this approach to be one of the most immediate and complex challenges in post conflict societies. And that improperly demobilized combatants are likely to turn to crime, banditry and violence Collier [1994], Weiss-Fagen [1995] and Kingma [1999].

However, all of the above from their perspectives are relevant in appraising the post-conflict efforts in the North East, either by individual perspectives or a holistic view of all. This paper will dwell on the conflict transformation approach and interchangeably adopt other perspective being that the conflict in the region is multidimensional from Boko Haram insurgency to communal clashes in some vulnerable flash points between pastoralist and farmers, though emphasis is on the for

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Drawing from the conflict transformation perspective, it is basically concerned with transforming deep rooted armed conflicts into peaceful one. Talking about transforming deep rooted armed conflicts like Boko Haram insurgency, ethno-religious or communal clashes and lately renewed attacks and counter attacks between pastoralist and farmers in the North East implies that, there should be a tangential commitment to peace-building and conflict transformation at both potent and latent levels.

According to conflict transformation approach as argued by Marie Dugan [1997], that; this approach “acknowledges the inevitability and ubiquitous nature of conflicts, hence, the desire to combine both short-term and long-term relationship building by transforming the root causes of the conflict”. When the nature of the conflicts has been established, it suggest that both long-term and short-term relationship building is on course. The approach further demands that; “undesired situations should be terminated by building something desired through transformation of relationship and construction of the conditions for peace”.

Corroborating on the above, Lederach [1999] posits that peace-building; “involves transformation of relationships, which includes processes of change within a more expansive view of context and time”. The expansive view of context and time here suggests what Marie [1997] refers to as short-term and long-term relationship building. Lederach further adumbrate that, peace-building should not be limited to only concrete marker of peace, such as signing of agreement or cessation of hostilities. Rather peace-building should be an ongoing multifaceted and holistic concept tied to the society’s social, cultural, political, spiritual, economic and developmental fabrics. In a practical terms, Lederach identified three levels of intervention in peace-building to includes; leaders of government, the armed groups, [rebels] and grassroots leaders all of whom constitutes a stake in the conflict [ Lederach 1999, Karbo 2008].

Haven established the fact that, transforming relationship is cardinal in building peace from this perspective, certain questions need to be asked that; what would be the cost of rebuilding or transforming social relations and the existing infrastructure and social services already damged in the North-East in terms of education, health, public buildings, transport etc. This and many other demand is a prerequisite in dealing with post-conflict situations. Though, post-conflict is yet a bit difficult to define due to the fact that conflict re-occurs after some period of peace [Gamawa 2017], or Galtunian version of absence of physical violence ‘positive peace’ and absence of structural violence ‘negative peace’ [Galtung 1964]. This implies that, cessation of violence alone does not guarantee peace, rather a possible relapse to violence is potent. Moreover, let’s consider the table below which is an overview of the recovery and peace-building needs by components in the six North Eastern States as at 2015 in million of US dollars.

**Table 1.1**

**An Overview of Recovery and Peace-Building Needs by Components [In Million US Dollars]**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Components | Adamawa | Borno | Yobe | Gombe | Taraba | Bauchi | Fed/Reg. | Total |
| Peace-Building and social cohesion | 28 | 38 | 23 | 14 | 19 | 24 | 6 | 152 |
| Infrastructure and Social Services | 595 | 3933 | 668 | 129 | 145 | 203 | 95 | 5768 |
| Economic Recovery | 38 | 69 | 31 | 22 | 28 | 41 | 245 | 474 |
| Total | 660 | 4040 | 722 | 165 | 192 | 268 | 345 | 6392 |

Source: FGN North East, Nigeria Recovery and Peace- Building Assessment; Synthesis Report 2015

What is observable from the needs breakdown as obtained on the table above, indicates that, social services and infrastructure recovery and peace-building needs is critical which engulfed the highest in total. In addition, Borno followed by Adamawa and Yobe States have higher needs per individual state, perhaps due to the overwhelming devastation caused by Boko Haram insurgency. Equally, economic recovery component in the worst hit States as obtained on the table revealed that Borno, Bauchi and Adamawa are in needs of serious economic recovery. Going forward, a peace-building and social cohesion need of the components is the least, base on the assessment conducted in the report. This does not suggest that, the peace-building and social cohesion is the least prioritize, because it is more of intangible components while the social services and infrastructure components are a physical and indeed concrete need that is capital intensive in terms of investment.

Furthermore, it appears that, peace-building efforts in both short-term and long-term process in the North East demands for a pragmatic approach. As the above table attempt to address components needs of the region according to States, as at 2015, a recently humanitarian needs for selected clusters in 2017, dish out a four year plan appeal as indicated on the table below.

**Table 2.1**

**Overview of Humanitarian Needs for Selected Clusters [Based on 2017 Appeal] in Million Dollars**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Clusters/Sector | 2017 Appeal [US Dollars] | 4 Year Programme [US Dollars] |
| Early Recovery and Livelihood | 44,553,589 | 178,214,356 |
| Food Security | 480,260,433 | 1,921,041,732 |
| Health | 93,827,598 | 375,310,392 |
| Nutrition | 110,268,668 | 441,074,672 |
| Protection | 88,274,151 | 353,096,604 |
| Water and Sanitation | 49,736,246 | 198,944,984 |
| Total | 866,920,685 | 3,467,682,740 |

Source: OCHA Financial Tracking System [2017]

As humanitarian situations in the North Eastern region deteriorates due to displacement and damages to infrastructure while the conflict rages, it produced an adverse effect on the productive sector of the economy like the agricultural production which is tied to food security and by extension it may affect the nutritional requirement of the population. As observed from the table above, the cluster on food security in the four year plan is close to 2 billion US Dollars followed by nutrition which perhaps have a correlation to food production. As stated earlier in the background of the paper, the North Eastern region has about1,794,400 ha under cultivation according to National Bureau of Statistics [NBS, 2018]. Unfortunately a sizeable portion of this arable land could not be cultivated due largely to displacement of many villages and towns especially in the most affected states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe by Boko Haram insurgency.

Health, water and sanitation, if properly transformed as peace-building efforts in the North East, it will go a long way in addressing humanitarian situations, thereby encouraging productive ventures going by the popular adage that ‘a healthy nation is a wealthy nation’. Other areas as it appears on the table in the cluster of physical protection, early recovery and livelihood are equally having a direct bearing to peace-building in the North East.

Be that as it may, been that the cluster needs above is an appeal plan for a period of four years from 2017, what would be required is the commitment to adhere to it and by extension successfully implement it as at when due. Moreover, the passage of the North East development Commission [NEDC] bill and its subsequent signing into law, would serve as albatross to the plight of the humanitarian needs of the people especially the internally displaced. The NEDC would help greatly in long term planning in reconstruction, resettlement, rehabilitation and reintegration.

As the Boko Haram insurgency over time attracted the attention of the international community, many collaborative efforts internationally and assistance in military hardware and funds have been on for some time. For instance, below is a graphical presentation of international humanitarian assistants [both appealed and funded] to help rebuild the North East damaged by the war as well as peace-building efforts processes from 2014 to 2017.

**Levels of International Humanitarian Assistance in Millions US Dollars [Appealed and Funded] 2014-2017**

Source: OCHA Financial Tracking System [FTS] Adopted by Famine Response and Prevention in North East, Nigeria

It is clearly observed that, the levels of international humanitarian assistance over the years have steadily rise from less than 200 million in 2014 to well over 1 trillion US Dollars by appeal in the preceding year 2017, even though the funded intervention is a little above 800 million US Dollars. Away from the humanitarian perspective, it has been observed that, the Nigerian government and its armed forces have since 2010 tried to put a stop to the operation and sustained attacks of the Boko Haram group, but has not been able to do so despite arrests and killings of many of the Boko Haram fighters in different encounters. Though substantially, the spate of attacks have been reduced to minimal especially after the 2015 general elections. While the preceding government has tried to address the challenges by increasing the defense budget from 100 billion in 2010 to 927 billion in 2011 and 1 trillion in 2012, 2013 and 2014 respectively [Gamawa 2017], yet, it was incapacitated in the requisite strategy to defeat the insurgents.

By this graphic evidence, as depicted above, it is worthy of note that peace is priceless, but once shattered regaining it requires huge investment in both human and material components of intervention. It also clearly shows level of commitment from both the government and the international community in addressing the plight of the people. As argued by former UN Secretary General Kofi in his Agenda for Development report, 2004, he posits that, the requisite for peace-building effort is pegged on a sustained cooperative work on the underlying economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems [Annan 2004]. Going by this context advanced by Annan, sum up the holistic and pragmatic approach to peace-building which invariably should be pegged on both short-term and long-term processes.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion therefore, this paper has provided statistical evidence, though not exhaustive with regards to peace-building efforts in the North East as pragmatic solution in post-conflict situations. In addition, the paper appreciate the fact that there were certain measures undertaken by both the government in synergy with the international community through support funding to squarely address the socio-economic and humanitarian challenges of the worst affected areas. This is as obtained from the international humanitarian appealed and funded between 2014 and 2017.

Similarly, it is also observed that, the government has both long-term and short-term plan in addressing the menace of insecurity in the North East and this is demonstrated by the drafting and subsequent passage of the North East Development Commission [NEDC], though the paper has not interrogate the nitty-gritty of the commission in terms of its content.

**Recommendations**

The paper recommend that;

* There is need for increase budgeting and tracking its spending so as to ensure efficient fund utilization in addressing human security and the plight of the vulnerable
* There should be effective and proper engagement of Community Based Organisations, traditional and religious leaders as critical stakeholders in the peace-building process
* Government should facilitate post-conflict trauma centers and rehabilitation of the survivors and subsequent reintegration
* Government should expedite action on reconstruction and rehabilitations of critical infrastructure like schools, health facilities etc as part of long-term plan as peace-building mechanism
* Internally displaced persons should be encourage to return to their towns and villages that are liberated from the insurgents

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