



Patterns of Ethnic Conflict and Challenges of Rural Integration in Gombe South Senatorial District, Gombe State

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Article History

Received: 29.04.2024
Accepted: 07.06.2024
Published: 14.06.2024

Abstract: Ethnic conflicts have dotted the historical landscape of the peoples of Gombe South Senatorial Districts as well as contemporary issues are central to these prolonged ethnic conflicts and violence. This study therefore examines the patterns of ethnic conflicts and challenges of rural integration in Gombe South Senatorial District. The study adopted the mixed-method in data collection. A total 365 sample were drawn from 384 populations as well as 24 key informants for the interviews. The study found out among others that; the immediate cause of the crises was the long-standing issue of boundary and land disputes between these communities, lack of economic opportunities also serves to cause crises, the failure to accurately demarcate the boundaries has eventually deteriorated the strong bound relationship and that these communities shares together, the conflicts have negatively affected the economic, social, and political sectors of the areas. During such conflicts, many lives were lost and properties running into millions of naira were also lost, the conflicts succeeded in limiting social interaction and harmony amongst the people. The crises have also resulted in the sharp increase in the number of widows and orphans leading to prostitution, unemployment, school dropout etc. The conflicts have affected the voting. and campaign patterns, democratic values and norms. The conflicts also delay viable political transition and consequently the aspiration of producing a Governor of Gombe State despite being the most literate region in the state. The study concludes that sincere governmental schemes and efforts must be established by government to achieve social and distributive justice for all people in the country. For where there is justice there will be peace and where is peace, there will be no conflicts.

Keywords: Patterns, Ethnic Conflicts, Challenges; Rural Integration, Insecurity, Nigeria.

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout history under a variety of social and political systems and contexts, people in all parts of the world have engaged in conflict and violent expression, they have also wage wars using a variety of techniques of struggles (Wika, 2010). In recent times ethnic conflicts have brought about enormous socio-political and economic consequences on the lives of rural dwellers across the globe, the violence

has become a challenging occurrence attracting the attention of academics all over the world. It affects the development of Africa including Nigeria throughout its political history. Conflicts and violent confrontations are no longer new phenomena in the world, particularly in Africa and specifically in Nigeria.

Violent identity-based, inter-communal conflicts are no longer new to Nigeria. Since the

Citation: Bako Ambrose Tal (2024). Patterns of Ethnic Conflict and Challenges of Rural Integration in Gombe South Senatorial District, Gombe State. *Glob Acad J Humanit Soc Sci*; Vol-6, Iss-3 pp- 126-135.

colonial handover, from the sixties through the eighties, Nigeria has witnessed an upsurge in the occurrences of such conflicts; most of them have traditionally occurred in the North of Nigeria {Cited by Maxwell, 2017 in (Best, 2007:3)}].

According to Akeem and Adeyinka (2012), the trends of violence continued in the Nigerian societies even after the 1st October, 1960 celebration of the country's political independence from the British government. Alhaji (2014) asserts that violence, such as ethnic violence, electoral violence and communal conflicts in the forms of pastoralists-farmers, settlers-indigenes, and land disputes have occurred particularly in the Northern parts of Nigeria in recent time. The geographical northern Nigerian states, such as Kano, Kaduna, Jos-Plateau, Borno, Bauchi, Gombe, Adamawa, Taraba, Yobe, Katsina, Nasarawa, Zamfara, and others have experienced one form of violence to another (Alhaji, 2014). Also, in Northcentral Nigeria, in the last eighteen years, Plateau State particularly Jos has been literally turned into a theatre of intense social conflicts and has been labeled by conflict researchers and social commentators as the main site of age-long ethnic and religious violence within the middle belt region of Nigeria (Best 2007, Wika, 2010)

Furthermore, there are also shreds of evidence of violence in the Eastern part of Nigeria, especially the activities of the Bakassi Boys in Aba, Anambra, Enugu, Imo and Onitsha. The activities of the Oduduwa People's Congress have also contributed to a trend of violence in Western Nigeria, particularly in Lagos and Ibadan. Several cases of violence have also been recorded in Warri, Port Harcourt, and Yenagoa in the forms of militant attacks on multinational oil companies and kidnappings. Wika (2014) asserts that the Maitatsine crises in the 1980s, the Efe-Modakeke crises, the Lagos area boys problem, the Tiv-Jukun crises, the Bassa-Egbura Nasarawa Toto crises, the Kano, Kaduna and Jos religious uprisings, the Niger Delta youth militancy and the book haram Islamic religious terrorism in the Northern parts of Nigeria are some of the major eruptions since the attainment of Flag of independence in 1960.

Gombe State, whose slogan is "Jewel in the Savannah" has suffered a lot of crisis ranging from political/electoral violence; the *Kalare* menace to *Boko-haram*, bomb blast, boundary adjustment induced crisis, etc. which have claimed many lives and properties worth millions of Naira. Gombe South Senatorial District (former Tangale waja region) being the focus of this research has also experienced this trend of ethnic violence. The crisis had been recurring every rainy season for more than 3 decades now. The long dispute was attributed to land with a

lingering legal battle of ownership especially between the people of Tangale in Billiri Local Council and Kulishin People in Shongom Local Council of Kaltungo Chieftdom. Every time the crisis occurs there are wanton and destructions of lives and properties that seriously affect the society negatively (Daily Trust July 20, 2017:1).

Statement of the Problem

As the world becomes more and more globalized economically, politically, socially and religiously, humanity is confronted by issues of conflicts and violence that threatened global peace, human security, and dignity of people. The dramatic technological development and the promises of the 21st century have not brought humanity the peace, justice, and sustainability it desires. From continent to continent, region to region and from country to country, humanity is grappling with a threat to the human being. The global community witnessed 231 armed conflicts between 1945 and 2005 and 51% of which occurred in the immediate aftermath of the cold war between 1989 and 2005 (UCPD, 2006 as cited Bercovitch & Jackson 2009).

In Africa, the last two decades of 20th century Africa were not only a period of economic crises and state policy adjustment; they were also decades of conflicts and violence of varying degrees and dimensions. The period witnessed a general resurgence in ethnic and religious conflict across the continent (Abdu, 2010). The 2016 Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project show that Somalia, Sudan, Burundi, South Sudan, Nigeria, and Libya are the most violent states. The majority of African countries are deeply engaged in ethnic, religious, political and economic crises causing loss of lives, displacement of populations, growth of terrorist and militia groups, insecurity and massive underdevelopment.

Nigeria had witnessed a series of conflict as well as violent eruptions across the length and breadth of the most populous black nation on earth; factors that caused them are both similar and distinct (Egwu, 1998). Nigeria was responsible for 29% of fatalities reported in Africa in 2015 (ACLED, 2017). The number has risen over the last 3 years with the rise of Boko-haram activities, the herders versus farmer's crises and the ethnic conflicts on the rise. Despite the continuous effort of trying to unite the people of different cultures and ethnic groups, Nigeria has continued to be seriously divided along ethnic lines and ownership of land has continued to be a subject of great concern. Thus, ethnic conflicts have become one of the major problems affecting the social, economic and political development of Nigeria in recent years. It has become a major boundary that creates divisions among the people.

Ethnicity and by extension religion, have also become potent tools for mobilization and manipulation in Nigeria. The country and her people have been so manipulated that virtually all institutions in the public and private sectors are being polarized along ethnic and religious lines. Civil servants, community and social workers are most victims of intimidation and oppression in their places of work. Survival and job security are strongly based on who is of the same ethnic group and religion as the boss. These are ideologies that do not promote peaceful and harmonious co-existence among Nigerians. Ethnic values should have been a force that will encourage Nigerians to appreciate the great benefits derivable from working together as a people in honesty and for a better future irrespective of ethnic nationality. However, the contrary is the case. Nowadays, there is a continuous increase in the rate of boundary induced crisis, especially in the Tangale-Waja Zone of Gombe State, particularly the Billiri/Kaltungo crisis.

There are many written documents on the causes of the Billiri/Kaltungo communal crisis as well as various committee reports and recommendations to bring the malady to a final stop. However, the problem keeps on persisting every year with July 2017, September 2018 and August 2019 being the recent ones, which claimed many lives and properties worth millions of Naira. This induced the present study to curtail the violence and finds a solution to checkmating the prevalence of this phenomenon. The main objective of this study is therefore to examine the patterns of ethnic conflicts and challenges of rural integration in Gombe South Senatorial District.

RESEARCH METHOD

Study Area:

Gombe South Senatorial District is the former Tangale Waja region comprising of four (4) local government areas namely, Billiri, Balanga, Kaltungo and Shongom local government areas politically referred to Gombe south. The research settings of the four (4) LGAs where the study is carried out are presented below.

Research Design:

Research design is a 'blueprint' guiding a researcher(s) in carrying out a study. Like in the building; it serves as a "master plan" that enables a researcher to come up with a solution to the research problem. According to Akpa (2011), a research design is an explicit process and procedure utilized in obtaining data to provide solutions to social problems. The Research design used in this study is Survey Design. The choice of Survey design is informed by the large area of study (Gombe South Senatorial District) often affected by the crisis. The Survey design enables the researcher to generate

data from respondents who are residents in the affected area of the conflict, to ensure reliable and compelling facts on the nature and various dimension of the conflict and how it is being perceived currently, to proffer solutions to the phenomenon.

Population of the Study:

The population of the study consists of all the people, who are residents of Gombe South Senatorial District. It includes male and female members of the public, government officials, community and religious leaders in the study areas. According to the census (2006), the population of Gombe South senatorial District put together is 716, 018 with the following breakdown: Balanga (212,549), Billiri (202, 144), Kaltungo (149, 805) and Shongom (151,520).

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques:

The large areas of the study, time constraints and availability of resources, it may be difficult if not impossible to use the entire population of (716, 018) of Gombe south. Thus, Research Advisors (2006) and Krejcie and Morgan (1970) suggests that the appropriate sample size for a study with a population of two hundred and fifty thousand (250,000) to three hundred million (300,000,000) is three hundred and eighty-four (384) with a confidence of 95% and margin error of 5.0% and this were used for the study.

The sample size comprised of three hundred and eighty-four (384) respondents for questionnaire administration and twenty-four (24) for the in-depth interview (IDI). The study area comprises of four LGAs i.e. Balanga with a population of (212, 549), Billiri with a population of (202,144), Kaltungo with a population of (149,805) and Shongom with a population of (151,520). To arrive at the actual number of questionnaires that were administered in each Local Government Area, the study divided the projected population of each selected LGA to the actual size of this research which is 716, 018 and multiply it with the number of questionnaires generated from Krejcie and Morgan (1970) scale which is 384.

For instance, the population of Billiri (202,144) divided by 716, 018; gave us 0.282316925 and multiply it by 384 it gave us 108 into one significant figure. Therefore 108 questionnaires were administered in Billiri Local Government area, and the same formula is used in arriving at the number of the questionnaire administered in the other three local government areas, Balanga, Kaltungo and Shongom, 115, 80 and 81 questionnaires respectively. In other words, 384 questionnaires were administered across the four (4) LGAs, with the following breakdown, Balanga 115 questionnaires, Billiri 108 questionnaires, Kaltungo 80 and Shongom

81. However, instead of sampling the entire 10 local government areas each, the study is more interested in the eight (8) communities across the local government areas mostly affected by the crises namely; Kuman Tangle (Kufai), Todi, Tal in Billiri Local Government, Boh, Kulishin and Lalaipido in Shongom local Government, Tungo and Kaltungo west in Kaltungo Local Government. For the twenty-four (24) participants for an in-depth interview, purposive sampling technique is used to access 24 participants i.e. 4 community leaders (Jaurabai), 4 Imams from Islam and 4 Priests from Christianity as the two dominant religion in the study area, 4 members of vigilante, 4 youth leaders and 4 police officers distributed across the four LGAs for in-depth interviews (IDI).

Method of Data Collection:

The questionnaire is advantageous because it saves time and cost and can be easily and effectively analyzed. The questionnaire can equally eliminate ethnocentrism, bias/sentiment that may arise from personal contact between the researcher and the respondents which may jeopardize data to be collected thereby putting the reliability and validity of the research in doubt. The questionnaire is administered personally with the help of 3 research assistants (1 person per LGA) within 1 week. The questionnaires are structured in sections: Section A, B, C, D, and E. Section A; Entails elicit information on the demographic composition and socio-economic characteristic of the respondents (such as age, gender, marital status and level of education, etc.) who are usually scattered in the study area (Ghosh,

2000). Section B, Are the nature of the crises, Section C, deals with the causes of ethnic conflicts, Section D, the impacts of the crises on rural integration and Section E, solutions towards checkmating the prevalence of ethnic conflict and challenges of rural integration in Gombe south senatorial district.

The interview was conducted in each of the areas affected by the conflict to obtain information that enrich the literature review, with key informants such as; the youth's leaders, the community leaders, women leaders, village heads, etc. This is done to compliment the illiterate population and those with reading deficiency and to also authenticate the information generated from the questionnaires. This was done also because not much has been written on the patterns of ethnic conflicts in Gombe south and the media coverage on the recent crisis was grossly inadequate for the literature review.

Method of Data Analysis:

A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis was adopted and used in this study. The quantitative data was analyzed using simple percentage (simple frequencies, percentage, and tabulation) to show the patterns of ethnic conflict in Gombe south. Similarly, the qualitative data generated through the in-depth interview IDI are used to complement and support the quantitative analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Socio-Demographics of the Respondents

Variables Frequency Percentage			
Sex of Respondents	Male	246	67.4%
	Female	119	32.6%
Age of Respondents	18-28	114	31.2%
	29-39	130	35.6%
	40-50	66	18.1%
	Above 50	55	15.1%
Religion Affiliation	Christian	284	77.8%
	Islam	70	19.2%
	Others	11	3.0%
Marital Status of Respondents	Single	104	28.5%
	Married	186	51.0%
	Divorced	30	8.2%
	Widowed	45	12.3%
Educational Qualification	Primary	70	19.2%
	Secondary	161	44.1%
	University	122	33.4%
	Others	12	3.3%
Employment Status	Employed	55	15.0%
	Underemployed	113	31.0%
	Unemployed	197	54.0%
Occupation	Farming	276	75.6%

Variables Frequency Percentage			
Sex of Respondents	Male	246	67.4%
	Female	119	32.6%
	Trading	65	17.8%
	Others	24	6.6%
	Total	365	100.0%

Source: Fieldwork, 2020.

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents based on their socio-demographic characteristics. Sex distribution shows that male respondents were more 246 accounting for 67.4% while female were 119 accounting for 32.6% of the respondents. The age distribution of the respondents show that more than one-third of the respondents were between the ages of 29-39 years (35.6%) and 18-28 years (31.2%) respectively. 66 of the respondents accounting for 18.1% were between the ages of 40-50 years while those above 50 years of age were just 15.1%. On Religious affiliation, Christians accounted for 77.8% while Muslims were 19.2%. Others religion accounted for 3%. Marital status shows that more than half of the respondents were married (51%) while 28.5% were not married. Educational qualification of the respondents shows more than 40% had secondary education and more

than one-third had university education. 19.2% had primary education and 3.3% had other kind of education. On their employment status, 54% were currently not employed. Among those who were employed, 31% were underemployed and only 15% were gainfully employed. Based on those who had other occupation to support their employment status, 75.6% were farming to support while 17.8% were trading to support. Others occupational activities accounted for 6.6%.

The Nature of Ethnic Conflicts in Gombe South Senatorial District:

In achieving this research objective, the formulated research questions 1 was answered using responses from the respondents. Data in table 2 shows the distribution of respondents on the nature of ethnic conflicts in Gombe South.

Table 2: Distribution of Responses on the Nature of Ethnic Conflicts in Gombe South

Variables		Frequency (Percentage)
Witness crises in Gombe South	Yes	355 (97.3%)
	No	10 (2.7%)
Participated in the Crises	Yes	72 (19.7%)
	No	295 (80.8%)
Relationship among identified crises group	Very Cordial	184 (50.4%)
	Not Cordial	179 (49.6%)
Frequency of Conflict	Once a year	318 (87.1%)
	Twice a Year	6 (1.6%)
	Seasonal	27 (7.4%)
	Once in three Years	14 (3.8%)
	Total	365

Source: Fieldwork, 2020.

The data in the table reveals that 97.3% affirmed that crises persist in Gombe south while 2.7% disagree with this fact. 80.8% of the respondents negated the affirmation that they participated in the crises while only 19.7% claimed they have participated. During this crisis, more than half of the respondents claimed rival parties still maintain some level of cordial relationship, as against the 49.6% that asserted that no cordial relationship exists between rival parties. The frequency of conflict manifested more based on yearly occurrence (87.1%)

than seasonal (7.4%). By this implication, the study has strongly revealed that crises still persist in Gombe South.

The Causes of Ethnic Conflicts in Gombe South Senatorial District

Table 3 shows the distribution of respondents on the likely causes of conflict in Gombe South. Of the total respondents, 170 of them accounting for 46.6% strongly agree that political factor is key to the rising conflict in Gombe South.

Table 3: Distribution of responses on the likely causes of the conflict/crises in Gombe South

Variables	SA	A	D	SD	U	Total
Political factor	170	29	61	100	5	365
	46.6%	7.9%	16.7%	27.4%	1.4%	100.0%

Variables	SA	A	D	SD	U	Total
Religious differences	16	1	348	0	0	365
	4.4%	0.3%	95.3%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Economic factors (unemployment/poverty)	292	50	1	9	13	365
	80.0%	13.7%	0.3%	2.5%	3.6%	100.0%
Socio-cultural differences	24	50	185	100	6	365
	6.6%	13.7%	50.7%	27.4%	1.6%	100.0%
Boundary dispute	289	61	5	10	0	365
	79.2%	16.7%	1.4%	2.7%	0.0%	100.0%
Long standing traditional/Historical clashes	124	32	87	11	111	365
	34.0%	8.8%	23.8%	3.0%	30.4%	100.0%

Source: Fieldwork, 2020.

Respondents critically disagree to the point that religious differences (348 (95.3%) is responsible for the glooming crises in Gombe South. More than two-third (80%) accounting for 292 respondents affirmed the fact that unemployment and poverty take a center stage for while crises still persist in Gombe South. Socio-Cultural differences were not a strong and considerable factor for promoting crises in Gombe South (SD =27.4% and D=50.7%). More than two-third of the respondents (79.2%) were

affirmative to the fact that boundary dispute exists in Gombe South and is resulting to crises in the locality while a little above one-third (34%) of the respondents alluded to the fact the long standing traditional and historical clashes is also responsible for conflict in Gombe South. From the above, it is critical to state that, political factor, unemployment/poverty and boundary disputes are crucial driving factors of the looming crises in Gombe South.

Table 4: Distribution of Responses on other likely causes of the conflict/crises in Gombe

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	
Others (Reasons for Crises)	Alcoholism	2	0.5%
	Anger	59	16.2%
	Corruption	8	2.2%
	Drug Abuse	36	9.9%
	Fear of marginalization	147	40.3%
	Ignorance	27	7.4%
	Partiality	59	16.2%
	Poverty	15	4.1%
	Rumor Mongering	12	3.3%
	Total	365	100.0%

Source: Fieldwork, 2020.

On a qualitative note, respondents were asked of other likely factors known to them but not listed in the above. More than 40% of them claimed crises still persist due to the fear of being marginalized in their own ancestral home. Few of them attributed the crises to habitual factors such as Alcoholism (0.5%), Anger (16.2%), and Drug Abuse (9.9%). Some of them still claim that crises have been prolonged as a result of rumor mongers (3.3%), poverty (4.1%), partiality (16.2%) and ignorance (7.4%). The presence of corruption (2.2%) was also

acknowledged as a cause of crises in Gombe South. This finding's is consistent or agreed with the position of Wolff (2006) and Markakis (1994) on the crises.

The Impacts of Ethnic Conflict on Rural Integration in Gombe South Senatorial District

Table 5 shows the distribution of respondents on the impact of conflict on rural integration in Gombe South.

Table 5: Distribution of Responses on impacts of ethnic Conflict/Crises on Rural Integration of Gombe South

Variables	SA	A	D	SD	U	Total
Destruction of lives and properties	298	54	1	0	12	365
	81.6%	14.8%	0.3%	0.0%	3.3%	100.0%
Paralyzed socio-economic activities	184	155	14	0	12	365
	50.4%	42.5%	3.8%	0.0%	3.3%	100.0%
	289	62	4	10	0	365

Variables	SA	A	D	SD	U	Total
Jeopardized existing cordial relationship between Christianity and Islamic religion	79.2%	17.0%	1.1%	2.7%	0.0%	100.0%
Impede local/foreign investment in the areas	214	94	2	8	47	365
	58.6%	25.8%	0.5%	2.2%	12.9%	100.0%

Source: Fieldwork, 2020.

Revealing from the table, more than 90% of the respondents strongly affirmed that Destruction of lives and property (96.4%), paralyzed socio-economic activities (92.9%) and Jeopardization of existing cordial relationship between Christian and Muslims (96.2%) were direct impact of the conflict in Gombe South. Another factor that respondents affirmed to was the impediment in local and foreign direct investment in the locality (84.4%). By implication, the persisting crises in Gombe south has significant negative impact on the integration of the district. The study confirmed what Aliyu, 2012 said,

the regular trademark of every ethnic conflict in Nigeria is death, arson and vandalization. It is reported somewhere in the reviewed literature that; in recent Billiri/Kaltungo/Shongom conflict, many people were killed, houses were burnt at Kuman Tangle (Kufai Village) in Billiri Local Government area. A police officer, who was helping to restore order, was also killed (Daily Trust, July 20, 2017).

However, table 7 shows the distribution of respondents on other factors that have impact rural integration in Gombe South, arising from the conflict.

Table 6: Distribution of Responses on other impacts of Ethnic Conflict/Crises on Rural Integration of Gombe South

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Drugs Abuse	33	9.0%
Begging	35	9.6%
Displacement	18	4.9%
Disunity	51	14.0%
Hatred/Suspicion	57	15.6%
Prostitution	24	6.6%
Distrust	53	14.5%
Job Lost/Unemployment	45	12.3%
Divorce	36	9.9%
Poverty	13	3.6%
Total	365	100.0%

Source: Fieldwork, 2020.

Critical among them were Disunity (14%), Hatred/Suspicion (15.6%), Distrust (14.5%) and the loss of job (12.3%). Drug abuse (9%), Begging (9.6%) and Divorce (9.9%) were also critical to triggering conflict in the district. Displacement (4.9%), Prostitution (6.6%) and poverty (3.6%) had no much effect on conflict in the district. By implication, rural

integration is strongly affected by the growing distrust, disunity and hatred in the district.

Solution towards Checkmating the Prevalence of Ethnic Conflict in Gombe South Senatorial District

Table 7 shows the distribution of respondents on the solution towards checkmating the prevalence of ethnic conflict and challenges of rural integration in Gombe South Senatorial District.

Table 7: Distribution of Responses on Solutions towards Checkmating the Prevalence of Ethnic Conflict and Challenges of Rural Integration in Gombe South Senatorial District

Variables	SA	A	D	SD	U	Total
Proper boundary demarcation/adjustment	348	9	0	0	8	365
	95.3%	2.5%	0.0%	0.0%	2.2%	100.0%
Prosecution of all the culprits	259	21	6	0	79	365
	71.0%	5.8%	1.6%	0.0%	21.6%	100.0%
Organize regular Town Hall Meeting/dialogue	261	104	0	0	0	365
	71.5%	28.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Encourage Intra-ethnic Marriage/combine cultural festivals	172	130	16	0	47	365
	47.1%	35.6%	4.4%	0.0%	12.9%	100.0%

Source: Fieldwork, 2020

More than 70% of the respondents affirmed that Proper boundary demarcation/adjustment (97.8), Prosecution of all the culprits (76.8) and Organize regular Town Hall Meeting/dialogue (100%) are critical toward bringing a lasting solution and checkmating conflict in the districts. 82.7 % strongly affirmed that encouraging intra-ethnic marriage and combining cultural festivals could help in addressing the challenges of rural integration in the district. By implication, it is possible to checkmate conflicts and those factors causing conflict as well as address the problem of rural integration if firstly, there is a proper adjustment in boundary, secondly,

regular town hall meeting should be organized and lastly, those found culpable of crises be given the deserved punishment.

Furthermore, in trying to qualitatively asked respondents other solutions towards checkmating the prevalence of ethnic conflict and challenges of rural integration in Gombe South Senatorial Districts, data in table 8 shows the qualitative responses on the solutions towards checkmating the prevalence of ethnic conflict and challenges of rural integration in Gombe south.

Table 8: Distribution of Responses on Solutions towards checkmating the Prevalence of Ethnic Conflict and Challenges of Rural Integration in Gombe South Senatorial District

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Religious Adherence	69	18.9%
Job Creation/Employment	31	8.5%
Education/Skills Acquisition	22	6.0%
Boosting Agriculture	51	14.0%
Granting of Soft Loan	59	16.2%
Political Equity	56	15.3%
Accountable Leadership	42	11.5%
Justice and Equity	24	6.6%
Tolerance	11	3.0%
Total	365	100.0%

Source: Fieldwork, 2020

Responses on table 4.5b shows that the most critical aspects are boosting agriculture (14%), granting soft loans (16.2%), enlightenment (10.7%), political equality (15.3%) and accountable leadership (11.5%). Others were religious adherence (18.9%), job creation (8.5%) education/skills acquisition (6%), justice and equity (6.6%) and tolerance (3%). By implication, citizen empowerment and education can help prevent crises and bring about rural integration in Gombe South.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The major findings of this research are those extracted from the objectives of the study. These includes; the causes of ethnic conflicts in Gombe South Senatorial District, the nature of ethnic conflicts in Gombe South Senatorial District, the impacts of ethnic conflicts on rural integration in Gombe South Senatorial District and the effective ways and solutions towards checkmating the prevalence of ethnic conflicts in Gombe South Senatorial District. Ethnic conflicts have been observed in this study as the major problem in the history of Gombe south particularly, Billiri, Kaltungo and Shongom communities. These conflicts have negatively affected the economic, social, and political sectors of the areas. During such conflicts, many lives were lost and properties running into millions of naira were also lost. Economically too, the economy

of the areas is weakened particularly through the cost of investment by the conflicts. The crises have also discouraged economic growth in the sense of industrialization and modernization as both local and foreign investors shy away from investing in the areas because of their constant fight over land which is an economic resource. Socially, the conflicts succeed in limiting social interaction and harmony amongst the people. The crises have also resulted in the sharp increase in the number of widows and orphans leading to prostitution, begging (not street begging), unemployment, school dropout etc. Politically too, the people are now divided because of such crises. These have affected the voting and campaign patterns, democratic values and norms. The conflicts also delay viable political transition and consequently the aspiration of producing a Governor of Gombe state despite their high literacy rate and reasonable population, because politics is a game of numbers.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ethnic conflicts have been a major problem in the history of Gombe South senatorial district, Gombe State. These conflicts have negatively affected the social, economic and political sectors. During such conflicts, many lives were lost and properties running into millions of naira were also lost. The failure to accurately demarcate the boundaries has eventually

deteriorated the strong bound relationship and togetherness that these communities shares before to the extent of secretly advising their sons and daughters not to intermarry with the other tribe. In fact, people only greet one another out of necessity in either market, work places or any place of social gathering due to fear of accusations of outright betrayal of one's people. Their living is synonymous to a popular Hausa adage "Na ciki na ciki". Unfortunately, the traditional leaders are not helping matters because of their greediness. They deliberately refuse to come together to resolve this issue once and for all like brothers and sisters until they degenerate to a state of anarchy and the government and politicians are blamed for such crises.

In conclusion therefore, the researcher believes that sincere governmental schemes and efforts must be established by government to achieve social and distributive justice for all people in the country. For where there is justice there will be peace and where is peace, there will be no conflicts. Finally, this study has revealed that although, political disagreement, ethnicity, religious intolerance and other factors are necessary but not sufficient conditions for causing crises, that lack of economic opportunities majorly serves as the cause of the crises. Therefore, the government should ensure that economic opportunities are provided to the people as this will go a long way to prevent violent crises in the area.

The recommendations suggested in this work are based on how to avoid future occurrence of the conflict. In drawing up the recommendations, the entire range of responses in relation to the causes and nature of the ethnic conflict were analyzed, and recommendations relating to specific responses are made. Thus;

1. The traditional land acquisition and land ownership needs to change in such a way that orderliness is restored. Individuals or group of individuals needing land should adhere to traditional custom of land acquisition or purchase land as opposed to simply occupying and taking possession of land.
2. Government should release a white paper on the commission of enquiry's reports on Billiri, Kaltungo and shongom crises. They should also erect government institution in the area.
3. Politicians should be re-orientated towards shunning divisive politics and also see the various ethnic groups in the various areas of their jurisdictions as one so as to foster peace.

4. Government should embark on mass employment of youths so that they will no longer be ready tools in the hands of desperate politicians who are ethnic and/or religious zealots. Where this is not done, the few well to do in the society should give out soft loans to support entrepreneurship in the area.
5. In-built traditional/cultural mechanisms for conflict resolutions should be explored and used. It is important also that, those factors which made peaceful co-existence and tolerance in the past such as; inter-ethnic marriage, town hall meeting and traditional methods of conflict resolution should be identified and promoted.

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