

Non Governmental Organisations and Conflict Management in Plateau State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper investigates the role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in conflict management with particular reference to Plateau state, Nigeria. The need for the study emerged from the fact that there has been prolonged incidence of unresolved conflict in the state. Though, both the Federal and State Governments have made concerted efforts in resolving the conflicts in Plateau state, the results have not been very positive or fruitful. With the recurring decimal of conflict, especially in Plateau state, the field of conflict has become a center of attraction for researchers. But of the many literatures on Plateau state conflict situations, very little attention is paid to the role of NGOs in managing them. Hence, the needs for this study at this point in time. The findings are part of the survey conducted between 1999 and 2007 on the role of Non-Governmental Organizations and conflict management in Plateau State, Nigeria. The research instruments used were Focused Group Discussion (FGD), in-depth face to face interview, questionnaire, observation and content analysis. Emerging findings from the study showed that NGOs have indeed played important role in the areas of conflict management. They have provided inter alia relief assistance to victims of conflicts, provided peace education in the affected communities, formation of peace teams like Local Emergency Preparedness and Response Team (LEPRT) in 17 Local Governments Areas in the state. But on the other hand, the paper also found that the root causes of conflict especially issues bordering on identity, poverty, deprivation, among others, have not been fully addressed. Consequently, the paper recommends that government should eliminate the concept of indigene ship as it causes serious discrimination among citizens of the same nationality. There is also the need for coordination and collaboration among the existing NGOs in order to check duplication of efforts.

Key words: Non-Governmental Organizations, Conflict, Management, Plateau State, Nigeria.

1.1 Introduction

Nigeria is a pluralistic society, defined by cultural institutional diversities of ethnic groups of various populations practicing at least three religions: Christianity, Islam and traditional religion. There have been various statements about the extent of Nigeria's ethnic pluralism, from 250 mentioned by colonialists, and even half that number by superficial observers, to the figure of 374 ethnic groups (Oтите 2001: 18). The 2006 population census result shows that Nigeria has over 140 million people (www.nigeriamasterweb.com/nigeria06censusfigs.html). This diverse composition, no doubt poses a great challenge to national integration and the corporate co-existence of the people. On May 29, 1999, Nigeria returned to democratic governance, but the inauguration of democratic government was paradoxically greeted with numerous incidences of communal and ethno-religious violent conflicts (CEPA, 2004). There is scarcely any part of the country that has not suffered one form of violent conflict or another, but studies have shown that the North-Central Zone has recorded the highest (Alubo, 2006).

Plateau is one of the states that make up the North-central zone in Nigeria. It is more or less located at the centre of the country. The state has an area of about 26,899 Sq. km and shares common boundaries with Benue, Nasarawa, Kaduna, Taraba, Bauchi and Gombe states. In the formative years of British colonialism in Nigeria, much of Plateau state was part of Bauchi province. In 1926, Plateau province was carved out of Bauchi province and in 1961, following states creation; it was merged with Benue to form Benue-Plateau state.

Benue-Plateau state emerged as one of those large states of the federation where pressure was mounted on the Federal Government immediately after the civil war for the creation of more states. Consequently, in 1976, Plateau state was created from the then Benue-Plateau state. With a population of 3,178,712 (www.nigeriamasterweb.com/nigeria06censusfigs.html), Plateau state could be considered densely populated. It is highly heterogeneous with over fifty-two (52) linguistic groups. This is second to only Adamawa state in Nigeria that has eighty-one (81) ethnic groups (Alubo 2006:35). Although no single ethnic group is large enough to claim majority position, about twenty-three of the 52 ethnic groups in Plateau state assumed this status.

From the foregoing, one can easily deduce that Plateau state and indeed Nigeria's social structure is prone to generate conflict from diverse ethno-cultural interests and goals, and from the political and economic necessities of survival, as individuals and as identifiable autonomous social groups struggle for advantage (Otite 2001:4). Level of fear and uncertainty among the populace is always heightened, and a situation in which individuals and groups tend to be intolerant and more prone to violence is created. With the advent of democratic rule in 1999, violence, civil unrests (disturbances) and ethnic conflicts are unrelenting. The situation is so terrible that hardly does any month pass without some form of civil disturbance since the return to civil rule in Nigeria. This has prompted a commentator to say that "...civil disturbances have become defining characteristics of the return to civil rule" (Alubo 2006:2). These disturbances and civil unrests have no doubt claimed lives, which statistic is mind-boggling. For example, the Economist states that:

... More than 6,000 people have been killed in civil unrests since 1999. The Muslim- Christian divide has usually defined the combatants. More than 2,000 people died in clashes in Kaduna in February 2000, and hundreds more in Aba the following month. In June this year (2001), hundreds died in similar clashes in Bauchi state, and more than 500 died in Jos, a city in the center of Nigeria, last month. (The Economist, 2001: 50).

The case in Jos, Plateau state stands out among all other states in the Federation. The situation is such that as at May 2004 (five years of civil rule) about 3,000 people lost their lives, and property worth millions of naira destroyed (Human Rights Watch, HRW 2005). Also, of the over eighty (80) notable major eruptions of civil disturbances between May 1999 and May 2004 in Nigeria, 17 or 21% of the total number were recorded in Plateau state alone. This is a matter of serious concern. Although, both the Federal and State Governments have made concerted efforts in resolving the conflicts in Plateau state, the results have not been very positive or fruitful. This led to the declaration of a state of emergency by the then President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo on May 18th 2004.

Government efforts failed largely because it often commence with the use of police and the military, which sometimes impose dusk- to-dawn curfews and/or mount road blocks for stop and search operations. Once the crisis area is relatively calm and refugees are collected in a camp, the next is the setting up of committee to identify the remote and immediate causes, ascertain level of damages to lives and properties and to give recommendations through white paper on how to forestall future reoccurrence. Such recommendations in most cases are not implemented. The result is the reoccurrence of crisis in the future.

With the recurring decimal of conflict, especially in Plateau state, the field of conflict has become a center of attraction for researchers. But of the many literatures on conflict, very little attention is paid to the role of NGOs in managing conflict. This is either because the role of NGOs is not noticed or perhaps not even known in conflict management. Against this background, the study explores the role of NGOs in conflict management using Plateau state as a case study. Against this background, the objectives of the study are to:

- i. Investigate the extent NGOs have intervened in conflict situation in Plateau state, Nigeria
- ii. Discuss the nature of their interventionist approach to conflict management in Plateau State
- iii. Examine the situation of conflict in plateau state.

1.2 Conceptual Review

Non-Governmental Organisation

NGOs are viewed differently by different people with each bearing the imprint of its socio-ideological context. A broader definition of NGO however suggests that it is any organization that is not part of government but which operates in civil society (Otite 2001: 42). This means NGOs are independent of Government and governmental control. Ball and Dunn (1996:20) see NGOs as "Organisations which are not serving the interests of members, but are concerned in one way or another with disadvantage and or the disadvantaged, or with concerns and issues which are detrimental to the well being, circumstances or prospects of people or society as a whole."

This suggests that NGOs show special interest in a particular aspect of community or social life of the people and the Nation at large. It also makes it possible for us to situate NGOs within development industry. Similar definitions in this vein are many. For Rajesh Tandon, (1989) “ NGOs are a category of development promoting organizations which are initiatives voluntarily taken on by citizens, professionals, youths, women and other special interest groups to focus their attention on one of the developmental aspects of their specific context”. NGOs from this perspective are developmental Organisations that work where people are oppressed or where a gap is created in a particular area in the society.

Other scholars like Elliott, (1987); Fernandez, (1987); Garilao, (1987); Bhatnagar and Williams, (1992) whose views are very useful for this study see NGOs as Organisations that foster popular participation in areas such as; articulating the needs of the weak, working in remote areas, changing attitudes and practices of local officials and nurturing the productive capacity of the most vulnerable groups such as the disabled or the landless. But suffice it to say that NGOs are independent voluntary association of people acting together on a continuous basis, for some common purpose, other than achieving government office, making money or illegal activities. NGOs play significant role in many respects especially in empowering and educating the people.

Conflict Management

Some Conflict scholars have argued that complete resolution of conflict is impossible, but in a conflict situation, something needs to be done. The way out is to manage the conflict. According to Hugh Miall(2004), Conflict management theorists “see violent conflicts as an ineradicable consequence of differences of values and interests within and between communities.” These theorists regard “resolving such conflicts as unrealistic: the best that can be done is to manage and reduce them, and occasionally to reach a historic compromise in which violence may be laid aside and normal politics resumed.” This definition assumes that conflicts are irresolvable and that handling is limited to reduce them and ending the violence. However, other theorists believe that it is possible to eliminate conflicts. Therefore, they see conflict management as a stage in the handling of conflicts, which could be followed by later stages. For instance, John McGarry and Brendan O’Leary (1993:4) have divided what they call “ethnic conflict regulations” into two main sections: conflict management and conflict termination. This distinction is based on the idea that the former is concerned with the handling of the consequences of differences between adversaries, whereas the latter is concerned with terminating them.

Conflict management, according to (Rahim 2002:208), is the attempt to keep a conflict from getting worse. Therefore, it involves the use of skills to control the intensity of a conflict and its effect through facilitation, negotiation and other kinds of intervention and institutional measures, as well as other means such as diplomacy. From the definition, conflict management is distinguished from conflict resolution in that it usually does not address the deep rooted sources of conflict. Burton, (1990:66-82) argues that the underlying causes of conflicts are embedded in the institutional structure of society. He said achieving complete resolution of a conflict requires making significant socio-economic or political changes that restructure society in more just or inclusive way. Changing societal structure such as the distribution of wealth in society is a difficult thing to do and can take decades to accomplish. Thus Burton reasoned that fully resolving conflict can be a long, laborious process, hence conflicts should be managed. From the above perspectives, the goal of conflict management is to intervene in ways that make the on-going conflict more beneficial and less damaging to all sides. This is why the emphasis of the paper is away from conflict resolution to conflict management. What modern society need for contemporary societal conflict is conflict management and not conflict resolution. Conflict management does not necessarily imply avoidance, reduction or termination of conflict. It involves designing effective macro-level strategies to minimize the dysfunctions of conflict and enhancing constructive functions of conflict in order to enhance learning and effectiveness in the society.

1.3 Research Methodology

In this paper, a Focus Group Discussion, FGD was held with representatives of the two conflict affected communities in Plateau state- Yelwa-Shendam and Wase. The choice of these areas was because the two communities often record the most frequent civil unrest cases in Plateau state. The purpose of the FGD was to interact with the communities that suffered violence, where refugees were evacuated from and who really felt the direct impact of the crises, with a view to getting first-hand information on what actually happened and what the NGOs did or did not. This makes the research participatory and people-oriented.

Qualification for participation at the FGD was based on a sample framework using age and other criteria such as being an opinion, religious, youth or traditional leader in an affected community, a legally recognized association/club in the area and must have witnessed at least one of the crises that took place in the area under study.

Questionnaires were administered to 6 selected NGOs out of the 45 NGOs that work for peace in Plateau state. The questions asked were both open and closed ended in nature. The NGOs were purposively selected going by the available profile of the NGOs which tells their level of experience in peace work, their strength and areas of coverage. Questionnaires were also administered to the 6 NGOs in order to obtain their views on conflict management in the affected areas. Simple percentage was used for the purpose of analyzing the data. On the other hand, a FGD was held with the affected communities in order to ascertain what the NGOs have said they did or did not in the questionnaires. This makes the result of the research more reliable. Data collected from both selected NGOs and conflict affected communities were carefully recorded in written form and thereafter analyzed.

Nature of Conflict in Plateau State

Plateau state is one of the states that have witnessed several inter-communal violent crises since the advent of civil rule in Nigeria. The state is made up of about fifty-four (54) ethnic groups which were living peacefully with one another and with the ethnic groups that came from other parts of the country, (Plateau Resolves 2004:11). Indeed, with the creation of states in 1967, the hospitality of the people and the natural endowments of the Plateau, the allure of Jos as the capital of Benue-Plateau and later Plateau state grew in leaps and bounds such that with time, it became a 'miniature Nigeria' housing people from all parts of the country going about their legitimate businesses without molestation. It was against this background that Plateau state took the motto "Home of Peace and Tourism".

Unfortunately, this tranquil co-existence as it has turned out was not to last forever largely because of the exploitation and manipulation of the concept of 'indigene ship' for selfish interest. Ethnic groups who have lived all their lives in an area are still considered as 'settlers' by those who claim that their ancestors were before them. This is central to the crises in Plateau state and this has set groups who considered themselves the 'indigenes' or the first inhabitants of an area, against those viewed as 'settlers', (Human Rights Watch, 2005).

Throughout Plateau state and indeed Nigeria as whole, groups considered "indigenes" or the original inhabitants of an area are granted certain privileges, including access to government employment, scholarships for state schools, lower school fees and political positions. To secure access to these privileges they have to produce an 'indigene certificate' which is granted by the local authorities. 'Non-indigenes' or 'settlers' are denied these certificates and the accompanying privileges. Different groups are considered 'indigenes' or 'settlers' in different areas.

The definition of the term 'indigene' is commonly understood to be based on a person's place of origin, but many people born and brought up in a particular area are not accorded that status, even though they may never have lived in any part of Nigeria. No official document or legislation defines these categories precisely or sets out clear criteria as to how a person's 'indigene ship' is determined. It is the absence of a clear, legal or policy guidance on the operation of the concept that has led to the inconsistency of its interpretation in different parts of Nigeria, often leading to discrimination against perceived: "non-indigenes" on the one hand and favouritism for "indigenes" on the other.

In the early 1990's signs of disquiet began to manifest between especially indigenous and some other Nigeria groups resident in Jos in support of, or against certain government policies. The first signs of violence and attack on religious institutions took place on 12th April 1994 with the appointment of Alhaji Aminu Mato, a Muslim as the caretaker chairman or sole Administrator of Jos North LGA. There were equally tensions over other public appointments in 1996 and again in 1998. The appointment of Alhaji Mukhtar Muhammed, a Hausa-Fulani Muslim was controversial. In December 1998, during the transition to civil rule, he had been forced to stand down as chairman of the newly elected Jos North LGA after he was accused of falsifying his credentials. His subsequent appointment to the coveted post of Poverty Eradication Co-coordinator was seen by some as a provocation and was strongly opposed by Christian groups. The protests escalated into ugly exchange of abuse and death threats on Mukhtar Muhammed. In the days leading to September 7, further inflammatory leaflets were circulated by "indigenes" and "non-indigene" organizations.

The trigger event to the September 7th Jos carnage was a skirmish between a young Christian woman and some Muslim devotees during a Friday Juma'at prayer, where she allegedly passed in front of the Mosque located at the Congo-Russia junction. Prior to that day, this had not been problematic exercise for her. All this changed on that fateful day as she was asked not to pass through that route again, and she angrily responded, which attracted other worshippers. The rest became sad history for the Muslims and Christians in Jos town. Thus, the 7th September, 2001 clash in Jos which sets Muslims against Christians in a violent confrontation were a product of accumulated tension that had been mounting over the years. Indeed, it was a deep product of history which was never before contemplated. Just like the April, 1994 crisis, subsequent crises have always taken a religious coloration each time there was outbreak of violence, even though in reality the crises were more of political and economic than religious.

By early 2002, the crises which hitherto were limited to Jos and environs had now spread across the state, particularly to the southern senatorial zone. Thus, areas like Yelwa-Shendam, BarkinLadi, Wase, Heipang, Langtang etc recorded violent crises, all of which have led to loss of human and material resources, at a scale never experienced before in the state. The crises increasingly assumed a religious divide which created an opening for external involvement. For example, the Yelwa-Shendam crisis of May 2004 took a religious dimension as Youth of the two dominant religions had open confrontations. This led to the loss of lives and property. Churches and mosque were burnt down.

1.4 Data Presentation and Analysis

For the purpose of analysis, the data were organized under the three major objectives set out to be achieved in the study. Hence, the data is reduced and organized based on the research objectives which covers areas of NGOs Intervention in conflict management, the nature of the interventionist approach in conflict management and the prevailing situation of conflict in Plateau state.

1.4.1 NGOs Intervention in Conflict Situation

The responses from the questionnaire administered to the 6 NGOs on the aspect of their **intervention** in conflict are presented in table 1 below:

Table 1

SN	QUESTION	% of Yes	% of No
1.	Has your organization intervened in any of the conflicts in Plateau state?	6 NGOs (100%)	0 NGOs (0%)
2.	Did you give any relief assistance to the victims?	6 NGOs (100%)	0 NGOs (0%)
3.	Was it publicized?	6 NGOs (100%)	0NGOs (0%)
	TOTAL RESPONSES IN PERCENTAGE	100%	0%

Source: Field Research, September, 2007

From table 1 above, all the 6 NGOs interviewed gave a 100% positive response as to whether they intervened in the Conflicts in Plateau State, gave relief materials to the victims and the publicity of the relief materials. This means that NGOs have intervened in managing conflict in Plateau state. Similarly, the responses from the communities interviewed proved that NGOs were visibly present during the conflicts and that they did intervene. It also revealed that relief materials were given to them by the NGOs that were present during and after the conflict. Below is the response from Yelwa community represented by **Abdullahi D. Abdullahi II (September 2007)**:

Yes, NGOs are very many in the state, and to be candid, many of them were visibly present during the crises in my area. They include, Caritas, Abuja through the Justice, Development and Peace Commission, Jos led by Ignatius Kaigama, and the League for Human Rights, Action Aid International, Youth Adolescent and Reflection (YAR), Human Right Watch (HRW), Global IDPs, Norwegian Refugee Council, Interfaith Mediation Centre, Vindication of Rights Group etc. They also played pivotal role in building peace. They gave relief materials like clothes, food and Medicare to victims. One of the NGOs, Centre for Peace Advancement in Nigeria (CEPAN), stands out in this direction. This NGO opened a clinic while the Medicine Sans Frontiers (MSF) another NGO funded the clinic free of charge to victims for one year. They trained some indigenes in the area of first aid treatment. Others like International Centre for Reconciliation (ICR) were on ground for trauma counselling.

National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) (sic) Plateau state and **The Nigerian Red Cross** and some Islamic Relief organizations, as well as UN Agencies also provided medical and logistical support and other immediate relief in the camp for the displaced persons. Others also assisted in the evacuation of the corpses and those wounded. These, to my people were the best of relief we received.

From the Wase community, the views from the respondents interviewed also affirmed the presence of NGOs in the state. But unlike the Yelwa-Shendam conflict, NGOs rather came long after the Wase crisis. And some only sprang up as a result of the conflicts. Below is the extract of an interview granted from the Wase community represented by the Galadiman Wase, **Mustapha Galadima (September, 2007)**:

Of course there are uncountable NGOs in the state. But as to whether they were visibly present during the crisis that started on July 4th 2002 in my area, the answer is No. Most of them only emanated as a result of the conflict, but they have worked seriously for peace. They gave relief materials to affected people through the Emir's palace and held many peace education forums and workshops for enlightenment.

Further question were asked to know whether the NGOs publicized their work in the areas and whether the relief assistance given, were devoid of interest. Both communities and the NGOs interviewed answered in the affirmative. One of the NGOs the Interfaith Mediation Centre (MCDF) Jos, led by James Wuyep and Muhammed Ashafa represented by **Sadeeq A. M. Howq (September, 2007)** puts it thus;

Our organization has participated in conflict assessment, registered IDPs and given relief materials to IDPs in 2004, April and May 2006 in Shendam, Army Barracks and in Nov 2006 at Shendam and Qu'aan Pan communities. All were duly covered by the media and it was purely devoid of any particular interest of ours.

From the foregoing, it could be deduced that NGOs have intervened in the crises in Plateau state. Although they were not visibly present at the Wase crisis, one could still commend the effort of giving relief assistance to the affected people. It was gathered that their late arrival was due to logistic problems.

1.4.2 The Nature of the Interventionist Approach in Conflict Management

Table 2 below shows the questions and responses from the 6 NGOs interviewed on the aspect of their efforts in conflict management in Plateau State.

S/N	QUESTION	% of Yes	% of No
1.	Have you held peace education in the conflict affected area(s)?	6 NGOs (100%)	0 NGOs (0%)
2.	Has your NGO held any meeting with the parties in conflict?	6 NGOs (100%)	0 NGOs (0%)
3.	Did your NGO make any effort to build peace in the area?	6 NGOs (100%)	0 NGOs (0%)
4.	Have you formed any peace team in the conflict affected area(s)?	6 NGOs (100%)	0 NGOs (0%)
5.	Has your NGO organized workshops and trainings for peace makers in the affected communities?	6 NGOs (100%)	0 NGOs (0%)
	TOTAL RESPONSES IN PERCENTAGE	6 NGOs (100%)	0 NGOs (0%)

Source: Field Research September 2007

From the table 2 above, all the NGOs interviewed gave a 100% response to the fact that they have held peace education in the conflict affected areas. Also, from their responses, they have all held meetings with the parties in conflict, formed peace teams and have organized workshops for the training of peace makers in the affected areas. These are all geared towards building peace in the areas. The fact that all the 6 NGOs said yes to these questions gave each a total 100% of Yes and a total 0% of No. This means that NGOs have employed so many approaches in managing conflict in Plateau state.

Similarly, from the affected communities, positive responses were gathered on the question as to whether NGOs have made any effort to manage conflict in the conflict affected areas. Below represents the extract from **Yelwa Community**.

Oh yes! NGOs have made tremendous efforts geared towards restoring peace in my area. For instance, one of the NGOs, ICR established a peace centre with a peace committee in place. Members meet every six months to give report and review the activities carried out to enhance peace from each community. (Abdullazeez Yakubu, a religious leader in Yelwa Community, September, 2007).

Another respondent added thus:

They have called us to series of meeting aimed at bringing peace in our area. One good thing an NGO has done was to have organized a football for peace tournament. Clubs from warring communities play in the tournament. And you know that even in Nigeria today, football match is one of our unifying factors. So this has helped my people seriously and has brought the disputing parties together. (Suleiman Yusuf, Chairman, Motorcycle Transport Union of Nigeria, Yelwa branch, September, 2007).

From the Wase community, the respondents praised especially faith based NGOs. The Emir of Wase represented by his Galadima during the Focus group discussion requested that the effort made by Ignatius Kaigama should be mentioned in this research to make it 'factual and complete'.

A lot of peace processes have taken place by NGOs, especially the faith based NGOs. May I request that for your research to be factual and complete, you should express the appreciation of my Emir to the Archbishop Kaigama of Jos for his efforts in restoring peace' If you read his book on Dialogue of life. An urgent necessity for Nigerian Muslims and Christians, you will know what I'm talking about... (Mustapha Galadima, September, 2007).

Another respondent also contributed as follows:

They brought the warring parties, Jukun, Tarok and Fulani's in Wase area to a round table for dialogue. At the forum, people were allowed to express their views freely, especially as it borders on economic (sic) which to me was the root cause of the crisis in Wase. Most communities fear economic domination and thus the dispute over land (Umaru Musa Mavo, a representative of Jukun community in Wase, September, 2007).

Regarding whether any peace education has been held in the area, one of them responded thus,

Oh yes, peace education is currently ongoing by most NGOs on the effects of crisis and the need for peace in my area. The Inter-religious and inter-ethnic dialogue committee headed by Archbishop Kaigama is still going on. We take resolutions reached at meetings back home to our people and implement such without any fear or doubt. (TankoIdris, representative of Bashar community in Wase, September, 2007).

When the researcher inquired to know whether there is any Peace Team on ground, both communities chorused "Yes; others went ahead to say "the inter-religious and inter ethnic committee is an example". Other groups include youth, opinion leaders, and women, traditional and religious leaders from affected communities. They often come together to chart the course for peace. The special committee on Yelwa-Shendam-Qu'aan Pan axis is another example. In addition to the above, respondents reiterated that some economic empowerment schemes were put in place by NGOs to improve their standard of living. In this regard, they responded thus:

Yes, Rice milling machines have been donated to my community by the Interfaith Mediation Centre, Jos. The Medicine Science Frontiers, MSF another NGO trained some of our Youths on how to manage the clinic built for my people as a result of the May 2004 mayhem. Some, like the Actionaid International, Abuja and YARAC, Jos constructed public toilets and employed people to manage it. Women and other peace centers were established and soft loan given by Interfaith Mediation Centre, JDPC Jos and ICR for the purpose of starting up small scale businesses (Suleiman Yusuf, Yelwa community, September, 2007)

From the Wase area, the response was not different. The rice milling machines were also installed there and some women were trained on how to use them. One of the NGOs, Interfaith, that donated the items put it right;

There is also normalcy and people have fully returned to their lawful business. Confidence is being built among the warring communities. Now the Tarok, Fulani's and Jukun who were hither-to at logger head could now inter-marry. However, the root cause(s) of the conflict has not been fully addressed. There is still youth restiveness due to unemployment and political maneuvering. But Women that were traumatized during the conflicts in Shendam and Yelwa have undergone a training programme on rice milling and cooperative society skills by our organization. We are also installing 6 rice milling machines (4) in Shendam LGA and 2 in Wase for the interfaith women multipurpose cooperative society. (SadeeqHowq, September, 2007)

This also points to the fact that NGOs intervention is capable of resolving conflicts in the place. Another NGO (JDPC, Jos) puts it thus;

We have completed Water catchments in Deomak Qu'aan Pan LGA, completed Well at Shendam and one under construction at Yelwa. In Wase Kadarko, we have facilitated mediation process and reconciliation programmes among Christians and Muslims. (Fom Anthony, September, 2007)

Inter-Gender recalled on their own achievement thus:

We have also organized series of workshops on conflict management and peace building in Jos for indigenous/other ethnic youth leaders in June 2002. The programme was aimed at extinguishing the ember of hatred and desire for revenge that was prevalent after the Jos crisis had been forcefully put under control. Youths, who have been used as tools for killing and destruction of properties, were the target of this project. (Inter-gender, September, 2007)

The above responses from both NGOs and the affected communities interviewed clearly depict the fact that NGOs intervention has been able to build peace in Plateau state. This is evident through the peace-building indicators clearly reflected in the activities of NGOs like call for meetings/dialogue, organizing peace-building workshops and seminars, establishing peace teams and so on.

Table 3: Situational analysis of Conflict in Plateau State

S/N	QUESTION	Fully resolved	Not resolved	Partially resolved	Latent	Total
5.	What would you say is the situation of the conflict now?	0 NGOs (0%)	0 NGOs (0%)	5 NGOs (83.3%)	1 NGO (16.7%)	100%

Source: Field Research, September 2007

From the responses given by the NGOs according to the questionnaire administered, none of the conflicts could be said to have been fully resolved, because 0% of the NGOs said so. However, it shows from the responses by 5 NGOs that **83.3%** of these conflicts are **partially resolved** at the moment, while 1 NGO said **16.7%** of the conflicts are at latent stage and because 0% of the NGOs said the conflict is not resolved, it automatically means the conflict is not fully resolved.

The conflicts could not be said to be fully resolved because the root causes from the response by the affected communities have not yet been addressed. Also, achieving complete resolution of a conflict requires making significant socioeconomic and political changes that restructure society in a more just or inclusive way. Changing societal structures, such as the distribution of wealth in the conflict affected areas in question is a difficult thing to do. However, any government that has the will can do so in collaboration with other stakeholders in conflict resolution, like the NGOs.

The responses given by the conflict affected communities also buttressed the above point.

One of the respondents put it in this way;

The conflict is partially resolved. It is partial since the root cause has not been addressed. For example, we have uncountable number of graduates in Yelwa, but we don't have up to two of them employed at the Local Government level. This is a Local Government we called our own. Is this good? (Abdullazeez Yakubu, Yelwa community, September, 2007)

This means that the role played by NGOs to the resolution of the conflicts in the state, which include sensitization workshops and trainings aimed at entrenching peace, economic empowerment for the people and rights advocacy and so on are capable of resolving the conflicts in Plateau State. However, the root cause(s) of the crises has not been fully addressed, hence more still need to be done. One of the respondents was so emphatic and categorical that:

NGOs have really tried their possible best, there is no gain-saying it, but we want to say that the conflicts in Yelwa begins and ends with the Long Goemai of Shendam" (Abdullahi D. Abdullahi, a representative of the Jarawas in Yelwa, September, 2007).

When asked why they made the statement. He retorted:

Because the Long Goemai has refused to recognize and approve the traditional chief selected by my people – the Jarawas; we have also been denied indigene ship certificate of Shendam LGA by the Long Goemai, though our ancestors have stayed on this land from 1824 – date. (Abdullahi D. Abdullahi, September, 2007)

The Goemai community includes both Christians and Muslims, who consider themselves “indigenes” and regard the Jarawa; who are predominantly Muslims, as “settlers”. The Jarawas on the other hand claim to be the “original founders” of Yelwa. They claimed that they have lived harmoniously from 1824, until the coming of the present Long Goemai who began to deny them indigene certificates.

They also claimed that other neighbouring communities also predominantly Muslims like the Borghom and the Pyem also enjoyed this friendship until the advent of the Long Goemai. Still unsatisfied with why the particular interest of both the Goemai and Jarawa communities, who have lived, intermarried and shared same religions; Christianity and Islam over the years in Yelwa town, the researcher gathered from both tribes that Yelwa is a commercial town located in the centre of the southern part of Plateau state. It has routes to Taraba, Benue, Nasarawa and Bauchi states. Hence, it is an economically viable town.

There are also still reports of skirmishing over the land in contest. The big unanswered question is who actually owns the land of Wase. While the Tarok claims they owned the land, Jukun said they first arrived on the land while the Fulani's conquered the Administrative dynasty of the land during the holy war of 1806. But suffice it to say that welcome though the efforts put in by NGOs to restore and sustain peace in Wase, there is still much left undone. Whereas the most significant indicator for conflict resolution i.e. addressing the root cause of the conflict has not been met, it is difficult to say the conflict is fully resolved.

1.5 Conclusion

This research has succinctly explored and discussed the role of NGOs in conflict management in Plateau State, Nigeria. It has gathered through the responses from selected NGOs and conflict affected communities in the state that NGOs have indeed played important role in the areas of conflict management. It has identified intervention in the aspects of relief assistance, training of leaders in affected communities on peace building, formation of peace teams like Local Emergency preparedness and Response Team (LEPRT) in 17 Local Government Areas, establishment of peace resource centre and committees, organizing football for peace tournaments for conflicting communities, sensitization workshops for peace education, facilitation of interfaith mediation and peace building meetings. Other areas include the promotion of human rights and advocacy campaign and economic empowerment schemes and so on.

The above met the criteria of conflict management in the short run. But the study observed that the root causes of the conflicts such as issues bordering on identity, poverty, deprivation and denial of human rights in terms of indigene ship and suppression have not been fully addressed. Though other indicators of conflict management like reconciliation, cooperation among conflicting parties and empowerment of the people has been met, especially through the efforts of NGOs in the state, the researcher concludes that the conflicts have only been partially resolved.

1.6 Recommendations

Based on the emerging findings from the study and conclusion arrived at, the following recommendations are pertinent:

- i. For effective conflict management, people from all levels in the conflict affected communities must be fully involved in the process. This is called **indigenous empowerment**. A situation where political and traditional leaders only meet to conventionally sign a cease fire agreement has not worked well over the years.
- ii. Though the giving of relief assistance during emergencies, by NGOs working in the area of conflict is important, such organizations need coordination and collaboration in order to check duplication of efforts, because many of these organizations may not even be aware of each other's existence. In a number of countries, including Canada, Germany and Finland, national platforms on peace building have been established (Tongerren, 2004). The aim is to know who is doing what, where and when. A directory listing all NGOs in the field of conflict should be published, especially in Plateau State where many NGOs are situated. With the information super high-way, such information and profile of conflict and the NGO(s) involved in the conflict should be on the internet for easy access to their profiles.
- iii. One of the root causes of the conflict in Plateau State is the concept of indigene ship. To address this saga, it is necessary that the Federal Government of Nigeria come up with official statement on the concept of indigene ship and to eliminate it since it has caused serious discrimination among citizens of the same Nationality. Also, in view of the fact that the 1999 constitution of the Federal republic of Nigeria has not clearly defined the concept, but defined citizenship in section 25 – 1 (a) as “Every person born in Nigeria on or before the end of Independent, either of whose parents or any of whose grandparents belong or belonged to any community indigenous to Nigeria”. Let every citizen who has settled in a place be entitled to the privileges given to citizens who are “natives” of a place. This is called resident right.

However, rights like traditional ruler ship of the place be sole responsibility of the natives of that place, but political and other rights be shared by all.

- iv. "There is no peace without Justice" (Pope John Paul II, 2002). Justice and security should be priorities in Government initiatives in Plateau State and Nigeria at large, especially in conflict affected areas. Perpetrators of violence under any guise should be made to face the law. This will serve as deterrent to others. Life is sacred and human rights are inalienable, hence any attempt to tamper with these God given gifts to mankind should be vehemently resisted by Government.
- v. Government should create job opportunities to arrest youth restiveness. This will prevent them from being used or misused by politicians to perpetrate vices. The Wase Grazing Reserve owned by the state and Federal Government of Nigeria which is one of the greatest in Africa should be revitalized. This will go a long way to creating employment opportunities for youth in that area and Plateau State at large.

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List of the Interviewees

- Alhaji Mustapha Galadima, The Galadima of Wase and Representative of HRH the Emir of WaseMal. Umaru Musa Mavo, Jukun community
- Mr. TankoIdris, Bashar community Mallam Abdullahi D. Abdullahi Esq – Opinion Leader
- Uztaz Abdullazeez Yakubu – Religious Leader