

ISSN 2297 0585

**International Journal of Applied  
Research and Technology**

**Special Issue  
December 2023**



<https://esxpublishers.com>

***Special Issue of***  
**International Journal of Applied  
Research and Technology**

**ISSN 2277-0585**

**CARDINAL ONAIYEKAN FOUNDATION FOR PEACE  
(COFP) INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH OF PEACE AND  
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

*Volume 2 Issue 2*

Available online: 31 December 2023



## PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

*This article may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, re-distribution, re-selling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.*

*The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instruction, formulae and analysis should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.*

Received: 19 December 2023 / Accepted: 27 December 2023 / Published: 31 December 2023).

## Copyright

*This report is published under the publishing agreement with Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace (COFP) on Peace and Civic Engagement.*

*For corresponding author:*

*E-mail: [info@esxpublishers.com](mailto:info@esxpublishers.com)*

*Subject: 23-1202.*

*© 2023 Esxon Publishers. All rights reserved*

---

## **Editorial Notes**

This Second Edition of peace research is an outcome of 2022 practical civic engagement that COFP Ambassadors/Fellows conducted in various states in Nigeria and Kenya. The six (6) geopolitical zones and Kenya have peculiar conflicts and crises that were addressed by the Peace Ambassadors in this research.

The work of COFP has reached grassroots all over the whole Africa. We hope that readers will enjoy reading the works of Ambassadors and will contribute to peace building in their communities.

**Dr. Yohanna Shaibu Mamza**

---

<b>Editorial Board</b>	<b>Consulting Editors</b>
Dr. Yohanna Shaib Mamza Research Consultant/Editor in Chief Religion Education, University of Jos, Nigeria.	His Eminence, Cardinal John Onaiyekan (CON), Founder/President COFP Foundation Cardinal Archbishop Emeritus of Abuja
Prof. Jeny Mary Eniege English Education, University of Jos Nigeria.	Prof. Olanyinka Ramota Karim Vice Chancellor, Fountain University, Osogbo, Nigeria.
Rev. Sr. Agatha Chikelue, DMMM Executive Director, Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace (COFP)	Prof. Dr. Chigozie Enwere Department of Political Science and International Relations, Nile University of Nigeria, Abuja.
Dr. Johnson O. Ebibi English Education, University of Jos, Nigeria.	Rev. Prof. Gyang D. Pam Provost GTS, Plateau State Nigeria.
	Prof. Galadima Bala Faculty of Medicine, University of Maiduguri, Nigeria.
	Prof. J.N. Kwasau Department of Arts Education, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Nigeria.

### Note to Contributors

- i. All the contributors are Peace Ambassadors of the COFP 2022
  - ii. All articles must bear the names, address of authors and phone numbers.
  - iii. The cover page must carry only the title of the paper, the names and address.
  - iv. The articles must be in English language.
  - v. The articles must be a practical report of conducted peace seminar/workshop
  - vi. There must be pictures to back the articles.
  - vii. The paper should not exceed 14 pages including the pictures.
  - viii. The typing must be single line spacing, 12 font size and in Times-New Roman justified margin.
  - ix. The medium for sending the message must be in Microsoft Word.
-

**LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>NAMES</b>	<b>GEO-POLITICAL ZONES</b>	<b>STATE</b>
1	Mamza Yohanna	North East	Borno
2	Musa Gerald Mamman	South-South	Port Harcourt
3	Uzoigwe Thecla Maria	North East	Borno
4	Saljaba David B.	North East	Borno
5	Okonkwo Denisia Ijeoma	North Central	Abuja
6	Obio Bassey Owai	South-South	Port Harcourt

---

## Table of Contents

Impact of Religious Conflicts on the Relationship between Christian and Muslim Students in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State .....	1
Social Media and Political Extremism.....	6
Developing Strategies for Peaceful Coexistence and Empowerment for Self-Reliance among Women in Maiduguri Metropolitan City.....	11
Peaceful Co-Existence: Empowerment of Women through Skill Acquisition in Koton Karfe, Kogi State.....	18
Appraisal of Margi Traditional Education for Conflict Resolution Mechanism in Borno State, Nigeria.....	22
Seed of Peace: Promoting Ideals of Peaceful Coexistence in Benue State. ....	26

---

# Impact of Religious Conflicts on the Relationship between Christian and Muslim Students in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State

<sup>1</sup>Yohanna, S.M., <sup>2</sup>Rv. Sr. Agatha Chikelue, <sup>1</sup>Cletus, A. G.

<sup>1</sup>University of Jos, Nigeria.

<sup>2</sup>Nile University of Nigeria, Abuja

## Abstract

The study investigated impact of religious conflict on the relationship between Christian and Muslim Students in public secondary schools in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau state. One research question and one hypothesis were formulated and tested to guide the study. A total number of one hundred (100) students, forty (40) teachers and thirty (30) school administrators were used from some selected secondary schools in Jos North Local Government Area. The research instrument used was questionnaire which was carefully designed for the respondents. It was structured into two sections. Section A: Bio-data and section B: section on impact of religious conflict on relationship between Christian and Muslim Students in public secondary schools in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau state. The detailed analysis of the data collected, showed that religious crises affect tolerance, respect and trust between Christian and Muslim students in public secondary schools in Jos North LGA of Plateau State. The study also showed that religious crises affect method of teaching in public secondary schools, in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State. The study recommended that a pragmatic and proactive effort must be made by those in positions of authority to reduce poverty.

**Keyword:** Religious Conflicts, Relationship, Christian, Muslim, Secondary School

## Introduction

This research came up as a result of intervention of Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace (COFP) through training of Peace Ambassadors that retrain the teachers of religion in secondary schools, college of education and universities. One of the aims of COFP is to train children at grass root to be tolerate and Peace Ambassadors in the schools and communities.

The name and the geo-political region called Nigeria today was the creation of the British Colonialists through the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorate in 1914. Prior to this, Nigeria was a heterogeneous and pluralistic society with many autonomous states within the nation existing independently. The multi-cultural and multi-religious nature of the country contributes to the conflicts the country is experiencing. The polarization of religion as an instrumentality for administrative convenience in Nigeria began with the Colonial Administrations. Regrettably the seed planted 108 years (1914-2022) ago has gradually grown into a monster that is becoming difficult to subdue. The historical root of this tragic development is traceable to constitutional regionalism and the divide and rule policy of the Colonial Administration (Omodia, 2009). The policy rather than unite the heterogeneous nation like Nigeria, promoted political and religious ideologies that encouraged ethnicity and regional biases. Political parties, political participation, appointments, employments and culprits of coup d'état were viewed and handled with ethnic, religious or political biases (Ikyase & Egberi, 2015). Nigeria as multi-cultural and multi-religious country has two major religions: Christianity and Islam, each competing and claiming superiority and dominance over themselves in number and in might. This claim of superiority as well as dominance has served as the foundation for religious intolerance and several socio-political crises that have bedeviled Nigeria since Independence in 1960.

The record of human history has shown that most noble acts of love; self-sacrificing and pious services to humanity are often associated with religion; yet it is also evident that religion has generated more violence and killed more people than any other institutional force in human history (Best, 2001). Many of the violent conflicts in the world today involve religious animosities. Indeed, the history of the encounters among the world's religions is filled with distrust and hatred, violence and vengeance. The deepest tragedy of the history of religions is that the very movements that should bring human beings closer to each other and to their ultimate source and goal have time and time again become forces of division. Again, it is this mental picture of the African worldview that enables Africans to understand, express, communicate and govern themselves. Today, even though democracy has replaced the idea of divine right, religion still plays a major role in the socio-political affairs of most nations of the world.



Conflict can be described as a situation or condition of disharmony in an interactional process. Conflict is when two or more values, perspectives and opinions are contradictory in nature and has not been aligned or agreed upon yet (Bagaji, 2012).

Religion as a concept is a universal phenomenon, and man having been created by God and in God's own image became religious from origin; hence Eluu (2006) opined that there is a divine essence in man which he tries to actualize in his daily commerce with the world and that the universally recognized institution for the actualization of such divine essence is religion.

### **Aim and Objective**

The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of religious conflict on the secondary school students of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) in public secondary schools in Jos North LGA of Plateau state. Specifically, the study sought to: Examine the extent to which consistent religious conflicts affect the relationship between Christians and Muslims students in public secondary schools in Jos North LGA.

### **Research Question**

To what extent does religious conflicts affect Christians and Muslims students' relationship in Jos North LGA?

### **Hypotheses**

There is no significant relationship between religious conflict and academic achievement of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) students in public secondary schools in Jos North LGA.

### **Research Design**

In order to investigate the impact of religious conflict on the education of students in public secondary schools in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State, a Descriptive Survey Research Design was adopted for this study. Survey research design is a design that is often used to assess thoughts and opinions. It consists of a predetermined set of questions given to a sample. The sample is the representative of the larger population of interest which one can use to describe the attitudes of the population from which the sample was drawn (Shaughnessy, Zechmeister & Jeanne, 2011). In a survey, only a part of the population is being studied, and findings from the survey are generalized to the entire population. Data were collected quantitatively through questionnaire. The survey research design is suitable for this study because the population of the study is so large that the researcher could only use questionnaire to collect the data.

### **Population**

The population of the study consist of students, teachers, administrators, in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State. This population constituted the unit of observation which data were obtained for the unit of analysis that is, the impact of religious conflict on the education of students in public secondary schools in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State. 2,756 students, teachers and administrators were used as the population of the study. The number of the population was obtained from the Jos North Education Area Directorate Office in 2021.

### **Sample**

The sample of the study comprised of 100 students, 40 teachers and 40 school administrators who were drawn from 20 secondary schools in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State. From each of the 20 sampled schools, 5 students, 2 teachers and 2 administrators were drawn for the study. The simple random sampling was adopted in selecting the 170 respondents for the study from the 20 schools selected. According to Obasi (2012), it is in sampling technique, where every member of the population has equal and independent chance of being selected in the sample to be studied. In this study, selection of the respondents was done through a simple random sampling technique, where some public secondary schools were randomly selected to carry out the study. In selecting the schools, a list of all the secondary schools in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State were obtained from the State Ministry of Education, then the numbers of schools were written on separate pieces of papers and thrown into two different bowls. Subsequently, 20 pieces of papers were picked at random without replacement from the bowl, after which the schools corresponding with the numbers on the pieces of papers drawn were selected as sample schools for the study.

In addition to selecting a sample of 140 respondents, the 40 administrators in the selected secondary schools were automatically selected and randomly selected respectively as samples for the study. Also pieces of papers were cut and numbers corresponding to the list of teachers in the sampled

schools were written and the pieces of papers were folded and thrown into a bowl. Forty pieces of papers containing the list of teachers were randomly selected.

### ***Description of the Instrument***

The instrument used for data collection was self-prepared questionnaire titled “Impact of Religious Conflict on the Secondary School Students of Christian Religious Studies in Public Secondary Schools Questionnaire (IRCSSCRSPSSQ)”. The IRCSSCRSPSSQ was developed by the researcher and was divided into two sections: section A and B. Section A contained items soliciting the demographic data of the respondents while section B contained items measuring the impact of religious conflict on Christian Religious Studies students in public secondary schools in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State.

### ***Procedure for Instrument Development***

The development of the instruments involved series of procedures and steps to ensure that important items are included in the instrument. The first step includes the review of various literatures that were relevant to the study. The second step involved the design of the research questionnaire items. The third step involved taking down comments, ideas and observations from the researcher’s supervisors, discussion with lecturers and students in the department to get relevant opinions that were included in the questionnaire items. This was built on a four point likert scale format, Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

### ***Validity***

The instrument was subjected to content validity by giving it to experts in the broad field of Educational Foundations specifically, experts in the field of Educational Administration and Planning and Test and Measurement to carefully ascertain the degree to which the instrument measured what it intended to measure. And as such, they were requested to validate the instrument in terms of its content, clarity and relevance. Effort was made by the researcher to ensure that items suggested for removal were removed and items suggested for modification were duly modified. And the final draft was re-presented to the experts and to certify the instruments to be valid. Only the items deemed appropriate for the purpose will be included in the final draft of the instruments which will be subjected to the scrutiny of the project supervisor and for final approval.

### ***Reliability***

The test-retest method was used to determine the reliability of the instruments. Copies of the IRCSSCRSPSSQ were distributed to the sample of teachers and administrators in the study area. After two weeks another set of the same instruments were re-administered on the same respondents. The result was correlated using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient. The Coefficient of 0.76 was obtained, this showed that the instrument was reliable.

### ***Method of Data Analysis***

The data generated from the questionnaires were analyzed statistically using simple percentage tables, frequencies and analytical graphs and charts with 4-point Likert scale: Strongly Agreed (SA), Agree(A), Disagreed(D), and Strongly Disagree (SD), and were substantiated with relevant literatures and related publications on the research subject.

The formula for calculating the percentage is

$$\frac{NR \times 100}{NP}$$

Where

NR = Number of Responses

NP = Number of Population

### ***Result and Discussion***

The total number of questionnaires distributed were one hundred and eighty (180) to students, teachers and schools’ administrators. However, the total number of questionnaires returned were one hundred and seventy (170) given the percentage returned of the questionnaires to 94.4% which is a good number.

### ***Analysis of Research Question One***

To what extent does religious conflicts affect relationship between Christian and Muslim students in public secondary schools in Jos North LGA?

The results of the analysis from table 1 reveals that 33.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that religious conflicts affect the relationship between Christian and Muslim students in secondary schools, 57.2% agreed that religious conflicts affect the relationship between Christian and Muslim students in secondary schools, 8.4% disagreed that religious conflicts affect the relationship between Christian and Muslim students in public secondary schools, while 0.8% strongly disagreed. From the results, it can be concluded that most of the respondents agreed that religious conflicts affect the relationship between Christian and Muslim students in public secondary schools in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State.

### ***Hypothesis***

There is no significant relationship between religious conflict and students' enrolment in public secondary schools in Jos North LGA.

The results of the Pearson Product moment correlation reveals that there is a weak positive correlation between conflict and students' enrolment where  $r=0.242$  and  $P\text{-value} = 0.001$  which is less than 0.05. This implies that the null hypothesis failed to be retained. Therefore, there is significant relationship between religious conflict and students' enrolment in public secondary schools in Jos North.

### ***Discussion***

Findings from the research question above revealed that religious conflicts affect the relationship between Christian and Muslim students in public secondary schools in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State. This is also in agreement with the opinion of Anebi and Igwebuikwe (2018) who maintain that students' relationship is usually affected during conflict because of the quest for revenge in case some students' parents are affected during conflict which affect families and relations in the affected communities or areas of residence.

### ***Conclusion and Recommendations***

From the discussions demonstrated in the study, it is apparent that the impact of religious conflict on students of Christian Religious Studies in public secondary schools in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau state shows that it affects the academic achievement and enrolment of students of Christian Religious Studies and it also affect the relationship between Christian and Muslim students. However, religious conflict does not affect the provision of facilities.

Based on the findings of the present study, the following recommendations are made:

1. A pragmatic and proactive effort should be made by teachers of religious studies to educate their students on the need for peace and coexistence
2. Religious leaders and government should promote fundamental human value of respecting others as they are, without insisting that they change their beliefs.

### ***References***

- Anebi, J. N. P. and Igwebuikwe, F. K. (2018). Security challenges and management strategies in public secondary schools in Aba education zone. *Journal of Economics and Environmental Education*, 3(1), 95-104
- Bagaji, A., Shaibu, M., Ogbadu, E. and Sule, J. (2012). Boko Haram and the Recurring Bomb Attacks in Nigeria: Attempt to Impose Religious Ideology through Terrorism? *JOUR*, (8). DO - 10.3968/j.ccc.1923670020120801.1370
- Best, S.G. (2008). Conflict and peace Building in Plateau state, Nigeria. Ibadan: Spectrum Books.
- Eluu, P.E. (2006). Religion Education: A panacea for tolerance and peaceful co-existence in Nigeria. *Ebonyi State University Journal of Education*, 4(2), 139-146.
- Ikyase, T. J. and Egberi, A. E. (2015). Political violence and democratic stability in Nigeria: reflecting on the past and charting the way forward. *Review of Public Administration and Management*, 4(8), 32 – 40.
- Omodia, S. M. (2009). Elections and Democratic Survival in the Fourth Republic of Nigeria. *The Journal of Pan-African Studies*, 1(1), 12 - 24

**Table 1:** The result of the analysis on how religious conflicts affect relationship between Christian and Muslim students in public secondary schools in Jos North LGA

S/n	Description of items	N	SA	A	D	SD
1	Religious conflicts affect the level of religious tolerance among students	170	62 (36.5%)	90 (52.9%)	16 (9.4%)	2 (1.2%)
2	Indulgence teaching is the cause of religious crises	170	25 (31.2%)	110 (64.7%)	7 (4.1%)	0 (0%)
3	Methods of teaching religion affect the relationship between Christians and Muslims	170	56 (32.9%)	92 (54.1%)	20 (11.8%)	2 (1.8%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>33.5%</b>	<b>57.2%</b>	<b>8.4%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>

**Table 2:** The result of the analysis Pearson analysis between religious conflict and students' enrolment in public secondary schools in Jos North LGA.

Group		Conflict	Enrolment
Conflict	Pearson correction	1	0.242
	Sig. (2 tailed)		0.001
	N	170	170
Enrolment	Pearson correction	0.242	1
	Sig. (2 tailed)	0.001	
	N	170	170

## Social Media and Political Extremism

Gerald, M. M.

Centre for the Study of African Culture and Communication  
Catholic Institute of West Africa, Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

### Introduction

The 2023 general election in Nigeria is fixed for Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> February (Presidential and National Assembly) and Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> March (Gubernatorial and State Houses of Assembly). Notably, 18 political parties are contesting for various positions (INEC, 2022, p.3). The 2023 election is a defining moment for Nigeria as the country approaches a quarter of a century of return to democracy. More still, the elections will also demonstrate how the country is progressing or retrogressing in the aspects of conducting a free, fair, credible, and peaceful election. Simply put, the 2023 elections will be a litmus test of the quality of Nigeria's democracy. In modern times, the new media, and specifically social media platforms have facilitated producing, sharing, and consumption of messages for electoral campaigns. On the one hand, these new media have proved to be viable tools for social mobilization and creating political awareness; on the other hand, these media platforms are also used by political extremists who share messages that are loaded with ethno-religious bigotry. Thus, social media platforms are increasingly becoming the means for recruiting, supporting, spreading, and funding extremist political content. The propagation of extremism via social media is made even easier as users of these media share content without any obligation to disclose their identity. Many of those who use pseudonyms operate as online thugs who act with neither a sense of restriction nor social responsibility. They use these platforms for calumny, character assassination, and to hack down their real and perceived opponents.

The term political extremism has many definitions. Broadly speaking, political extremism is an intolerant, disrespectful, and angry attitude towards other differing political views and opinions. Political extremism is guided by extreme theories, doctrines, and ideologies. Extremism can be violent or non-violent, but hardly without the use of, uncivil, inflammatory, or belligerent language, hateful narratives, dehumanizing discourses, as well as aggressive and divisive rhetoric. Extremism can be motivated by many factors such as politics, religion, ethnicity, racism, and anti-immigration (xenophobia). According to Robert F. Kennedy, "What is objectionable, what is dangerous about extremists is not that they are extreme but that they are intolerant. The evil is not what they say about their cause, but what they say about their opponents" (Bolino, 2012, p.577). Political extremism is an old phenomenon. The Roman Senator Cato was a political extremist who desperately sought the destruction of Carthage. His extremism was demonstrated in the words with which he concluded every speech with the words, "Carthage must be destroyed" (*Carthago delenda est*). His destructive words led to the destruction of Carthage in 146 BC. History shows various forms of extremisms of the past and those that are still prevalent, among which are anti-semitism, right-wing extremism, as well as ethnic and religious militancy.

Political extremists understand politics as an aggressive competition between ideologies, ethnic groups and religions. For example, the post-election riots of 2011 were a reaction of political extremists who framed the victory of Jonathan as a triumph of the south and a loss for the north; others interpreted the election as a battle between religions, with Jonathan representing Christians and Muhammadu Buhari representing Muslims. Political extremism in Nigeria is often inextricably tied to ethno-religious sentiments. For example, the religious and ethnic extremism demonstrated by Boko Haram and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) has a political undertone. Boko Haram's extremism is predicated on the unrealistic dream of establishing an Islamic Government in a pluralistic country, while IPOB calls for secession from a country where they have experienced decades of marginalization and injustice. There is ample evidence to show that banditry in the Northwest is an expression of political extremism because these bandits are connected to politicians. Tension heightens whenever the general elections approach because of the fear of political extremists who are prone to violence.

The famous Irish playwright and social critic George Bernard Shaw asserts that "An election is a moral horror, as bad as a battle except for the blood; a mud bath for every soul concerned in it" (Lilleker, 2012, p.187). The 2023 elections are going in the same direction as in the past years and politicians are repeating the same worn-out strategies of whipping ethnic and religious sentiments among the electorates. Political extremism in Nigeria is closely mixed with religion and ethnicity because political parties and politicians pay little or no attention to the ideologies they profess. The Nigerian electorates hardly know what the manifestoes of the political parties contain, much less the differences between the political manifestoes of the major political parties, namely: All Progressive People's Congress (APC),

the Labour Party (LP), and the People's Democratic Party (PDP). In the 24 years of the return of democracy in Nigeria, the majority of the citizens have consistently voted for persons and not for parties. Often, the Nigerian electorates consider the quality and integrity of a candidate presented by a party and not necessarily what the party stands for. For many Nigerians, the slogan "Vote Wisely" means voting for the candidate that is geographically close to you, and one who speaks your language, and practices your religion; for those who think deeper, voting wisely implies voting for the candidate with character, competence, personality, and credibility; there is yet another category of electorates who understand voting wisely as voting for the candidate who is the highest bidder and who doles out the highest amount of money to the electorates. Money politics and vote buying are still a common practice in Nigeria where bullion vans carrying money are stationed near polling booths and money is openly distributed to hungry voters to influence elections. A parochial mind is likely to see the three major presidential candidates for the 2023 elections as representatives of their ethnic groups and religions with Peter Obi representing the South East, Atiku Abubakar, representing the north, and Bola Tinubu representing the South West.

Usually, ordinary citizens are made to fight over ethnic and religious differences while politicians fight over national resources. The minds of the so-called masses are manipulated to see politics as a fierce competition between ethnic groups. For example, the infamous statement by one of the presidential candidates: "It is my turn" (Emi lokan) was not so much a statement of patriotism as that of self-aggrandizement. He was speaking not to citizens but to fellow political demagogues, who understand the political game of chess. His words represent the mindset of average Nigerian politicians who come in with selfish interests but are vested in religious and ethnic garbs.

The Greek's classification of human beings as idiots, tribesmen, and citizens provides a yardstick with which to assess Nigeria's politicians. For the Greeks, the idiot lacks the sense of common good and has his mind beclouded by a primitive quest for the acquisition of wealth to the detriment of other people. Idiots steal public funds and store them for their generations that are yet to be born and care little about the living who are languishing in abject poverty. Tribesmen, for the Greeks, are those who are nepotistic and are unable to think beyond the clans and tribes from which they originate. A tribesman politician would only appoint, promote, employ, favour, or give a contract to people who belong to his region and ethnic group. A citizen is a person who has a balanced notion of the common good and has an inclusive vision. In the Nigerian context,

*"A citizen is interested in promoting projects that benefit all. Unlike the idiot, he is a respecter of the law. He does not drive above specified speed limits, he does not misappropriate public funds, he does not abuse his office, he does not cheat in an examination, he does not use substandard materials to execute contracts for which he has been paid inflated bills for, he does not make laws to benefit him and his situation at the detriment of others. A citizen speaks up when things are going wrong, [does] not consider only people from his tribe for appointments, and does not litter the environment even when no one is watching. A citizen is equipped with knowledge and skills to live a life of civility and contribute towards the development of the society he lives in" (Agbo, 2021, par. 13).*

The elections will be proof of our political values 24 years after the return of democracy. The elections will show if we can differentiate between the candidates who are idiots, tribesmen, and citizens. The votes will also provide a window to assess the level of awareness of the electorates on whether they are idiots, tribesmen, or citizens.

### **Social Media in the Season of Electioneering**

Decades ago, traditional media such as radio, television, and newspapers were used by politicians to campaign ahead of elections. In the current digital era, new media have become megaphones that are accessible not only to the rich but to ordinary citizens. Several communication theories can be used to support the use of social media platforms for electioneering or other political purposes. Some of these theories include the Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) which explains how people use media to satisfy their specific needs and aspirations; another theory that is compatible with the use of social media is technological determinism. This theory establishes the relationship between technology (medium) and the message. The proponent of this theory, Marshall McLuhan describes the medium as the message because the medium "shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action" (McLuhan 1964, p.9). Furthermore, the power of the phone, personal blogs, and social media platforms brought about the concept of Citizen Journalism because the digital phone is a tool with which to gather messages, take photos, as well as share video and audio messages. Another concept of communication that supports the use of social media as a vital instrument for politics is

Strategic Communication. Strategic communication aims at social change or behavioural change and influencing politics.

Social media, also known as Social Networking Sites (SNS) or interactive technologies are versatile applications for social interaction through text, audio, video, and images. Through these applications, users can receive, produce and share messages (Musa, 2021, pp.301-302). Social media have become indispensable instruments in modern politics as they provide people with the opportunity to air their views and exercise their freedom of speech (Alegu & Magu, 2020, p.4). Social media can be used constructively for peacebuilding processes and narratives and they can be used for the spreading of disinformation. According to a report given by Google, the estimated number of active internet users in January 2022 is 109 million and the most active social media platforms in Nigeria are WhatsApp (91.9%); Facebook (86.4%); Instagram (77.9%); Facebook Messenger (71.2%) (Dazang, 2022). In the year 2014, the year before the 2015 general elections Statcounter and Global Stats reported that Facebook had the highest number of social media users in Nigeria with an estimated 85%, 12% used Twitter and less than 3% used other social media platforms. (Adelakun, 2018, p.19). Compared to the 2022 statistics there is a slight increase in the percentage of Facebook users and an exponential rise in the use of other social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook Messenger. The 2022 statistics show that WhatsApp is the dominant Social Media platform in Nigeria.

Social media have been used constructively and strategically during elections to counter voters' apathy and mobilize citizens to vote and raise awareness about the importance of voting. Here are some striking voting captions and quotes found on Instagram (Bain, 2020): "Shaping tomorrow by voting today"; "Vote for change"; "Be the change you wish to see in the world"; "I'm voting for a better future"; "My vote, my choice"; "If you don't vote you lose the right to complain"; "Every vote count"; "Your vote is your voice"; "Vote like your life depends on it".

In addition, social media served as the watchdog during the last general elections in Nigeria as some electorates exposed electoral fraud where under aged children lined up to vote, and in another case where party agents were captured on camera distributing money to influence voters. The images and videos were shared on WhatsApp and Facebook platforms (Apuke & Tunka, p.4).

However, political extremists have taken advantage of social media to share and spread potentially harmful information in the season of electioneering. Studies show that:

*"Extremist movements are aware of the often-marginalized position they hold in the mainstream media. Therefore, they opt to legitimize their goals, methods, and tactics through the internet, allowing [them] to control the content of the message. The internet allows [them] to control their image, paint a respectable picture of the movement, and reach a broad audience. By drawing attention to the barbarity of others, supporters can be attracted and passive sympathizers can be pursued into action" (Pauwels et al, 2014, pp. 55-56).*

These political extremists transmit harmful messages constructed in various ways: as manipulated political memes, dehumanizing messages to ridicule political opponents, spreading disinformation (fake news), propagating and reinforcing conspiracy theories, manipulating images and events that happened in other countries and presenting them as what happened in Nigeria; bringing past stories and presenting them as current stories just to ignite conflicts. The document on the national action plan for preventing and countering violent extremism identifies social media influencers as one of the core constituencies to focus on in the prevention of violent extremism (Agbakwuru, 2022, par. 4). Idayat Hassan, the Director of the Centre for Democracy Development (CDD), West Africa, observes how disinformation in social media is threatening national cohesion and reinforcing the Nigerian identity politics (Annan Commission, 2022). Thus, social media has become a battleground for political conflicts that are disguised as ethnoreligious conflicts.

There are yet those who use their social media platforms to post and share unauthorized election results. During the 2015 election some social media political activists had come out with conclusive results of the elections even before the elections were conducted in some parts of the country (Guardian Nigeria, 2015, pars. 1 &2). Such unauthorized results by party stalwarts are likely to foment trouble and riots if they are not in sync with the final results released by the Independent National Electoral Commission.

Political parties use social media to emphasize their popularity by using Bots. These are automated social media accounts which are like ghost accounts on social media to establish an exaggerated number of followers of a political candidate. The Centre for Journalists Innovation and Development (CJID) discovered that the major candidates for the presidential election had hundreds of thousands of followers with fake social media accounts (Luckscheiter, 2022, pars. 13-16).

Social media are also used by foreign powers to influence elections. There are cases of international interference in elections in Africa and other parts of the world. Some Western countries have an interest in who wins the elections. Some interference come by way of offering help to conduct the elections for African countries. In some situations, these powerful countries set ethnic groups and religions against themselves (Razak, 2012, pp. 7-8). In 2015, the People's Democratic Party accused foreign powers of supporting the All-Progressive Congress and in 2019 the All Progressive Congress accused the same foreign powers of helping the People's Democratic Party to win the election (Falana, 2019, par. 4). There was alleged foreign interference through Facebook in the 2016 United States elections. To avoid similar occurrences, the Facebook Company came out with a policy not to permit "foreign electoral advertisement" ahead of the 2019 elections in Nigeria.

Social media gives political extremists opportunities to live in what is known as Echo Chamber. This is a situation where people continue to receive the same kind of messages that confirm their ideologies and mindsets. Social media users usually share messages with people who share their opinions, beliefs, values, and ideologies and so the messages go around like a vicious circle within the in-group. This implies that political extremists are likely to share messages with ideologically homogenous people. Facebook and Twitter are among the social media platforms that use centralized algorithms to create an echo chamber. They do this by curating the activities of social media users and suggesting platforms or users that have similar content. Therefore, a political extremist whose activity is creating, sharing, liking, and commenting on extremists' messages is likely to find suggestions from friends who do the same.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

One of the ways of raising awareness about political extremism is by organizing workshops. The 2023 general elections are defining moments in the history of Nigeria and we are all stakeholders to ensure that it is credible, just, and peaceful.

The following recommendations aim at mitigating political extremism through social media and establishing a culture of peacebuilding during and after elections. First, dangerous and violent political extremism can be countered by every citizen who has a portable device. Counter-messaging means producing messages that counteract extremists' ideologies. Patriotic citizens who have access to social media can cultivate the habit of debunking false information and messages that exacerbate identity politics and ethno-religious hatred. Besides, Group platforms can establish rules and regulations that prohibit the sharing of messages that promote political extremism; thirdly, social media users can Cross-check the veracity of the information before sharing. Besides, social media users can exercise some restraint by not sharing negative, and dangerous information that is not verified, especially about political opponents. Needless to add that social media users are at liberty to leave or dissociate themselves from platforms that have toxic, divisive and extremist political views. Users of social media platforms can take advantage of the buttons provided by social media companies which enable users to send reports about dangerous or inappropriate messages.



## References

- Adelakun, Lateef. (2018). Analysis of social media abuse in Nigerian politics: Is regulation Necessary? Researchgate, MCC, 2 (1).
- Agbakwuru, J. (2022). Terrorism: Why Nigeria may continue to witness the carnage. Vanguard (June 10). <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/06/terrorism-why-nigeria-may-continue-to-witness-carnage-experts/>. Retrieved 11<sup>th</sup> December 2022.
- Agbo, C. (2021). Idiots, tribesmen, and citizens. 21<sup>st</sup> Century (July 14). Chronicle. <https://21stcenturychronicle.com/idiots-tribesmen-and-citizens/>. Retrieved 11<sup>th</sup> December 2022.
- Akiyode-Lawanson, J. (2019). Facebook moves to avoid election influence allegations in Nigeria. Business Day (17<sup>th</sup> January). <https://businessday.ng/ng-election/article/facebook-moves-to-avoid-election-influence-allegations-in-nigeria/> retrieved 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022.
- Alegu, J.C., B.S. Maku, K. Adelaja, A.A. Rasheed (2020). Social media, propaganda and electioneering campaigns: The Nigerian experience (1999 -2019). *International Journal of Sociology and Political Science*, 2(1).
- Annan Commission (2022). Nigeria: mitigating the risks to 2023 elections posed by social media. Kofi Annan Foundation. <https://www.kofiannanfoundation.org/supporting-democracy-and-elections-with-integrity/nigeria-mitigating-social-media-risks-elections/> Retrieved 11<sup>th</sup> December 2022.
- Apuke O.D., E.A. Tunca (2018). Understanding the implications of social media usage in the electoral processes and campaigns in Nigeria. *Global Media Journal*. 16 (31).
- Bain, E. (2020). 27 Instagram voting captions: best quotes and phrases for your Election Day 2020 photos! HITC (3<sup>rd</sup> November). <https://www.hitc.com/en-gb/2020/11/03/instagram-voting-captions/> Retrieved 11<sup>th</sup> December 2022.
- Bolino, A.C. (2012). Men of Massachusetts: Bay state contributors to American society. Bloomington: iUniverse Publishers.
- Dazang, N. (2022). Social media and the 2023 general elections. Vanguard (29<sup>th</sup> August). <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/08/social-media-and-the-2023-general-elections/> Retrieved 4<sup>th</sup> December 2022.
- Falana, F. (2019). Foreign interference in elections. Thisday (26<sup>th</sup> February). <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2019/02/26/foreign-interference-in-elections/> Retrieved 10<sup>th</sup> December 2022.
- Guardian Nigeria (2015). INEC and challenge of social media influence on elections. Nigerian Guardian (4<sup>th</sup> April). <https://guardian.ng/saturday-magazine/inec-and-challenge-of-social-media-influence-on-elections/> Retrieved 11<sup>th</sup> December 2022.
- Independent National Electoral Commission (2022). Final list of candidates for national elections (Presidential, Senatorial, and House of Representatives). <https://inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Final-List-of-Candidates-for-National-Elections-1.pdf> Retrieved 9<sup>th</sup> December 2022.
- Lilleker, D. G. (2012). People, parties and parliaments: Election campaigns, media, and their impact. *European Journal of Communication*, 27(2), 187–194. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323112441292>
- Luckscheiter, J. (2022). Bots and biases: The role of social media in Nigeria’s elections. Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung (26<sup>th</sup> October). <https://ng.boell.org/en/2022/10/26/bots-and-biases-role-social-media-nigerias-elections> Retrieved 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022.
- McLuhan, Marshall. 1964. Understanding media: The extensions of man. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Musa, G. (2021). “The gospel according to social media: A field guide for the perplexed.” Faith in action, Volume 1: Reform, mission and pastoral renewal in African Catholicism since Vatican 1 (S. C. Ilo, N. K. Nonterah, I. Otu, MSP, Eds). Abuja: Pauline Publications.
- Pauwels, L., N. Schils, J. Lafinneur, F. Brion, A.Verhage, B. De Ruyver, M.Easton (2014). Explaining and understanding the role of exposure to new social media on violent extremism: An integrative quantitative and qualitative approach. Gent: Academia Press. [www.academiapress.be](http://www.academiapress.be)
- Rasak, B. (2012). Elections and international conspiracy in Africa: *The Nigerian experience Journal of Social Sciences and Public Policy Review*, 4 (9), 54- 61.

# Developing Strategies for Peaceful Coexistence and Empowerment for Self-Reliance among Women in Maiduguri Metropolitan City

<sup>1</sup>Uzoigwe, T. M. and <sup>2</sup> Chikelue, A.

<sup>1</sup>University of Maiduguri

<sup>2</sup>Nile University of Nigeria, Abuja

## Abstract

This research examines the strategies for developing peaceful coexistence among women in MMC. All women in Maiduguri Metropolitan City were used as the population of this study which is 257,607. A purposive sampling technique of fifty participants was adopted. Creation of social platform, employment opportunity, empowerment exercise, skill acquisitions and good education for women were the five variables identified for the study. A four point Likert rating scale of 15- items questionnaire was used for data collection which was analyzed to ascertain the relationship between the variables and peaceful coexistence. The result indicates a significant relationship between each variable and peaceful coexistence. Written protocol paper was also administered to fifteen participants making the sample population sixty-five. Result reveals that free qualitative education, women involvement in decision making, opportunity for dialogue, among others are the strategies for developing peaceful coexistence in the community. Recommendations were made as well as conclusion for effective growth.

**Keywords:** Peaceful coexistence, Strategies, Developing, Self-reliance, Skill acquisition and empowerment

## Introduction

Within the past few decades, peace has eluded many parts of the country especially the northern Nigeria of which Borno State and in particular Maiduguri has been at the center of the episode. Series of efforts made by the Government to combat the insurgent attack made the pressure to move from the city to the remote places known as the country sides. Many farmers and inhabitants were seriously attacked and they rushed to the metropolitan city of Maiduguri for refuge and shelter. This attack by Boko Haran Sect (Western education is evil) has left a lot of inhabitants homeless, orphaned, widowed and widower. Many public facilities and infrastructures were devastated. The closure of schools, churches, mosques, hospitals and marketplaces lingered for a long time. Phenomena of these kind led to frustration, distress and series of trauma experiences. It has made millions who were living comfortably in their houses, earning their living through their daily struggles to be displaced and eventually ended up in IDP camps and as beggars in the street. To continue to keep the populace in perpetual fear the terrorists have devised other means like abduction, kidnapping that attracts a huge ransom, sexual abuse of women and even of the same sex, banditry and all sorts of dehumanizing strategies to achieve their goal. In all these, many have been recklessly wounded and torn apart and that is why the only solution to bring them back to normalcy is to open up avenues that can restore their peace of mind and body. No wonder, Bernedette et al (2015) asserts; "An individual without peace cannot give peace to another person or others around them. You can only have peace and give peace to others when you are satisfied with what is going on around you. But when you are dissatisfied with the happenings around you such as injustice, no employment, no good roads, no clean drinking water, and no electricity peace may elude you and the people around you may suffer."

## Statement of the Problem

Maiduguri Metropolitan City is a Multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious society. Its peaceful nature makes people migrate from different parts of the country to enjoy this serenity. It was robbed of its peaceful nature by the environmental mess up caused by the insurgency. To add to the efforts of the government, some humanitarian bodies have emerged to alleviate the pains of the people by providing free education, shelter, food and clothing for the displaced, but none has really delved into forming women in groups, empowering them by training them in skill acquisition program so that they will be able to empower other women by their corporation and mutual association. Here arises the essence of this project research and implementation.

### **Aims and Objectives**

The general aim of the research is to discuss strategies for peaceful co-existence and empowerment for self-reliance among women in Maiduguri city. The specific objectives are:

- i. To enable unemployed women to be skilled and hence become self-reliant and independent.
- ii. Form likeminded women who will encourage and empower others by their being empowered by the initiative.
- iii. Train women who will stand for their rights and inculcate values to the family and society and avoid all sorts of domestic and social violence.

### **Research Questions**

Three research questions were asked to guide the study;

1. How does creation of social platform of women enhance peaceful coexistence in the community?
2. To what extent does employment harness peaceful living in the family and community at large?
3. How far does empowerment assist women to be self-reliant and also enhance peaceful coexistence?

### **Conceptual Framework**

#### **Concept of Peace**

Peace is the harmony, which exists either within a person or between people who live together in a community (Bernedette *et al.*, 2015). It is the opposite of antagonistic conflict, violence or war and that; it may mean an internal state of mind or nation. In addition, peace is seen by Dalai Lama, (2012) as a situation where people are able to resolve their conflict without violence and can work together to improve their lives. Other writers see peace as a concord or harmony or tranquility which exist within oneself, among two or more people, or in the society at large. In a similar way, Dalung, (2013) views the word peace as a state of harmony characterized by lack of violent conflict, commonly understood as the absence of hostility. In international relations, peace is not the absence of war or conflict, but also the presence of cultural and economic understanding.

#### **Peaceful Coexistence**

The desire for peaceful existence is part of humanity and has dominated and continued to dominate international, national and local community's efforts at promoting the well-being of the people (Edwin *et al.*, 2014). The peaceful coexistence between the members of any society and the dissemination of a culture of tolerance, love and peace is the safety valve for all countries. They are considered the healthy and sound environment for comprehensive human development in all scientific, economic, commercial, human rights and health fields. A socially and economically stable environment, along with political development, enables everyone to exercise freedom and obtain economic, health, political and humanitarian rights without infringing the rights of others or practicing any kind of violence (Ali, 2018).

Ali Ahmed 2018, further asserts that Peaceful coexistence between the various spectra is the fertile soil that stimulates economic growth at all levels. It is followed by the development of other economic and trade facilities, such as light and heavy industries, import and export, as well as the fundamental factors of the development of all aspects of life, namely intellectual, scientific, industrial, educational, legal and political.

Peaceful coexistence is viewed by Dalung (2013) as competition without war, or a policy of peace between nations and individuals of widely differing cultural, religious, political systems and ideologies. Peaceful co-existence is a state in which two or more groups are living together while respecting their differences and resolving their conflicts nonviolently (Weiner, 1998). As a term and concept, peaceful coexistence implies living in peace together as a matter of policy or social contract among people. It is an inclusive concept that also includes mutual acceptance and empowerment for the attainment of identified common goals (Kamaruddin and Oseni, 2013).

Peaceful Coexistence is a policy or an attitude that enables, mutual tolerance between states, groups, etc., having different beliefs, ideologies, or outlooks; mutual respect for each other's integrity and rights; equality and mutual benefit; the fact of living together at the same time or in the same place. (Ilo, 2021) The five principles of peaceful co-existence as promoted by China include mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual nonaggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality of members and mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence (About China, 2007).

#### **Identification of a Peaceful Society**

Arifeen and Semul 2019, suggested that a peaceful society can be identified in terms of traits and function: economic affluence, effectiveness of the state, apparatus, mechanism for resolving internal

conflicts and fights. Under peaceful conditions, people are more at ease and can easily activate their humanity. They can meaningfully think about their present conditions and ways of improving their future. They can be real “rational man”, “economic man”, “organization man”, “and political man” (Shah, 2008). They can invest in economic ventures, participate in social and political activities and think about future generations (Kolawole and Abu, 2017).

### **Empowerment for Self-Reliance**

Worthy of note that many countries have focused on empowerment of women, as it will fuel the economic development of a country (Sunfo, 2013). James (2008) sees empowerment as; “The process of strengthening the existing capacities and capabilities of disadvantaged groups in the society to enable them perform towards improving themselves, their families and society as a whole”. It is a multi-dimensional process involving the transformation of economic, social, psychological, political and legal circumstances of the powerless. It is the process of articulating plans, aimed at bridging the gap between the advantaged and disadvantaged groups in the society, so as to achieve growth or equitable distribution of income. Women empowerment can thus be described as all purposeful efforts aimed at imparting education to women with the aim of repositioning the knowledge, skills, and competences required of them (Alonge *et al.*, 2014). He went further to say that “It is also the process of equipping women with functional skills that can make them live as useful members of the society”. Empowerment is also defined as the strengthening or improvement of competitive advantage or bargaining position (Mardikanto and Soebiato, 2013).

Empowerment not only includes the strengthening of individual community members, but also the institutions. Instilling the values of modern culture, such as hard work, thrift, openness, and responsibility are main part of empowerment effort (Umiyati, 2016) There is no doubt that the current situation in Nigeria and other sub-Saharan African countries calls for the read option of a self-reliant approach to development if we are to overcome some of the current maladies in the rural settings (Idoma and Muhammad, 2013).

### **Self-Reliance**

Generally, it is the ability to think and act without the help or influence of others, the ability to decide what you should be or do. Self-reliance encourages the need for people to improve their living conditions using home initiatives and resources at their disposal. It is also seen as development that relies on “internal” resources as opposed to development that relies heavily on “external” resources. Self-reliance is synonymous with self-sufficiency. It means doing things for ourselves rather than having things done for us. Self-reliance is the personal initiative in the ability and effort to identify, harness and manage effectively and efficiently the personal and collective resources, human or natural in the immediate surroundings in order to uplift one’s or a people’s quality of life, standard of living and condition of existence. It also refers to the sole dependence of individual capabilities to improve life and the ability of an individual to rely on him/herself in order to accomplish a specific task and progress in it. (Bulus *et al.*, 2020).

Self-reliance encourages the need for people to improve their living conditions using home initiatives and resources at their disposal. This concept is being given great attention and considered as a new blueprint for community development (Idoma and Muhammad, 2013). According to Carter (2012), self-reliance is defined in three facets; knowing that people can solve a problem for themselves, ensuring that they have the resources and skills to do something about it, and granting them freedom from external obstacles.

### **Strategies for Developing Peaceful Coexistence among Women**

There are different strategies to employ in order to establish permanent peace in the society. There is a popular saying that “Peace begins from the mindset”. Setting a platform either through social media or physical group where seminars, workshops are organized and people are conscientized about the essence of peaceful coexistence in the society is a great advantage to our generation. It creates room for dialogue and understanding of the others perception of issues and way of life. Furthermore, Kolawole and Abu (2017) have this to say “Many programs and strategies have been developed to apply conflict resolution principles, with positive results in several contexts in replacing prejudice with tolerance and acceptance and promoting mutual understanding and constructive cooperation. Conflict resolution programmes include, but are not limited to, educational programs, dialogues, encounter models, compassionate listening, nonviolent communication, cooperative problem solving, reconciliation and forgiveness, and open space technology” all these are possible through creation of social platform.

Secondly, another strategy to enhance peaceful coexistence is creation of adequate employment for the populace especially the women folk. Bernedette et al 2017 assert, “We believe that if everyone is

occupied in one job or the other, no one will have the time to create problems. Employment opportunity for all may suffice to solve peace problems in Nigeria". Women who are engaged with their work have no time to gossip or intrude into affairs that are not their business. Hence, everyone's affair is respected.

Thirdly, is the policy of empowerment, in an age where there is less opportunity for white collar jobs, people need to be empowered through acquisition of skills and financial aids to enable them establish means of earning their living without depending on the government for monthly allowances. When everyone is empowered, the high level of dependency on the other for daily needs is reduced and as a result, peace is enhanced. Alonge, (2014) has this to say; "Government however needs to provide the enabling environment for women empowerment to be achieved holistically in Nigeria. If women are empowered, not only will their status change, Nigeria economy will become stronger".

Furthermore, education of women is a sine quo non in the establishment of a peaceful society. An enlightened woman can never be intimidated with domestic violence or similar issues, such woman also knows how to inculcate good values to the family members especially the children and the husband. Respect for everyone is enhanced. Education is the key for peaceful co-existence.

Lastly, is the acquisition of skills that can lead to self-reliance and independence on the provision of daily needs. Bernedette *et al.*, (2015) put it right: "Skill acquisition is one of those things that can keep people busy. When everyone is occupied, doing one thing or the other, there will be no room to think up evil and none will gang up to destroy the peace of the country. In developed countries skill acquisition ranks higher than unmerited degrees and certificates".

### **Materials and Methods**

For an easy approach and facts findings, the researcher made use of both quantitative and qualitative approach in the field work. The struggle was to find out whether the findings from the quantitative method aligned with that of the qualitative result. Experimental and practical approach was also adopted in form of two days' seminar and workshop in which the participants were trained in peace building strategies and skill acquisition program and lastly were empowered to start small scale business.

A four-point Likert rating scale of 15- items questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The instrument was face validated by experts in the area of test and measurement who ascertained them valid for use. The test was administered to 50 women which were selected from different religions, ethnicities, different levels of education and works of life.

Furthermore, a single question demanding written protocols of peoples' opinion of the strategies for peaceful coexistence was administered to 15 participants. The essence of adopting this design was to establish the facts from different angles of understanding.

### **Population of the study**

The population of the study consisted of all the women in Maiduguri Metropolitan City, which is 257,607 as reported by the National Bureau for statistics (2012).

### **Sampling Procedure**

The sampling technique adopted for this study was the purposive sampling where 50 women of different categories and religion comprising of traders, civil servants and house wives were selected to participate in the study. The purposive sampling procedure was ideal because of the huge population of MMC. One research assistant was employed for easy assessments.

### **Sample**

The sample size of this study was 65 in population. Fifty of the participants were given a questionnaire to respond to while fifteen of them responded by written protocols. The same fifty who participated in questionnaire were subjected to seminar and training and eventually were empowered to start off small scale business. The various methods are the purpose of getting the best after due consideration and confirmation of results. The results obtained from quantitative analysis are compounded for confirmation, with the results obtained from the qualitative analysis.

### **Result and Discussion**

Data presented in Table 1 shows that in each of the variables subjected under study and analysis, the calculated r-value for each of the parameters is greater than critical r-value of 0.138 at 0.05 level of significance with 198 degrees of freedom. Meanwhile each of the working hypothesis state that there is no significant relationship between the variable and peaceful coexistence in the community. The result of the calculated r- value being higher than the critical r-value is an indication that the null hypothesis is directly rejected or not accepted. Since all the hypothesis are null it then means that there is significant

relationship between each variable and the peaceful coexistence. As a result, there is a significant relationship between creation of social platform for women and peaceful coexistence.

The findings in the second variables indicates that there is significant relationship between employment of women in different fields of life and peaceful coexistence. This reveals that when women are seriously engaged in their different works of life, there is less time left for actions that breed violence in the society because an idle mind is the devil's workshop.

Consequently, the outcome of the findings indicates that there is a significant relationship between empowerment of women, education of women and skill acquisition of women with peaceful coexistence in the community. This rightly gives us an evidence that empowering women with skills, material and financial resources enables them to be useful to themselves and be at peace with themselves and others. This agrees with the work of Alonge, (2014) thus "If women are empowered, not only will their status change, Nigerian economy will become stronger" The same is applicable with giving women the rightful education both formal and informal, thus an empowering tool to be peace ambassadors to humanity. This is not also far from creating avenues for skill acquisitions like catering services, knitting, sewing, baking, modern farming, hair dressing, make over, basket making etc, enables women to engage themselves with being very resourceful and hence have no time for gossips and busy body affair that may induce violence to the society. Actually, this is in line with the findings of Bernedette *et al.*, (2015) that peace and harmony could only be achieved in a society like Nigeria with the provision of basic infrastructure, employment of youths, good governance and gainful skill acquisition for effective co-existence and individual self-reliance. Researchers have maintained that skill acquisition is very important in the life of every citizen and that lack of skills is the major cause of some violence in the society.

Finally, the findings also give credence to what Bernadette et all (2015) says " It is important to recognize that when the needs of the masses are met, the people will be happy and there will be no need for crises and even when a problem arises, it can be resolved amicably".

#### ***Discussion of the qualitative data***

Analysis of the written protocols shows that out of the fifteen participants, five indicated the importance of employment opportunity for all as strategy for peaceful problem solving in Nigeria. Three were of the opinion that empowerment of women and their skill acquisition which also is a source of developing resources and the community will enhance peaceful coexistence. Four of the participants wrote that education of both youths and women will go a long way in establishing lasting peace in the society. Subsequently, three participants indicated that creation of social platforms where women will be enlightened and trained to be ambassadors of peace will be of great advantage in making the society a peaceful one.

Furthermore, these are the strategies suggested by the participants to enhance peaceful coexistence in the society. They include; creating room for dialogue among the people even when there is no impending conflict; inculcating peaceful coexistence in the curriculum in schools of different levels Inculcating in children the value of love and respect in the early stage of their life; Government should imbibe positive attitude towards the control and management of our natural resources and money. Effort should be made to reduce the rate of poverty in the country. The courts should assist people in resolving their issues amicably.

Obviously, the issues raised by the participants indicate that there are more qualitative approaches to establishing a peaceful coexistence community other than the ones mentioned in the quantitative approach.

#### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Having taken time to study the present conditions of our society especially of Maiduguri Metropolitan City, it has come to our knowledge that insurgency and terrorism breed numerous violence and restlessness to not only the women but also to all mankind. The result indicates that the return of permanent peace is actually possible but effort should be made to solidify a few things like frequent training and enlightenment of women on the needs and strategies of enhancing peaceful coexistence in the society. This will go a long way to help us as well as educating, empowering and getting them fully involved in decision making at different levels. If individuals deem it right to be at peace with themselves and one another then peace will become the backbone of the society.

Based on the findings so far, we recommend the following as tools for enhancing peaceful coexistence in the society.

- Free qualitative education should be made compulsory in our nation.
- More opportunities should be given to women to serve the public.

- Effort should be made by the government and every citizen to eradicate discrimination, tribalism and all sorts of land and ethnic disputes
- Training children, youths, women and citizenry in skill acquisition is a priority which should begin in schools
- Instilling the fear of God in our children is the beginning of a peaceful coexistence in the society.

### References

- Adeboyo, O.A. and Akeem, A.A. (2017) Peaceful Coexistence Social Media and the Nigeria Baptist Pastors Challenges and Possible way out. *EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 8(6), 120 -126.
- Ali, A. A. (2018). Peaceful Coexistence: The Key to the Development of Communities *International Journal of Inspiration & Resilience Economy*, 2(2), 40.
- Alonge, H.O., Akondele, M.I. and Osamino, E.O. (2014) Women Empowerment for Self-Reliance: Education Management Strategies in Nigeria case. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*. 4(1), 517-524.
- Bernedette, U. C., Rita, A. N., Hellen, S.O., and Emmanuel, E., (2015). Strategies for Peaceful Problem Solving in Nigeria. *International Journal of Curriculum and Instruction* 7, (2), 35-50.
- Bulus K., Gubak H D and Gabam H.S (2020). Youth Unemployment, Empowerment And Self-Reliance In Nigeria: A Panacea For Self-Employment *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, (10) 12.
- Carter, J. (2012). RC and Research Publications, (10) 12 Hing self-reliance in development projects. Aid Effectiveness, Community Development, Ethics in development [Online]. [Accessed on 02.07.2013]. Available at [www.whydev.org/self-reliance-in-community-development-project](http://www.whydev.org/self-reliance-in-community-development-project)
- Dalung, S. (2013). Peaceful Co-Existence, Conflict Management and National Integration in Nigeria, the Journey to Somalia, Lead paper presented at a two-day Workshop
- Edwin M.C I., OKoli, F.C. and Nzekwe, II (2014). Peaceful co-existence: A tool for sustainable development along the boundary corridor of Nigeria Mediterranean. *Journal of Social Sciences* 5 (27), 364- 370.  
for Clergy/Pastors organized by Ministry of Religious and Community Relations
- Idoma Kim, 2 Muhammad Isma'I (2013) Self-Reliance: Key to Sustainable Rural Development in Nigeria *ARPN Journal of Science and Technology* 3, (6), 585-592
- International Labour Organization (2022). Promoting Social Cohesion and Peaceful Coexistence in Fragile Contexts through TVET. Guide for TVET Practitioners Swizerland.
- James, O. (2008). Education as a Catalyst for Women Empowerment in Nigeria. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 5 (6).
- Kamaruddin Z. and Oseni U. A. (2013). Coexistence and acceptance as a means of global peace: The case of Malaysia. *The Journal of Rotterdam Islamic and Social Science*, 4(1), 1-20.
- Kolawole, S. O. and Abu, S.H. (2017). Psychological strategies for achieving peaceful co-existence in a multi-cultural and multi-religious society for sustainable national development. *Nigerian Journal of Psychological Research*, 13, 32-42
- Lama, D. (2012). What is peace? International alert annual report. Retrieved on 8/7/2014
- Mardikanto T, Soebiato P (2013). The Community Empowerment (in Public Policy Perspective). Bauchi: Alfabeta Press.
- National Bureau of Statistics (2012). Nigeria population.[www.tradingeconomics.com](http://www.tradingeconomics.com) Retrieved 29/7/2014.  
Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/i.B978-008045405-4.00633-9>
- Shah, M. M. (2008). Sustainable development. Encyclopedia of ecology (pp. 3443- 3446).
- Sunfo, United Nations Friendship Organization. (2013). [Online]. Accessed on 24.06.2013]. Available at [sunfosrilanka.org/index.php/women-empowerment](http://sunfosrilanka.org/index.php/women-empowerment)
- Umiyati, I. (2016). Empowerment: Strategic solutions to realize farmers self-reliance, farming scale and sustainable prosperity (survey on paddy farmers in south Sumatera-Indonesia) *Global Advanced Research Journal of Agricultural Science*. 5(3).

**Table 1:** Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the relationship between each variable and peaceful co-existence**N = 50**

<b>Variables</b>	$\Sigma X$ $\Sigma Y$	$\Sigma X^2$ $\Sigma Y^2$	$\Sigma XY$	<b>Cal-r</b>
Social Platform of women Peaceful Coexistence	1203 1435	17180 21323	1726305	0.356
Employment of women Peaceful Coexistence	1289 1435	18127 21323	1849715	0.483
Empowerment of women Peaceful coexistence	1204 1435	17191 21323	1727740	0.357
Education of women Peaceful coexistence	1203 1435	17181 21323	1726305	0.356
Skill Acquisition Peaceful Coexistence	1043 1435	17181 21323	1496705	0.274

*Significant at 0.05, df = 198; critical r = 0.138*



# Peaceful Co-Existence: Empowerment of Women through Skill Acquisition in Koton Karfe, Kogi State

Okonkwo, D. I.

COFP International Research and Civic Engagement

## Abstract

This study examined youth empowerment and sustainable development in Koton Karfe. Primary data were collected through oral interview at randomly selected beneficiaries of the empowerment schemes. The findings of the study revealed that YES had made significant contributions towards improving the standard of living of the respondents in the study area. According to ZhujiWorld.com (2015), the statistics of women in Koton Karfe were 6043. A purposive sampling technique fifty participant was adopted. The various variables for this study used were needs assessment of the community, sensitization, and empowerment exercise and skill acquisition. Experimental design was used in order to ascertain the findings. Three objectives and research questions were raised. To improve the performance of the youth empowerment scheme in the study area, the study recommended that adequate loan facility with minimal interest rate, the establishment of additional training for participants should be ensured in order to achieve sustainable development.

**Keywords:** Youth, Empowerment, Skill Acquisition, Sustainability, Needs Assessment

## Introduction

Women empowerment is not a new concept. From time immemorial, women have always participated in societal development and they were always finding ways of trying to empower themselves and better their conditions, both individually and corporately. The role of women in development has often been undermined if not totally neglected because of the men-oriented nature of history writers. The woman is often misconceived as a second-class citizen and the weaker sex because millions of them are downgraded to domestic work, bedroom and chores but the truth is that even in these supposedly mental chores, the woman is still making extraordinary contributions to societal development.

Ever since humans have always waged conflicts, humans have also been involved in numerous ways to end them. Often, one side coercively imposes its will upon the other side, sometimes violently, and thus terminates a conflict. Within every society, however, many other ways of settling fights have long been practiced, including various forms of mediation or adjudication. Even between opposing societies, negotiations have been used throughout history to reach agreements regarding issues of contention between them. Conflict resolution relates to all spheres of conflicts, whether within or between families, organizations, communities, or countries.

Human history is the history of conflicts of values expressed in various inter and intra religious, ethnic, regional or class conflicts and contradictions. This idea was aptly expressed by Marx and Engels (1998) when they argued that the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle.

## Statement of the problem

Women's participation in intermediation is essential for achieving lasting, positive peace, which goes well beyond just the silencing of guns. Women are crucial partners in economic recovery, social cohesion, and political legitimacy, and women's participation in a mediation process can help ensure that more and diverse members of the community become engaged in peacemaking. This, in-turn, can build the credibility of the process and increase local ownership of the deep-rooted causes of conflict, as well as facilitates creative and holistic solutions to conflict (unwomen.org, 2022). The main problem, which this program addressed, is trying to impart some self-reliance skills among the young women of Koton Karfe Community (Christians/Muslims) as they lack self-empowerment. The empowerment program is designed to help these young girls to think about how to contribute to their family and community at large. If they are empowered, it will ease poverty that give birth to many crimes and conflicts.

## Objectives

The broad objective of this study is to explore the rationale behind why majority of the Koton Karfe youths especially their young girls are not self-employed. While the specific objectives are:

1. To empower the target recipients with relevant skills that make them economically important and help them earn a living.
2. To enable the youth in the host community be eligible for employment.

3. To prepare them for future tasks of self-employment.

Hence, drawing on the humanistic theories to teaching and learning as the theoretical framework, the workshop was designed to investigate three major questions, namely:

1. What are the relative factors that cause ethnic and religious conflicts in Koton Karfe?
2. What restraints do the facilitators experience while selecting participants (Muslims & Christians) in order to make peace?
3. To what extent has skill empowerment attempt to help governments to manage, resolve conflicts and promote peace in Koton Karfe?

### **Literature Review**

One cannot trace the history of Igu kingdom without reference to its migration. Notably, earlier settlements that were temporary actually paved way for the establishment of Igu and Opanda kingdoms and later formation of other Egbura splinter groups (<https://naijablog.ng/2019/09/22/egbura-koto-history/>). Koton Karfe (Egbura igu) is the headquarters of Kogi Local Government in Kogi State in the Northern part of Nigeria between Lokoja and Abuja. Koton Karfe is predominantly inhabited by the Egbura Kotos even though other tribes: (Ebira, Yoruba, Igbo, Bassa, Nupe etc.) are found in small proportions all over the community. The community's traditional government is overseen by the Ohimegye (saluted Agaba Idu!) and is assisted in governance by his chiefs, prominent men from all over the kingdom. A democratically elected chairman heads the Local Government's Area Council. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koton\\_Karfe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koton_Karfe)).

The Ohimegye of Igu (Koton Karfe), His Royal Majesty Alhaji Abdulrazak Gambo Isa Koto, opined that, Igu kingdom is one of the oldest kingdoms in North Central Nigeria, spanning over 400 years. He proudly said Igu, which means “enclosure” in Egbira, is the cradle of Egbira civilization, adding that it was the Hausa who called the place Koton Karfe, probably because of the abundant deposits of iron ore around the area. He said bows and arrows and spear are the sign of the Egbira culture because of its rich history in iron smelting and gallantry in warfare. It was recorded that succession tussle aroused later which led to the split of Egbira.

### **Method and Materials**

The design of the paper is experimental where workshop on skills empowerment was organized and report analyzed as the findings.

### **Empowerment for Peace**

Empowerment for peace refers to activities that provide capacity building for youth and adults who are trapped in a conflict as a result of their lack of power, influence, or status. This program offers participants new skills to help them break out of a cycle of destructive conflict. Skills empowerment for peace are used to address situations where there are power disparaging situations of repeated conflict, and to provide skills that can lead to lasting and sustainable change.

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2022.

Funding: Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace (COFP), FCT, Abuja, Nigeria.

Venue: Civic Hall, Koton Karfe, Kogi State, Nigeria.

### **Participants**

The coordinator of the program, Denisia Ijeoma Okonkwo of the Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy Congregation, the women leader of Koton Karfe community, Hajiya Zainab, 47 female youths.

### **Skills taught are;**

- a. Liquid soap for washing of utensils and car
- b. Bleach
- c. Tablet soap
- d. Organic black soap for bathing and treating of infections such as ringworm and body rashes
- e. Shea butter and cocoa body lotion
- f. Facial scrubs such as; brown sugar, charcoal and blue alum facial scrub. Tea tree feet treatment was also taught. In addition, different types of snacks were taught and they are; doughnut, vegetable puff puff, beans ball, queens cake and how to decorate cake with fondant and icing.

### **Sustainability**

Every implemented project ought to be sustained because sustainability is the capacity of an organization to carry on its mission or program far into the future. A project can be sustainable in three main categories: organizational, financial and community sustainability.

**Organizational sustainability:** This is how the NGO itself continues to function after the project. Here, it is expected that Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace (COFP) will use social media to publicize its research findings, and also help attract new volunteers to the people of Koton Karfe.

**Financial sustainability:** It is how the financial support required for the project or the organization will continue after the grant has ended. For example, as part of the advocacy initiative, the communication team of COFP will organize an online newsletter and crowd-sourcing campaign. This campaign will also include an annual appeal to further support the project.

**Community sustainability:** This refers how the Koton Karfe community carries out the project activities even after the NGO leaves. Here, the COFP project trained 47 female youths and young mothers on skills acquisition. After these 3 days training, these 47 participants will then share their knowledge with other women and neighbours in their communities. In this way, the project will continue to reach an additional 70-100 beneficiaries one year after official project activities are completed.

In addition, there is a business sustainability, the participants were empowered with some starter kits to enable them put into practice what they have learnt and also startup a mini scale business. The project will generate financial gains or profits and continue to function on earned income. There is also need for a follow-up by reaching out to the participants from time to time to know if they were able to do some practical by themselves.

Furthermore, majority of women in Koton Karfe are jobless and needs more support from national and international donors.

### Needs Assessment

A needs assessment is a logical progression for determining gaps between current conditions or wants of a particular community in order to reach a desired outcome. An independent needs assessment was carried out in Koton Karfe community. I was able to reach the traditional ruler of Koton Karfe community in the place of His Royal Majesty, Alhaji Abdulrazaq Isa Koto. He directed me to the community women leader, Hajiya Zainab to help me out. After my discussion with Hajiya Zainab, she narrated to me that the women lack skills, that they always depend on their husbands to provide for their family needs and this always cause mayhem in the family. Also, their young female youths go in to early marriage as a result of hardships.

### Outcome of the Workshop Empowerment

1. **Poverty Eradication:** Empowering people can reduce the rate of poverty to a large level. One of the keys to empowerment is with skill development. When a youth is equipped with needed skills, he or she can utilize them to feed, assist others, and even invest for future use, aiding the nation economically. This will in-turn contribute to the increase in employability and add to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the nation.
2. **Crime Reduction and National Security:** Empowerment ensures that youths have the necessary skill to sustain a livelihood, preventing from adopting the path of crime.
3. **Good Governance:** When the youths are empowered, they invest in the masses, thereby paving the path for a better future. To build a better tomorrow, we need to nurture the youths of today.
4. **Employment Creation:** This is another significance of youth empowerment. A youth empowered society will not seriously suffer from the problem of unemployment that many nations are battling with in the current time. A skillful youth is a job creator.

### Conclusion and Recommendation

The 21st century is not in the distant future- it is today. Youth empowerment is of good importance to both nations and the empowered. Outside the government creating youth empowering programs, the youths should see it as a duty to personally develop themselves, because at the end of the day the best thing you can bring to any environment is yourself. Based on the findings of this study, the following policy measures aimed at improving the effectiveness of Youth Empowerment hence leading to sustainable development are therefore proffered:

- i. Training centers should give adequate training to participants, training and retraining cannot be overemphasized.
  - ii. Additional Youth Empowerment Schemes and training centers should be established in the study area with efficient equipment.
  - iii. The government needs to adopt sectoral policies and rearrange priorities in public expenditures which promotes efficient economic growth, increase productivity in provision of adequate loan facility with minimal interest rate.
-

**References**

- Marx and Engels (1998). *The Communist Manifesto*. New York: Penguin group.  
Retrieved from <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security/conflict-prevention-and-resolution> on May 4, 2022.  
Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koton\\_Karfe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koton_Karfe) on May 5, 2022.  
Retrieved from <https://naijablog.ng/2019/09/22/egbura-koto-history/> on May 5, 2022.  
Lanre, O. (2019). Importance of youth empowerment in 21<sup>st</sup> century. Retrieved from <https://guardian.ng/> on August 25, 2022.  
Imam, A.M. (1993). *The Dynamics of winning: an analysis of women in Nigeria in Robson, E. (ed) women in Nigeria: the first ten years*. Zaria. ABU Press.
-

# Appraisal of Margi Traditional Education for Conflict Resolution Mechanism in Borno State, Nigeria

<sup>1</sup>Shaljaba, D. B. and <sup>2</sup>Yohanna, S.M.

<sup>1</sup>Federal Ministry of Defense, Abuja

<sup>2</sup>University of Jos, Nigeria

## Abstract

Margi is a diverse culture and tribe. “Margi Twe Ngha Tem” is one of the eight (8) groups of Margi in Nigeria, Cameroun and Chad Republic. This research discussed the appraisal of Margi Traditional Education for Conflict Resolution Mechanism in Borno state that suffers the impact of Boko Haram. The objectives of the paper were to identify the components of Margi culture, analyze it for peaceful development in contemporary society. The method adopted was the focus group discussion of 300 people that comprise: Emirs, District heads, Religious Clerics, Youth and Women groups, Transport Workers and Security Personnel. The discovery reveals the culture has different layers and shields like Onion: Customs, tradition, institution, music, materials, food and religion. Their application was discussed in reality of life and five (5) recommendations were proffered to the youth to learn their culture, different groups to use good part of cultures in schools, to religious groups to use good part of culture as contextualization of their preaching.

**Keywords:** Appraisal, Margi, Traditional, Education, Conflict, Resolution.

## Introduction

Margi people are one of the Afro Chadic people of Africa. They are found in Nigeria, Cameroun and Chad. The majority of the Margi people are in Borno and Adamawa states. Margi language is very wide and many scholars believed that it can be categorized into eight (8) groups (Mamza, 2016). Since there is a wide difference on the language and culture of margi people, this paper will concentrate on margi Dzakwa also known as Margi “twe nga tem” that comprises the following towns: Wamdeo, Uba, Hildi, Mishara, Betso, Muva, Uvu, Giwi, Rumirgo, Uda and Walafa.

In 2014, these towns were overrun by Boko Haram terrorists. Many people were killed, properties worth billions of Naira were lost and relationships suffered. Since the members of the Margi in the above towns are Christians and Muslims, the insurgency planted doubt, fear, mistrust and seed of intolerance in the hearts of people (Mamza, 2019). There is a blame and counter blame for the destructions and killings. Since 2014 to date, Margi people have been scattered, many could not come back from where they resettled. As a result of this, many young men and women lost their cultures. Also western and Arabian cultures impacted a lot on the good cultures and tradition of margi people that enhance peace building among communities and individuals.

The objectives of this paper therefore are to:

- i. Identify the components of the culture and tradition of margi twe nga tem.
- ii. Analyse how the cultures enhance tradition, build peace and development.
- iii. Apply this mechanism to transform conflict sustained from Boko Haram terrorism.

## Method and Materials

The design of this research is a practical dialogue session and interviews. Workshop was conducted in Government Secondary School Uba where the Emir of Askira, Emir of Uba, the district heads of Askira and Uba Emirates gathered. Military, Police and other security agencies attended. Pastors and Imams from difference sects and denominations attended. Academics and heads of institutions also attended. Drivers and businessmen and women were present. Youth groups were in attendance as well as women group. The population of 300 people represents the total population of Margi people and other tribes living among them. The instruments used in this research were focus group discussion and oral interviews.

## Result and Discussion

Based on the discussion and interview responses from the people that attended the workshop and seminar, it has been discovered that the margi culture has a series of culture and traditions that are capable of transforming and reversing conflict and preventing crimes. It has been discovered that these

series of cultured heritage are in layers. It was described that as onion has shields or layers, so also does the margi culture. Figure 1 diagram describes the discussion and its analysis.

### **Description of the diagram on the Margi culture and tradition and its mechanism to peace building and conflict transformation**

1. **Tradition:** Tradition is a norm of every culture. In Africa, it is the oral constitution that guides every community. It is a law that is passed from generation to generation. It dictates how to observe some rites that include: festivals, funerals, naming ceremony, marriage ceremonies and taboos that every culture abhor. Margi people like other African cultures have festivals that binds her together “Ladir” (Kabiru, 2022).
2. **Custom:** Custom is the practical display of tradition. Custom covers totality of practices of every culture. It includes the language of the people, their history, myths, legends, folktales tribal marks, identity and growth (Webster, 2020). The custom of margi Twe Nga Tem as discussed in the introduction includes its funeral rite and rituals, music and dialects. This also involves informal training of every kind which is done accordingly to the dictates of the tradition of area of specialization either hunting, blacksmithing, medicine, butcher, barber, medicine or priesthood (Mamza, 2016).
3. **Institution:** This is the custodian of the power engine of a culture. This comprises the office of the king, chief of every community. This traditional institution maintains justice and social tranquillity of every community. The role of the king is beyond physical responsibility. He works in relationship with the chief priest to keep the peace and order of the society. He administers justice with the help of his cabinet. The king makers have power to dethrone a Margi king who committed a heinous crime. They have power to banish and expel an individual that tempers with the peace of the town. The peace and justice of the community is a collective effort of all stakeholders in Margi Twe Nga Tem (Southern Margi). The Traditional Institution also fights any outbreak of disease which is associated with the demons. They can foresee evil that is coming and fight it back (Gwandang 2010).
4. **Materials:** The materials of a culture covers the clothing that distinguish individuals in Margi, it ranges from cap, rings, gown and shoes. It also covers Margi weapons, farm implements, the cooking utensils, the musical instruments and the medicines. In Margi, the dressings of Kings and commoners are different, the herbalists and blacksmith, so also age groups. The funeral dressing and other social events are so different. The most expensive dressing in Margi land is a hand-woven regalia made from cotton. Presently, the price is three hundred thousand naira (N300, 000.00) to five hundred thousand naira (N500, 000.00) equivalent to USD 428 to USD 1,000. The Margi weapons are very poisons that if they shoot something with their arrows, the victims will die in less than ten minutes. They are brave people and they use charms to protect themselves, they used it to fight Boko Haram to liberate their land. Whether this is biblically/morally right or wrong has become a subject of debate (Mbiti in Mamza, 2018).
5. **Food:** Food is a basic substance for survival. Every culture and people are known with the type of their food. Margi people worldwide are known with eating fresh fish, prepared with vegetable. It is called “Margi Special” the reader can goggle Margi special and read on how to prepare it. They eat vegetables, herbs, cereals, domestic meat and bush meat. Margi people are great farmers, fishermen and hunters. They know how to prepare their cooking oils from sheer butters, groundnuts and process raw materials into consumable. They rear honey and use it throughout a year as diet and medicine. They are hospitable to their visitors and entertain them with meal from fish, meat or groundnut soup. They are very strong people that can harvest tones of groundnuts, beans, guinea corn and other food crops using manual farm implements (Muhammed, 2022).
  - a. Those that eat together cannot kill themselves, they cannot harm themselves or betray each other due to the mutual love. That the saliva of each other shared will remind them of the love and responsibility shared for the interest of one another. Also, it teaches respect because the younger ones allow the elderly one to start eating, take meat first and leave the food for the youngest as a sign of mentorship. The elderly ones break the food into pieces to allow the younger ones eat as they cannot break it due to heat. This makes the children respect their elder brothers/ sisters as they grow up and kills the tendency, they might have to argue with them in dispute resolution (Ahijo, 2022).
  - b. Extended family members settle in one place and eat together in community to monitor each other. If there is scarcity of food from one fellow, they will assist, they will share varieties of dish as no one can hide his riches and poverty. They use the avenue to discipline the lazy person among them. They can fight the external foes. They will know who is sick and discuss how to assist the person (Buba, 2022).

**Care of widows and orphans:**

The traditional Margi culture practice leverage marriage where a younger brother of the deceased marries his late brother's widow and raises the children. With the coming of Christianity and Islam, it has been discouraged and stopped. The widows are now left to care for their children. Some children suffer more in cases where both parents die. Some scholars and Margi stakeholders have a concern that there is a need to revisit this issue. The single young men should consider marrying young widows. The number of young widows in Margi land is alarming due to the killing of young men by Boko Haram terrorists. This is one of the challenges of the church in North East Nigeria (Mark, 2016).

**Team and community Service:**

It has been discovered that in the last three decades, the Margi community had strong team work for farming and other community development programmes. Teamwork helped in building individuals and groups economically. The idleness and crime rate was minimal so also violent conflict and crises were controlled. One of the factors that gave birth to conflicts are idleness that lead to poverty. Margi stakeholders believes that if the spirit of team work can come, the youth can have access to loans, grants and support to farm. They can develop communities and individuals (Dzivama, 2022).

**Skills development and mentorship**

The process of mentorship in Margi land is tedious, the mentee must buy the heart of his/her mentor with total obedience and loyalty. It will take someone many years in service and humility before he/she will know how to practice traditional medicine. It is believed that such training is compulsory in order not to destroy people and break the rules of the practice and ethnics. Also, children learn skills and crafts from their masters. Some of the masters were harsh and highly principled but their students endured. Margi traditional crafts covers: mat making, blacksmithing, traditional medicine, hunting, trading, rearing animals, breeding honey, curving, clothes dying, sewing traditional clothes and many more. Today, young men and women must learn how to be patient and learn crafts, skills and business under mentors. They must learn how to be loyal and honest. Skills development today comprises of music industry, movie industry, sports, fashion design and many more. University Education, College of Education and polytechnics must be channel towards wealth creation and Community Sustainability to resolve crimes and conflicts. They must be a shift from degree Certificate without character to discipline and innovation. If Margi people could solve their problems some centuries ago, the modern Margi men and women can solve their problem, socially, economically, spiritually, physically, mentally and morally (Holma, 2023).

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

The power of Margi people is their unity and rich cultural heritage that were passed as informal Education. It is believed that young men and women of Margi can do better than their ancestors since they are more educated and civilized. The Christian and Islamic Education should enhance the good parts of Margi culture towards peace building, mutual respect and National Development.

The outcome of the discovery from the Seminar discussion recommended the following:

1. The Margi Youth and Nigeria Youth in general should learn from their cultural education to enhance peace building and economic development.
2. The parents should teach cultural virtues to their children.
3. The Margi kings and their cabinets should practice justice and peace in settling conflicts
4. The government at all levels should implement teaching of history and local cultures in school for peaceful and rich Economic Development
5. The Christian and Muslim Religious should use the good part of Nigeria's culture to preach as a means of contextualization of Bible and Quranic passages to their congregations.

**References**

- Gwandang, Y. (2010). History of Kibaku people of Borno State. Kaduna: Baraka Press Ltd.
- Mamza, Y. (2016). History of Wamde: people, culture and religion. Kaduna: Bright Colour Publishers.
- Mamza, Y. (2020). Impact of Boko Haram on the social lives of people of Borno and Adamawa State. 2 (8) ESXON Publishers. <https://www.Esxon.http>.
- Mark, S. (2016). Plight of widows in EYN Church. EYN Quarterly Magazine, 3(4) 5-9.
- Websters, M. (2022). English Dictionary. London: Websters press ltd.

**List of Interviews**

Alhaji Ahijo, Muhammed. Executive Chairman, Askira/Uba LGA, Borno State. Interviewed on 14/02/2022.

His Highness Muhammed, Saidu Alkali. District Head of Wamdeo District. Interviewed on 14/02/2022.

Malam Usman, Alim. Chief Imam of Uvu District. Interviewed on 14/02/2022.

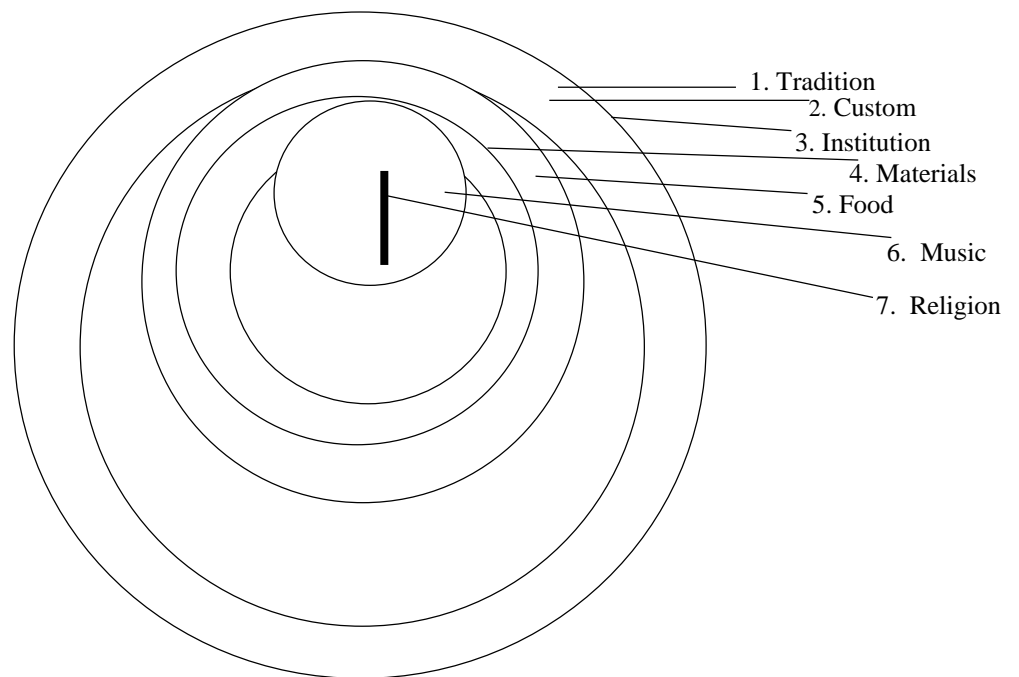
Malam Ndrashari, Buba. Member Traditional Council, Wamdeo District. Interviewed on 14/02/2022.

Madam Rebeccah, Kabiru. Teacher Central Primary School Uba. Interviewed on 14/02/2022.

Prof. Adamu Dzivama. Professor of Agriculture University of Maiduguri and Waziri of Uba Emirate Council. Interviewed on 14/02/2022.

Rev. Dr. Toma, H. Ragnjiya. Former EYN President and Former Commissioner of Animal and Fisheries, Borno State. Interviewed on 14/02/2022.

Rev. Lawan Tsarba. EYN DCC Secretary of Uba. Interviewed on 14/02/2022.



**Figure 1:** Margi Culture diagram



## **Seed of Peace: Promoting Ideals of Peaceful Coexistence in Benue State**

Bassey Obio

The Presbyterian Church of Nigeria  
Grassroots Ecumenism Promoters of Nigeria (GEPON)

### **Abstract**

The deteriorating security situation in Benue State, Nigeria occasioned by incessant Herders-Farmers clashes has called for decisive action for peace. The political, ethnic and religious coloration of this crisis has sent messages of hate and divisions across the boundaries of the State. People of different ethnic and religious inclinations who were living together in peace are beginning to develop hatred for one another as a result of attributing the killings to particular religious or ethnic groups in Nigeria. The imperative for planting seeds of peace and promoting ideals of peaceful coexistence cannot be overemphasized in order to safeguard the future peace of the State. This article examines the practical field engagement with church leaders and teachers to discover and expose ways of promoting peaceful coexistence through planting seeds of peace among community members in Benue State. It focuses on the role of church leaders and teachers in promoting ideals of peaceful coexistence. It employs practical field engagements with 20 church leaders and 22 teachers. Methods such as trainings, dialogical interaction and interviews were applied to gather data and build capacity for transmission of ideals of peaceful coexistence. The results show that church leaders and teachers can influence their followers/learners towards peaceful coexistence. This article therefore recommends Training of Trainers (TOT) to build capacity of these leaders for action for peace as ways of promoting peaceful coexistence and planting seeds of peace for sustainable peace in Benue State.

**Keywords:** Seed, Peace, Promote, Ideal, Coexist.

### **Background**

Diversity is the gift of God in creation but humanity has problematized it. God created all things in different colours, sizes, patterns, cultures, attitudes, behaviours, values, growth rate, talents, etc. just to herald complementarity and beauty in diversity. No one negotiated to be born into our various historicities; it is a natural phenomenon. Disrespecting our differences has degenerated into several conflicts in our society. In Nigeria, religious, ethnic, political and economic conflicts are far spreading. In Benue State, the Herders-Farmers conflict has created hatred among ethnic and religious adherents within the State, looking like a time bomb waiting to explode. Condemning one another, killing one another, favoritism, nepotism, tribalism, ethnicity, religious extremism and the likes, have become the way many respond to diversity in our world today. Jesus foresaw this trend when he preached in Matthew 5:9 that blessed are the peacemakers as well as prayed in John 17:21 that they may be one. It is now clear to us that it is our Christian mandate to work out peace and pursue unity in diversity which is what Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace is doing by running fellowship program to engage and train Fellows on promoting peace, dialogue and unity.

Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace (COFP) is one of the Non-Governmental organizations God is using to foster lasting peace, harmony and transformative development in our world today. It was established in 2010 by Cardinal John Onaiyekan, former Chairman of Christian Association of Nigeria and Catholic Bishop of Abuja, a great peace ambassador of our time. COFP provides platform for peace-building, interreligious dialogue and social change in Africa. This NGO is partnering with Grassroots Ecumenism Promoters of Nigeria (GEPON), an initiative of the Ecumenism and Interfaith Desk of the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria with Rt. Rev Ini Ukpuho as National Director and Rev. Bassey Obio as GEPON Convener. COFP had engaged Rev. Bassey Obio for a one-year fellowship programme 2021/2022 in Abuja and offered a small grant for small scale community peace project in Benue State as part of the requirement for graduation in the one-year fellowship programme. The small scale peace project was implemented between January and March, 2022. The project engaged with church leaders and teachers for practical trainings, interactions and interviews. This article discusses the results/outcome of the project.

### ***Statement of Problem***

There is observable gradual disconnecting among various ethnic and religious groups in Benue State. The Herdsmen killing of Benue farmers are perceived to be sponsored and supported by particular ethnic and religious groups. Hence, the trust for one another is gradually eroding. Those who lost their loved ones in the course of the serial attacks on farmers are nursing plans of reprisal attacks. Also, those who are displaced from their ancestral homes are hurting, transferring their aggression to anybody from the suspected ethnic or religious group. The situation is like a time bomb waiting to explode. Future peace may be jeopardized if critical stakeholders are not properly engaged to foster peace. Children, youths and women are being radicalized by the pains and hardship they are made to go through. Out of school children are increasing by the day in Benue due to this insecurity and conflict situation. Families that were training their wards from their farm income are now left with no option than to withdraw them from schools. This situation is already prompting the people to be violent. If the seeds of peace are not planted consciously in the young ones, the future will be disastrous, God forbid!

### ***Aims and Objectives***

This article examines the outcome of practical field work engagements with church leaders and teachers on their role in promoting peaceful coexistence in Benue State. Specific objectives include:

- i. To assess the level of awareness of the concept of peaceful coexistence among church leaders and teachers in Benue State.
- ii. Investigate their understanding of the causes and triggers for conflicts.
- iii. Examine the level of communication for peace known and practiced by church leaders and teachers.
- iv. Evaluate the role of church leaders and teachers in planting seeds of peace and transmitting ideals of peaceful coexistence.

### ***Research Questions***

- i. What is the level of awareness of the concept of peaceful coexistence among church leaders and teachers in Benue State?
- ii. What is their understanding of the causes and triggers for conflicts?
- iii. To what extent do church leaders and teachers know and practice communication for peace in Benue State?
- iv. How can church leaders and teachers plant seeds of peace and transmit ideals of peaceful coexistence in Benue State?

### ***Literature Review***

The findings discussed above can also be underpinned by several viewpoints in literature regarding planting seeds of peace in our wounded world. Rebecca Seiling (2007), in her work *Planting a Seed of Peace*, uses 43 stories of peacemakers to illustrate how seeds of peace can be planted in children of all ages for sustainable peace in any society. This work stresses the issues of fanaticism, extremism, radicalism and communication. If these factors are given attention in molding our children, they can easily be checked against the backdrop of sustainable peace. Also, Rommel Roberts (1994), Shanaze Naderi (2018), Laura Berkeley (1999) and Daouda Fall (2015) write explicitly of planting seeds of peace as major ways of promoting peaceful coexistence in any society. Rommel Roberts places his work on seed of peace in the context of the struggle for freedom from injustice in South Africa. He stresses that people carrying the seed of peace can demonstrate courage and commitment to overthrow injustice in any society. Therefore, seed of peace should be planted in ordinary citizens who may become future silent heroes and heroines of peace. All he meant was courage and commitment to peaceful coexistence as seed to be planted in people. Naderi uses the story of a young girl who planted several seeds and got different results or outputs from them. This shows how what we plant in children would amount to the kind of future we want for ourselves. Hence, planting seeds of peace consciously can engender future peaceful coexistence. Berkeley and Fall also use story and poem respectively to illustrate how we should plant the seed of peace in our society. Garbage-in-garbage-out is the computer language for what they mean here. If people allow those things that trigger conflict to thrive, then conflict is inevitable; but if they consciously plant seeds of peace through the approaches identified in this article, then future sustainable peace is guaranteed.

The contribution this article has made here is mainly in the approaches needed to plant seeds of peace and promote peaceful coexistence. Approaches such as curbing prejudices, biases, single stories, stereotypes, hatred and hate speeches in any society can foster sustainable peace. Also, basic need approach which has been identified as being an effective way of ensuring peaceful coexistence. If we do the humming bird approach and pencil paradox effectively, peaceful coexistence can be attained.

## Method and Materials

Data was collected from the practical field work engagements with church leaders and teachers in Benue State. The community peace project adopted three main methods, namely Training of Trainers (TOT), Dialogue and Research; the first method aimed at training leaders who will in turn train or influence the behavior of their members or learners towards peaceful coexistence. The second ensured interaction and mutual learning among participants while the third method collected data in the training process including interviews on camera, comments and opinions for further improvement on peace programming and engagements. Training manual was developed and distributed to all participants. Also, Resource persons engaged for the training sessions developed papers which were printed and distributed to all participants. Participants were given workshop materials like files, jotters and pen. Professional media team was engaged for video coverage, photos and interviews under the express permission of the participants

Several interactive sessions were involved to gather comments and views of participants concerning issues of peace and conflict in their domain. Videos, photos and interviews were conducted among participants. The target groups for this project were community gate-keepers such as church leaders and Teachers. The rationale was that they are direct influencers of behaviours of their followers which can enhance transmission of ideals of peaceful coexistence and planting of seeds of peace. Twenty clergies and twenty teachers were directly involved. They will in turn reach their church members and learners with messages of peaceful coexistence. Our team of researchers gathered data from the interactive sessions, comments and interviews and analyzed them in line with the main variables and objectives of the study.

## Result and Discussion

### *Concept of Peaceful Coexistence:*

Findings from respondents in this study reveal that Peace is a situation of no war or violence in an area or country. Many participants agreed to the view of peace above. Majority said that peaceful coexistence has to do with living together with people of different ethnic and religious backgrounds with respect and tolerance towards them. This agrees with the view of Cardinal John Onaiyekan that Peace can only be achieved when we understand, respect and accept differences. Other peace activists have also concurred to this viewpoint. For Sr. Agatha Chikelue, war doesn't start with violence; it starts with misunderstanding and prejudice. For Hans Kung, there will be no peace among the nations without peace among religions. Desmond Tutu also speaks about tolerating other people whom you may consider enemies. He says that if you want peace, don't talk to your friends, you talk to your enemies. Nigeria has multifaceted versions of religious beliefs/practices; it is like Iran, Saudi Arabia, Canterbury, Vatican City, Geneva, US Pentecostalism and African Pentecostalism put together in one nation. Learning to coexist is required for peace sake.

The findings under this variable also expose two main Christian views about peace/war: a) **Pacifism** – all wars are evil, against Christian ethics, b) **Just war** – war is warranted for public good and just course. Therefore, comments and interviews from participants reveal that Benue State has been practicing pacifism by not going to war with the Fulani Herdsmen but allowing God and the government authority to do their work of justice. However, recently the Benue State Governor, Dr. Samuel Ortom began to call on all residents of Benue to arm themselves for defensive purpose. This introduced the idea of just war, preparing people to fight back since the war between herders and farmers has been highly politicized. Participants discussed how this has created just war concept in the minds of the people of Benue.

### *Causes and Triggers for Conflicts:*

From the presentations, plenary, comments and interviews during the workshop, it was gathered that several factors could cause or trigger conflicts in Benue state. First, forceful land grabbing was identified as serious trigger for conflicts. Some participants observed that from the style of Usman Danfodio, leader of the Fulani movement in this part of the world, land grabbing had been their major strategy to occupy any place of their desire. This was done by forcefully evicting the original land owners. This is the style the present regime of herders is adopting in Benue State. They want to forcefully drive away land owners for their selfish benefits which is causing conflict. Second, single-story about people can trigger hatred and conflict. It is always aimed at condemning and dispossessing others of their good sides. Participants pointed out the level of inter-ethnic and inter-religious condemnation going on in the State. For instance, the TIV people see nothing good about the Idoma people and vice versa. This habit is fueling conflict in the State. Third, another cause of conflict was identified as stereotypes and one-sided perspective on issues. Your perspective can blur you from seeing other people's perspectives. For example, mountain top and valley perspectives are not the same. A facilitator gave example of four

people viewing letter “W” from different corners, they see different letters: the person on top will see “M”, the person by the left-hand side will see “3”, the one by the right-hand side sees “E” while the person below will see “M”. Therefore, if people refuse to harmonize their perspectives by seeing beyond one perspective, then conflict is inevitable. Fourth, fanaticism/violent extremism/clash of civilization like Boko Haram, Islamic State of West African People (ISWAP), etc. can trigger conflict. Fifth, Radicalization due to drugs, politics, cultism, hate speech, pains, etc. are also making people violent which leads to conflicts. Sixth, Jihad versus Crusade/Revelation can trigger conflict. Some religious extremists claim to be fighting for God and creating God in their image, whatever does not go as they know and believe, they let a conflict arise from it. Lastly, Injustices, persecution, oppression, trauma, pains and poverty constitute causes of conflict among community members in Benue State. Though pains are part of life, how we take it, whether in bitterness or love can trigger conflicts, said a participant. Therefore, data collected shows that the above factors were discussed by participants as possible triggers for conflict which must be constantly checked.

#### ***Communication for Peace:***

The study also reveals that effective communication can herald peace. Communication has the power to exacerbate or ameliorate conflict. People should watch their tongues. Communication is everything we say and do. It is both verbal and non-verbal. Our culture, religion, politics, economic system, etc. are sending messages to generations. Communication is even more accentuated in our modern world of internet and telecommunication. Everything has been reduced to communication technology. Hence, communication is a broad way of peace-building; it is called communication for peace with principles such as:

- a) do no harm principle – use words/linguistic style that brings peace and not harm
- b) Authenticating sources of information – example, religious information can come from scholars, pulpit and streets; the most authentic is scholarly information. Pulpit can be abused by untrained pastors/preachers. Street information is even too raw to be taken as doctrines. Wrong information can fuel hatred and crisis.
- c) Generalizing hurts creates hatred –there are “Good Samaritans” even among the so-condemned Gentiles in biblical context. Two types of goodness in the Bible: Human goodness-to show love, care and compassion to humanity; and divine goodness which means Holiness. Any human can be good in human goodness, but only God is good in divine sense.

Participants elicited these issues and learnt together how to use communication to foster sustainable peace in Benue State.

#### ***Planting Seeds of Peace/Transmitting Ideals of Peaceful Coexistence:***

The papers presented by various facilitators and the comments and interviews from participants agree that the church leaders and teachers can effectively plant seed of peace and transmit ideals of peaceful coexistence among their followers and learners. A cursory look at approaches to do this gleaned from all the presentations and comments indicate the following:

- Dealing with prejudices, hatred and bias in life. Example, two people stepping on your toes and you react differently is a matter of prejudice or bias against them. Treat people fairly.
- Basic needs approach. This reduces conflict if people can meet their basic needs. Jonathan Bradshaw classified needs into four: felt need, expressed need, comparative need and normative need. Abraham Maslow developed his hierarchy of needs from physiological needs to security, social, esteem need and self-actualization. Talk to leaders at all levels to meet people’s basic needs, and then peace will reign.
- Humming Bird approach. A story was told how a forest caught fire, other great animals watched helplessly but the humming bird was doing its little best to put off the fire. Do your little best to bring peace, don’t say no one can help this country, you can. You are not insignificant.
- The Pencil Paradox. This is simply surrendering yourself to be used by God as peacemaker in our world that is already on fire. No wonder Jesus taught that blessed are the peacemakers....five principles of pencil paradox: a) allow yourself to be used by God, pencil cannot write if someone does not use it b) experience painful sharpening in life, pencil cannot write if not sharpened c) you have ability to correct any mistake you make in life, pencils comes with erasers, d) focus on your inside, it is the most important part of you, pencils writes from inside, e) continue to move no matter the difficulty, pencils have unstoppable ink.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Planting seed of peace can be a major way of promoting peaceful coexistence in Benue State. This study focused on church leaders and teachers. They are major influencers of the behaviours of their members and learners. If their capacity is built to plant seed of peace and transmit ideals of peaceful coexistence, then sustainable peace would be guaranteed in Benue. The study therefore gathered 20 church leaders and 20 Teachers in Makurdi, Benue State for trainings, dialogue, interactions and interviews on promoting peaceful coexistence. It has discovered that if the triggers for conflict can be checked and seeds of peace consciously planted in community members, peaceful coexistence would be achieved.

Therefore, this work recommends that major stakeholders like teachers, religious leaders, trade union leaders, community heads, student leaders, women leaders, youth leaders, market union leaders and leaders of transporters should be targeted for awareness creation and capacity building on peaceful coexistence. They should also be mobilized, encouraged or equipped to step down the trainings for proper transmission of ideals of peaceful coexistence.

### **References**

- Berkeley, Laura (1999). *The Seeds of Peace*. USA: Barefoot Books.
- COFP. Curriculum on Interreligious Dialogue and Mediation Certificate Program, 2018-2021. Fall, Daouda (2015). *The Seed Planter*. USA: Createspace.
- Naderi, Shanaze (2018). *The Seed of Peace*. USA: Fariedch.
- Obio, Basse (2022). *Seed of Peace Training Manual*. For Peace Workshops in Benue State.
- Okoro, Ijeoma (2022). *The Role of Teachers/Educators in Promoting Peaceful Coexistence in Nigeria*. A paper for Peace Workshop among Teachers in Benue State.
- Okoro, Uma (2022). *The Role of Church Leaders in Promoting Peaceful Coexistence in Nigeria*. A paper for Peace Workshop among Church Leaders in Benue State.
-