Communal Conflicts and Challenges of National Integration in Nigeria in the 21st Century

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Abstract
Nigeria, a multi-ethnic and heterogeneous entity is composed of people from different ethnic groups. Communal conflicts in Nigeria have continued to pose enormous challenges to national integration in the country. Some socio-economic, cultural, political and ecological factors have been the drive for communal conflicts in Nigeria. These conflicts have led to severe loss of persons and property and have impacted negatively on the peaceful coexistence and mutual harmony among Nigerians. The effort of the state in effectively containing communal conflicts in Nigeria has not been quite rewarding. The study adopted the qualitative approach, in which case, materials were analyzed through the content approach. Data for the study was sourced through the secondary means of data collection. In this case, information from textbooks, official publications and journals were found useful. The study revealed that the low level of tolerance among some Nigerians and weak capacity of the state on conflict management have not helped matters. Improved governance, greater tolerance of one another and the adoption of pro-active approach by the state in conflict management are the recommendations of the study.

Keywords: Communal Conflicts, National Integration, Multi-Ethnic, Good governance, Ethnicity.
There has been the persistence of communal conflicts in Nigeria up until the 21st century. The virulent nature of these conflicts has continued to threaten state security and mutual cohesion of people in the affected areas. Aside the way and manner the British colonial masters carried out the amalgamation process and the unwarranted boundary demarcations and adjustment which created a lot of problems, some other cultural, socio economic and political issues have continued to provoke inter and intra-ethnic challenges. Up till 2018, the problem of arbitrary boundary demarcation and ethnic group creation by the British overlords has continued to be felt in Nigeria. The persistence of communal conflicts has therefore remained a national challenge which the Nigerian state is yet to find a lasting solution to. The threat posed by communal conflicts in parts of the country has therefore remained a bane on efforts made by the state towards national integration and development (Oji, 2015). According to Adetula (2004: 383) “these conflicts have resulted to the destruction of infrastructures, loss of human lives as well as bringing about adverse effects on the productive capacity of the nation”.

Communal conflicts have continued to be recorded in parts of the country in varied magnitude in contemporary Nigeria. This development has constrained the citizens from enjoying the so much publicized dividends of democracy in real terms (Alimba, 2014). It has remained worrisome that even under a democratic dispensation. Nigeria has continued to witness the problem of social and communal conflicts which have resulted to colossal losses and displacement of the human populace. Across the various ethnic groups, the manifestations of various forms of conflict such as electoral, ethnic, and religious and herdsman versus farmers clashes have made communal conflicts to be creating severe challenges to the nation building or national integration efforts of the Nigerian state. Of all these conflicts, communal conflicts have come next to religious conflicts as a major threat against state security and mutual co-existence of the people of Nigeria (Alimba, 2014). While democracy has not favoured most Nigerians economically since the restoration of democratic rule in 1999, the re-occurrence of communal conflicts across the country has remained a much more disappointing experience (Onwudie, 2004).

National integration is aimed at the creation of common nationhood as well as structures and institutions necessary for national development. The re-occurrence of communal conflicts have however, continued to cripple the national integration efforts of the Nigerian state. This has led to systematic deficiencies in Nigeria since the attainment of nationhood by Nigeria up until the 21st century. Available records have shown that Northern Nigeria has recorded (and still record) a greater dose of communal conflicts in Nigeria than any other region of the country. Among the most volatile states are: Jos, Benue, Nassara, Bauchi, Adamawa, Kaduna, Taraba, Kogi, etcetera. No doubt, communal conflicts have rendered these states most unstable, unsafe and uninhabitable for effective social engagement and business. Despite the negative consequences of communal conflicts on national integration in Nigeria, scholarly attention has been focused more on other factors such as ethno-religious, socio-economic and Political conflicts as factors militating against national integration in Nigeria. Little attention has been given to communal conflicts as a major factor working against the realization of a fully integrated Nigeria. Consequent upon this, this study focused systematically on communal conflicts as a major threat to efforts targeted towards nation building or national integration in contemporary Nigeria. To achieve this objective, the following systematic areas were explored by the study:

i. Conceptual clarification
ii. Communal conflicts
iii. Causes of communal conflicts
iv. Brief overview of communal conflicts in Nigeria.

v. National integration

vi. Consequences of communal conflicts on national integration in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification

Scholars have expressed divergent views on the precise meaning of conflict. The different meanings of conflict have arisen in view of the different orientation of scholars and the dimension or circumstance a particular conflict occurs. Conflict has been described as a clash of interest and the unwholesome bid of an individual to have his/her way in a competitive endeavour despite other competitors’ resistance. In a social relationship, conflict expresses the effort of an individual to outdo the other rival who also offers resistance (Coser, 1966; Adetoye & Omilusi, 2015). In almost all cases, conflict involves competition among individuals who would want to control or exercise dominion over certain cherished values in a state or organization (Osaghae, 2005). Marxist scholars often situate conflict from class perspective which is often defined by economic disparity between the haves and the have-nots commonly known as bourgeois and proletariats. Karl Marx in his most explosive book titled “The Communist Manifesto” published in 1937 expressed the inevitability of conflict in human society from time immemorial. This implies that conflict has remained part of human existence given the noted class antagonism in the different epochs in human history. Conflict may occur between members of the same group (intra-group conflict), as well as members of different groups (inter-group conflict). Ethnic or communal conflicts often take the form of zero-sum contest and this has been the drive for the violent nature of some conflicts (Osaghae, 2005).

For Angaye (2003) conflict emanates following the insatiable quest or competitive process whereby individuals attempt to have an edge over others in a given context. Due to divergences of interests, conflict usually breeds quarrels and opposition. This is derived from the fact that in almost every nation, organization, institution or group, there is hardly properly defined ways or manner through which valued or other tangible resources could be distributed without a group or group of individuals feeling alienated or cheated. Disagreements or conflicts erupt in the bid of one group to attempt effecting necessary changes or reforms especially when a particular group or individuals tries to take undue advantage of the other or others. Given the fact that a lot of people or groups often express their desires and wants especially in multi-ethnic and heterogeneous states, these expressions often collide with those of others. In almost all cases, conflict occurs in the bid of the disadvantaged or deprived group or individuals to advance their interest or seek modification of the status quo to their advantage (Angaye, 2003). The bid of some groups or parties to harmonize their irreconcilable differences over some things, for instance, resource endowments often end in conflict (Otite & Albert, 2006). Conflict dimensions often take various forms that if left unchecked may lead to the destabilization of a system. When this becomes the case, the state and its agencies may resort to different conflict resolution mechanisms. Continuous encounters and re-occurrence of conflicts may have the potency of dredging a society to a halt as it can constitute a drawback against the realization of the socio-economic, cultural and political development of a state. Recognizing the negative consequences of dysfunctional conflict, concerted efforts are usually made to enhance conflict resolution strategies at various levels of group or state relations (Otite & Albert, 2006).

Conflict usually manifest in the form of a clash of interest or goal between parties which may be at individual, ethnic group or state levels (John, 1990). Closely related to this view is that
conflict reflects a determined action or struggle over a goal, which may be overt or covert (subtle); manifest or imaginary. In addition, there is real conflict situation as well as psychological conflict (Aja, 2007). In his further submission, Aja (2007:15) contended that:

Conflict is an attitude, behaviour or an action or a process that introduces strains and stresses in the relationship between two or more parties on, say, the attainment of a set of interests or goals. In a conflict situation, parties perceive or treat each other as a stumbling block which may result in frustrating the other in attaining a set of goals, or even furthering one’s interests.

Drawing from the existing definitions of conflict, Alimba (2014:180) argued that conflict arises out of incompatibility of desired goals in group relations which may end up bringing undesirable consequences (Darling & Fogliasso, 1999). The quest by a particular individual to have his way on a thing or value commonly desired among a group often result to conflict (Hellriegel & Slocum, 1996).

For Wilmot & Hocker (2011) conflict often arises when individuals at the same time desire a particular goal, position, common belief and values they so much cherish. Conflictual situation does not occur in isolation. It often occurs among humans when a group of people are involved in one form of relationship or the other. Conflict may result to good or bad outcomes. Conflict also takes a functional or dysfunctional dimension. When conflicts end in negative outcomes, such is regarded as dysfunctional. On the other hand, when conflicts bring about positive outcomes, such is regarded as functional or constructive conflicts. What arises from the above scholarly views on conflict is that conflict has become or remained part and parcel of human existence. Conflict, whether latent or manifest is often psychological as it develop from the psychological mindset of those involved in the conflict. It therefore follows that conflict denotes an overt or coercive interaction whereby a group, an organization, or individuals with incompatible interests are engaged in the pursuit of mutually shared values and often resort to overt or covert means to outwit an opponent.

Communal Conflict

Communal conflict results among people or individuals who have a stake over scarce resources that are highly valued, otherwise known as tangible and intangible resources. Communal conflicts often take two dimensions, that is, infra and inter group conflict. In almost all cases, the common ties or bond that exists among groups often make the competition take a fierce dimension. It has to be noted that the hijacking of commonly held resources by a particular individual or a group of individuals often degenerate into conflict. The management of conflict often becomes intractable depending on the level of escalation of the conflict. Communal conflict often results from disagreement among communities (Azuonwu, 2002). Communal conflict is usually wider in scope and dimension than community conflict. Oboh & Hyande (2006) posited that communal conflicts often involve groups or individuals who lay contradictory claims over certain valued resources. Such conflicts hardly end without some costs on both sides. Conflicts occur in diverse forms. For instance, Albert (2001) contended that in certain parts of Nigeria, the challenges of owners versus strangers problem has remained a major source of communal conflicts. In addition, religious disagreement, land matters, power tussle or kingship has contributed immensely to communal conflicts in Nigeria (Alimba, 2014).

Communal groups are often characterized by inherent identity which also becomes the drive for communal conflict. Their membership is usually through inscriptive orientation instead of
achieved. The group is usually unique and projects a sense of common belonging and individual realization. The group’s solidarity is usually strong (Oji, 2015). In almost all societies, communal identity is held very strong to the extent that it defines the individual and his overall world view (Oji, 2015). Nature has therefore made it that humans have great emotional touch or inherent attachment among their social group to the extent that they often resist any attempt that may negatively affect the group members as their inner feeling is very strong (Nnoli, 1998). By their very nature, communal conflicts are usually more difficult to contain with unlike other forms of conflicts. Hence, to effectively manage such conflicts is usually difficult. The outbreak of communal conflict or violence portends more danger than some other conflicts considering the extent of collective group cohesion to achieve their goals (Oji, 2014; Carmet, 1993). According to Chipman (1993:146) “among the inherent features of communal violence is the making of soldiers out of individuals given their shared group identity”. There is usually strong power in communal identity as it often has much effect on an individual’s overall orientation. Individuals do attach much sentiment to their ethnic affiliations. Consequently, emotional attachment that result from this becomes strong matters of identity.

Causes of Communal or Community Conflicts in Nigeria

In Nigeria, communal conflicts have resulted from a whole lot of factors as their persistence has continued to be recorded in parts of the country. These factors however, vary from one area to the other. In other words, there have been very many dimensions of these conflicts since the country’s existence as a political entity. Political and economic value or consideration has been the major drives for some of the communal conflicts in Nigeria. A study on the causes of communal conflicts in Nigeria has shown that a good number of internal contradictions have also contributed to it (Onwudiwe, 2004). Communal conflicts also emanate from individual differences, power tussle and inconsistent goals and aspirations among individuals (Albert, 2001). Lyam (2000) traced communal conflicts to climate change and other natural factors. For Yecho (2006) conflicts generally result from harsh or unfavourable social, economic and political factors. In addition, greater demand for land for cultivation, rural poverty and various forms of impoverishment and human degradation have also remained the triggers of communal conflicts (Varma, 2000). Similarly, Angaye & Dori (2006) had identified factors such as minority issues, leadership challenges, human rights abuses among others as triggers of conflicts especially in Northern part of Nigeria.

In his analyses on the causes of communal conflicts in Nigeria, Alimba (2014) came up with the following factors:

1. **Economic factors**: These arise from competition for scarce economic resources and the manner or mode through which such resources are distributed in society for the well being of the people.

2. **Human factors**: Over all human conditions affect the totality of people’s well being, fears, tension, human security and general survival. The uncertainty of these often degenerates into communal conflict.

3. **Political factors**: This has to do with the struggle and competition over political recruitment into available political offices and challenges of political leadership. Also considered is the tussle over kingship (Ezeship) crisis going on in several communities in parts of the country.

4. **Ecological factors**: These factors take various forms such as climate change and ecological challenges which have exacerbated farmers and herdsmen conflicts in contemporary Nigeria. Up till 2018, there has been greater migration of Fulani herdsmen to other parts of the country with its attendant challenges. The persistent
clashes between Fulani herdsmen and farmers in parts of the country can therefore be attributable to ecological factors.

5. **Colonial factors:** Most communal conflicts in Africa, particularly Nigeria, have been traced to colonialism. This is as a result of the way African and Nigerian boundaries and territories were either amalgamated or Balkanized without a careful anthropological study of the people involved. Since after independence, communal conflicts arising from this have remained unabated among the people, especially border communities.

With the restoration of democratic rule in Nigeria on May 29, 1999, many believed that lasting solutions should have been found to the incidence of communal conflicts across the country. Unfortunately, Nigeria has rather been witnessing the resurgence of communal violence resulting to undesirable consequences. A major hallmark of democracy is that it allows for mass participation in governance as well as making provision for an institutional arrangement for the management of various forms of conflict (Oloyode, 2007). For Nigeria, this is yet to be achieved after over 17 years of unbroken democratic governance in view of the fact that communal conflicts have remained unabated in contemporary Nigeria. It has become a common experience in Nigeria for some of the ethnic groups especially the less dominant ones to adopt various ways to press for their rights. Osaretin & Akov (2013:352) aptly captured this when they contended that;

> The expression of ethnic hostility in the Nigerian state has resulted from the tendency whereby a wide gap has been created between the minority and the majority ethnic groups which has soured the expected mutual understanding and cohesion that should exist between them.

**Brief overview of some recorded communal conflicts in Nigeria**

Since the 1980s in particular, there has been the re-occurrence and persistence of communal conflicts in Nigeria with the Northern region recording more of such cases (Abdu, 2002). Danfulani (2006) submitted that at various times, between 1997 and year 2000, the people of Modakeke and Ife were trapped in communal conflicts. Same also broke out between Sabon gari and Kano. Similarly conflicts also broke out between the people of Sabo and Ibadan as well as Zango and Kataf in 1992. Other places that experienced communal conflicts were Urhobo and Itsekiri; Jukun and Tiv; Kuteb and Chamba as well as Hausa and Shagamu (Kwaja, 2009). The findings of Enaruna (2014) showed that the problem of human settlement and boundary issues contributed so much to communal conflicts in Cross River and Ebonyi States in 2012. For instance, there was a prolonged communal conflict between the Ezza-Ezillo communities in Ebonyi State. The conflict lasted between 2008 and 2011. Catastrophic losses were recorded in the conflict as over 150 lives were lost and property worth millions of naira destroyed. Massive death of children and women in particular were also recorded. Both sides actually counted their losses. In addition, communities such as Eyo Abasi, Isua and others in Akwa Ibom State slugged it out over some oil rich areas of the state up till 2018.

Communal conflicts have also been re-occurring between some communities in Lagos over Oro cultural festival and in Rivers State over State and Local Government creation as well as ownership of oil wealth, water ways and farmlands. Communal conflict also broke out between Itsekiri – Ijaw and Urhobo communities over the movement of Local Government Headquarter against the wish of Ijaw community in 2003. Aguleri-Umuleri in Anambra state experienced communal conflicts that lasted several decades with thousands of lives and property worth millions of naira lost (Aja, 2007). Protracted communal violence was also the
lot of some communities in Ondo State such as Ijaw – Ilaje because of a land that was rich in oil resources. National integration efforts in Nigeria have actually been marred by the persistence of communal conflicts. For Northern Nigeria in particular, communal conflicts have remained intractable. Between 1988 and 2004, official reports released by the Government in Benue State confirmed that 29 community conflicts occurred in Tiv area of Benue state on several occasions.

Nigeria’s Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, has not been spared from communal conflicts. For instance, there has been the re-occurrence of communal conflicts especially among some communities in Gwagwalada area of Abuja arising from herdsmen and farmers clashes. Communal conflicts often take a virulent nature which often makes their early identification and management more difficult. It therefore becomes apparent for all necessary pro-active steps and proper intelligence gathering networks to be adopted so as to detect or identify the early warning signals in order to take steps to forestall possible explosions of communal conflicts across the country.

**National Integration**

National integration has been devised as a strategy that has to do with the alteration in the relationship between people with respect to the flow of interactions and co-existence whereby individuals find their places within the community without reference to ethnic origins (Tunde, 1984). What this implies is that in the interactions among people of a multi-ethnic or heterogeneous entity, the individuals involved pay greater allegiance to their national unit than their ethnic groups. Nwosu (2005:48) corroborates this view when he contended that inter group or inter ethnic interaction has to do with the elimination of ethnic sentiments and parochialism among the ethnic groups that make up a political system. A properly integrated society hardly witness incessant political or communal conflicts because of the people’s high level of nationalism, compromise and tolerance. National integration is usually targeted at the reduction or elimination of primordial loyalties or ties so as to bring about a politically harmonious community (Coleman & Rotberg, 1964). Similarly, national integration efforts are aimed at the development of trust and confidence on the state by the people. Contributing, Ogunjenite (1978) contended that for multi-ethnic geo-political entities such as Nigeria, national integration attempts to foster greater understanding among the people and reduces ethnic sentiments which help in the realization of both individual and national aspirations.

National integration efforts are usually aimed at wielding together a pluralistic society without necessarily doing completely away with tribal or ethnic loyalty. As a purposeful endeavour, the slow pace of national integration especially in multi-ethnic and heterogeneous societies such as Nigeria usually result to severe consequences such as civil war or uprisings, ethno-religious or communal conflicts, rise of ethnic militia and separatist movements. According to Enaruna (2014:5) “national integration is actualized when a spirit or sence of oneness is developed among the people with the determination to work together to achieve the common good of majority of the people”. National integration is aimed at ushering in unity, fairness, cooperation, consensus building and non violent mechanisms for conflict resolution which of course are the critical ingredients of loyalty of the people to the nation.

An integrated society or nation among others is characterized by the following:

- Ability to effectively contain threats against the state.
- Proper channels of decision making and fair distribution of state resources.
- Commitment to building a politically conscious citizenry and a resolve to adopt alternative means of conflict resolution instead of violent means (Ojo, 2005).
National integration therefore denotes an arrangement through which pluralistic or multi-ethnic nation-states develop a sense of oneness and willingness to cohabit and relate well with one another.

**Consequences of communal conflicts on national integration in Nigeria**

Without doubt, communal conflicts have knelt a serious blow on the national integration efforts of the Nigerian state. Consequently, Nigeria’s bid towards a properly integrated nation that would pave way for a meaningful socio-economic and political development has been greatly hampered. This study examined the following:

i. **Threat to state and national security:** The persistence of communal conflicts in Nigeria has imposed greater security threats and challenge in the country. To a large extent, the level of insecurity, occasioned by the persistence of communal conflicts in Nigeria has led to a culture of palpable fear, apprehension and state of uncertainty among the populace (Nwankwo, 2013). In strategic studies, security has both objective and subjective context. (Wolfers, 1954). The security of a nation is therefore measured with respect to its ability to secure the nation’s core values, life, property, liberty, and deter aggression or win war when it becomes inevitable. Values constitute those tangible and intangible assets that enable individuals and nations to live a meaningful life or realize national objectives.

Generally, human security which has to do with the overall people’s wellbeing and welfare has continued to be threatened in Nigeria. Across the ethnic groups therefore, the problems occasioned by communal conflicts have continued to threaten national security. Consequently, this has impacted negatively on the overall psyche of the people which has led some to be involved in unethical practices. Following incessant Boko Haram attacks and persistent communal conflicts in the North East, Nigeria and its environs between, 2009 and 2015, the area became highly unsafe and insecure for business and other transactions. This led some Nigeria’s foreign partners such as the United States and Britain to warn their citizens against travelling to those hostile areas in Nigeria.

Communal conflicts in Nigeria have often taken violent dimensions, leading to the declaration of state of emergency in the affected areas by the Government. This has occasionally been the lot of some states or cities in Northern Nigeria such as Kano, Kaduna, Jos, Maiduguri, Bauchi, Adamawa and Yola (Nwanegbo & Odigbo, 2013). The desertion, dislocation and displacement of people from those areas that have records of communal conflicts have drastically reduced the pace of socio-economic and tourism development such places were hitherto known for.

ii. **Loss of lives and property:** Communal conflicts have generally resulted to high mortality rates, and huge damage to citizens’ property (Akpenpuum, 2013). Similarly, Babangida (2002:11) submitted that: “communal conflicts have resulted to incalculable loss of human and material resources as well as grossly affecting the productive capacity of the nation. Communal conflicts have also resulted to the death of many of the combatants and civilians through direct military action, famine and starvation. Others have also lost their lives due to improper medical attention. Some survivors of violent conflicts in most cases have been permanently deformed as some others suffer other forms of physical and psychological scares.

iii. **Threat to intra and inter-ethnic harmony, mutual co-existence and migration:** Communal conflicts in Nigeria have constituted a serious threat to intra and inter-ethnic harmony, mutual co-existence and level of citizen’s inter-ethnic migration. The outbreak of
conflicts have usually led to serious breaches in intimate communication and cordial relationship as people part ways and treat or see each other as rivals. In this case, disharmony ensues which seriously affect mutual trust or peaceful co-existence. On extreme cases, this is followed by the outbreak of violent conflicts which often lead to the dispersion of people from their places of location to other safer areas. For instance, some people of South East extraction were forced back to their region in year 2000 following the Sharia crises in parts of Northern Nigeria. Incessant communal conflicts in Northern Nigeria in recent times have also made some people to flee to their states of origin for fear of losing their lives (Nwanegbo & Odigbo, 2013).

iv. **Entrenched generational animosities**: The losses and pains that result from communal conflicts usually last a long time, even after such conflicts have ended. In other words, the consequences usually outlive their perpetrators. The groups or individuals that feel they lost in an earlier conflict usually seek a revenge or retaliation at the slightest opportunity. This is partly responsible for the re-occurrence of communal conflicts in places such as Jos, Benue, Kano, and Bauchi States. In this situation therefore, the level of inter and intra-ethnic tension is usually high. In addition, the level of cooperation among the people usually goes down.

v. **Increasing cases of internally displaced persons and dislocation of persons**: Communal conflicts in Nigeria have resulted to greater incidents of humanitarian problems such as internal dislocation and displacement of persons. As at 2014, communal conflicts in Nigeria led to the internal displacement of over 750,000 persons. In Jos alone, about 220,000 persons got internally displaced between 2010 and 2014. The problem of internal displacement also affected over 1,500 people (Alimba, 2014). Similar conflicts in Nassarawa State within the period under review led to the displacement of 4,500 people. Some of the Internally Displaced Persons were either forced out of their ancestral homes or had their houses set ablaze by rival combatants. The Internally Displaced Persons across the country have been faced with enormous nutritional, health and security challenges. Their health and rehabilitation have remained a serious challenge due to limited assistance from individuals, the government and non-governmental organizations.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following options are hereby recommended:

i. **Adoption of the pro-active or preventive approach**: Efforts in this regard should be tailored towards addressing the conflict triggers and reduce the incidence of communal conflicts across the country. This would include: proper demarcation of boundaries between communities by the relevant government agencies; provision of infrastructure as well as a level playing ground for all groups.

ii. **Embarking on enlightenment programmes and sensitization**: Every effort should be made to minimize or forestall the outbreak of communal conflicts as well as their escalation assuming they break out. In view of the severe consequences of violent conflicts, peace building efforts need to be intensified. There has to be proper peace education and enlightenment of the communities prone to communal conflicts on the consequences of such conflicts.

iii. **Confidence building measures**: For a lasting solution to communal conflicts, victims of such conflicts need to be properly rehabilitated and fully integrated in the society. There has to be the provision of the necessary support to them and the regular policing of the warring communities, in order to ensure the safety of the vulnerable groups.
iv. **Good governance:** Good governance ensures that the leadership commits itself to the promotion of responsive administration, accountability and social justice. Thus, the leadership at any level of governance should eschew corruption and misrule and be committed to fair play and integrity and above all, live above the ostentatious pomp of office. By this therefore, the citizens on their own will be under obligation to follow rightly, and be patriotic, pursue and practice those virtues that will promote national development.

**Conclusion**

This study has examined communal conflicts and the threat it has posed to national integration in Nigeria. It has been noted that conflict is inevitable in every human society. Functional conflict however can bring about societal progress, whereas dysfunctional conflict is anti-thetical to development. The persistence of communal conflicts in Nigeria has therefore remained a major threat to national integration and development. Communal conflicts result from some socio-economic, political, ideological, cultural and ecological factors. Communal conflicts among the ethnic groups in Nigeria have resulted to severe consequences given the huge loss of lives, property and resources (tangible and intangible) that are usually recorded during such conflicts. Communal conflicts have come second to ethno-religious conflicts among the factors that have derailed national integration in Nigeria. Unfortunately, the Nigerian state is yet to device appropriate strategies for the effective management of communal conflicts in Nigeria. The measures so far put in place by the state have failed to mitigate the potency of communal conflicts in the country. As the study has shown, a properly integrated state is one where the citizens demonstrate a high level of nationalistic consciousness, tolerate and accommodate one another and have little or no recourse to violence as a means of settling disputes.

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