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Conflicts and Socio-Economic Development in Kogi State: Analysis, Challenges, and Policy Recommendations

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Abstract

Kogi State lies in the central part of Nigeria, this state has had strings of conflicts which have so sharply impacted the socio-economic fabric of the state. In this research a systematic analysis of how these conflicts have frustrated the development path of the state is made. The ethno-religious conflicts as well as political conflicts arising from historical enmity and rivalry over the natural resource wealth have resulted in huge processes of displacement of people and made significant sections of the population shelter and economically less-secure homeless. This displacement has stressed the local infrastructure and social services, education, and health care which are important for the welfare of the population and economic development. This condition has affected the economy of the state especially the business people and farmers who are involved in production of food crops since civil unrest always post a negative impact that discourage investors. This has in turn has led to economic stagnation, and thus worsening poverty and social inequalities, and hampering the state's bid toward sustainable development and social inclusiveness. This is a way in which it looks at how the instability impacts on economic prospects, the social fabric and indeed services. In light of the foregoing, the study aims at offering appropriate recommendations on effective ways on how to address conflicts and bring about sustainable development in the state.

Keywords: *Conflicts, Socio-Economy, Challenges, Development and Kogi State*

Introduction

The crises in this Nigerian state are complex and can be broadly classified as ethno-religious, political and resource-based. Many of these tensions have resulted in conflicts, which have seen groups of people forced out of their homes, structures burnt down and people

killed. The conflicts have been fuelled through historical rivalries and animosities in which colonial policies compounded ethnic and religious divides to create conflicts that have not been fully resolved to date, and Kogi state is not alien to this unpleasant

reality (Igala History 2018; Adebayo, 2019). Kogi State occupies a central location in Nigeria's geographic and economic positioning and has always been a political hotbed and sensitive area. Being located betwixt between the northern and southern parts of the country, the state has been through strings of conflicts that have interfered with its social and economic growth over the years (Ajayi, 2022). The source of these conflicts goes back to the historical, ethno-religious, and cultural backgrounds of the state that majorly houses the Igalas, Ebiras and Okuns. These groups despite belonging to the same state have had different interests and stakes in the affairs, claims to resources, political power and cultural supremacy (Ojo 2018).

With specificity to the natural resource blessings and the geographical advantage of the state, there are still questions about the rationale behind her pace of developmental transition which Ojo (2018) and Adebayo (2019) have linked to the political struggles as different elites groups tend to struggle for the control of the state's resources and political power. This has caused violence and instability that has prevented any attempt at economic or social progress of the state (Omede, 2020). The persistent instability has had its way of affecting the economy of the state, especially the agricultural sector being the backbone of the state. People have been forced out of their farms, markets have been affected and investors have been put off by the ever-lurking presence of violence (Ogunleye, 2021). From these conflicts, it is not only the people's lives and their wealth that are wiped out but also the future of the state and its people.

Further worth lamenting is the fact that the internal displacement of individuals due to acts of violence has also put more stress on already fragile local amenities thus causing the living standards to decline even further (Adeyemi, 2022). Against this background, this article aims to present a detailed discussion of the conflicts in Kogi State including the type of conflicts, their root causes, the effects on the society and probable policy measures that are to be taken to solve them. By understanding these conflicts, we can better appreciate the complexities involved in finding lasting solutions and promoting sustainable development in the state.

Roots of Conflicts in Kogi State

The Middle Belt region of Nigeria has been associated with various incidents of Muslims and Christians' riots and Kogi State is not an exemption. Hateful memories accompanied by current political and economic rivalry prompted series of clashes in the territory, especially in the places of ethnic and religious diversities (Omobowale, 2011). The conflicts in Kogi State are rooted and traceable to the pre and colonial periods that set a tone for ethnic animosity and competition for resources among its people. It is noteworthy to note that this historical background is crucial to understand the multifaceted nature of the modern-day conflicts that have been unfolded in the state. The state now known as Kogi State was occupied by several ethnic groups which were the Igala, Ebira and Okun with their complex socio-political systems and customs (Adukwu, & Oholi, 2014). These groups co-existed in relative harmony most probably due to some loosely integrated political structures in what is now considered pre-colonial Africa and engage in sporadic armed confrontation over the ownership of the land and resources, as was witnessed in other parts of pre-colonial Africa (Adetiba & Rahim, 2012).

The change in the political system in Africa which was marked by the introduction of colonialism at the end of nineteenth and the beginning of twentieth century gave a new tone to the existing

relationship among these groups. During the British colonial rule, indirect control was applied whereby the British ruled the country through indirect agents known as traditional rulers. This policy, stimulated ethical conflict since colonial power provided one group of people more political privilege than others, as well as more opportunities to gain more resources (Adewumi, 2010). For instance, the Igala people whom the British regarded as more polished and compliant were privileged to receive better treatment in terms of the award of chieftaincies and resources. These prejudices resulted in the 367 resentment that the other ethnic groups especially the Ebira and Okun felt that they were dominated and suppressed during colonialism as noted in Ojo 2018.

Interethnic and inter-religious violence in Kogi State has been especially high and is dealt with below because of the state's location within Nigeria's Middle Belt area where there is a relative blend of religions and ethnicities. Aggravating ethnocentric competition for political favouritism, ethnic rivalry was belled up by the post-colonial political administration and the subsequent establishment of the Kogi State in 1991. The formation of the state compounded ethnic groups that over had put claims to land, resources and political territory. This led to a power struggle among these groups whereby each group wanted to be in charge of the other to control the affairs of the state (Adamu, 2021). An also important source of conflict is access to land as well as natural resources that are available within the State. There are various minerals such as limestone, coal and iron ore in the state, which have stirred interest of both local and foreign investors. However, the management and distribution of these resources have been chequered and often have resulted in leading to conflicts of interest in areas of ownership and access among various communities (Olorunmolu, 2008; Olayiwola, 2013). These tensions have arisen due to the absence of government's policies, especially proper land tenure systems, to fairly administer the state's natural resources resulting in blood shedding and time-bound conflicts.

Furthermore, political struggle has also contributed greatly to the sustenance of crises that exist in the state. Appalling, most of the political elites have played ethnic and religious cards over the years to mobilize support and entrench hegemonic power base, which has exacerbated the fissures within the state (Audu, 2021). These identities are often manipulated especially during election periods when the politicians in power mobilise violence and employ ethnic militias to suppress opposition and stuff votes (Punch; 2019). This political manipulation has institutionalised violence and impunity and consequently, it is hard to address such conflicts to attain sustainable peace. In all, it could be said that Kogi State experiences a long and multilayered history of conflict due to colonial policy, ethnic differences, competition for resources and power politics which have served as serious threats to the socioeconomic development processes in the state.

Socio-Economic Impacts of some specific conflicts in Kogi State

There has been a compilation of specific conflict cases in Kogi state for the past two decades which in several ways have affected the socio-economic development. Thus, it is pertinent for us to examine these cases as well as their effects on different aspects of the social and economic advancement of the state.

- i. **The Ebiraland Violence (2007-2009):** Ebiraland is located in the central part of Kogi State and experienced political violence and ethnical conflict between 2007 and 2009 due to rival political leadership and control of resources and chieftaincy

power among the Ebira ethnics (Tenuche, 2009). This volatility led to the killing of over 300 hundred people, Kidnappings, and general destruction, leading to fear and insecurity, which in turn resulted in economic stale and business closure, resulting in joblessness, and poverty among many individuals and businessmen/women (Olayiwola, 2013). The conflict also had a damaging effect on education as about 60% of schools were closed or destroyed and the population of the region's youths. In addition, it polarised the people of Ebira and worsened the chances of resolution. Although violence reduced in 2009, Ebiraland is still politically unstable with hatred and enmity between rival groups (Suleiman, S. N. (2012).

- ii. **The Ebira-Igala Conflict (2012-2013):** The Ebira-Igala conflict, starting from the year 2012, is rooted in ethnic animosity, issues of land ownership and political struggle therefore causing massive destruction, displacement of over 150,000 people and the shutdown of economic activities in Kogi State leading to the loss of over 5 billion Naira. Many people were left homeless, without the possibility to feed themselves and their families and without health care services (Greenbarge Reporters, 2016). The conflict cut down on farmland with over 500 farmlands ravaged which displaced farmers reduced the yields and increased the prices of food by 30% thus making food scarce. These ethnic tensions increased, and thus enmity and social fragmentation were established that did not allow for to restoration the destroyed communities within a long time (Joshua, 2013). Despite the relative reduction in the level of conflict, issues that led to the conflict remain unresolved indicating that the tensions still prevail and that there is occasional violence most especially politically related instabilities or during election seasons (Agbese, 2014).
- iii. **The Bassa-Nge and Bassa-Kwomu Conflict (2014-2015):** The Bassa-Nge and Bassa-Kwomu conflict which started in 2014 was a result of historical rivalries of land ownership and local political power struggle that led to destruction, displacement and economic loss to the tune of 10billion Naira. The conflict impacted the local community by causing looting, and burning of property, involving in the fighting and negatively affecting the agricultural production at about 40%; resulting to insecurity of food and high food prices (Umar, 2015). About 15,000 people were rendered homeless (NEMA Report, 2015), finding shelter in other towns and villages or even tents, and forming a challenge in humanitarian crises where they failed to get their basic needs (Umar, 2017). The conflict raises the question of the need to maintain the peace process and to solve the problem of ethnic tensions in the area so as not to let the conflict happen again.
- iv. **The Bassa-Komo Conflict (2015):** The unpopular conflict between the Bassa-Komo which stemmed

from the fight for the control of the natural resources and the land has hitherto manifested openly in 2015 leading to the loss of many lives and properties as well as disruption of socio-economic activities in Kogi State. The conflict caused many people displaced, their local markets extinguished and critically influenced economic and agricultural activities that are characterized by declined production, higher food prices, and high levels of poverty (NAK (2021). Most of the schools and health centres were destroyed which limited the community's access to these services, more so the affected persons particularly women and children were psychologically affected due to the lack of mental health services. Such a situation for the years reveals the need for continued peacebuilding, long-term interventions in addressing enduring structural contestation over resource control and integration and supporting the communities to avoid any future acts of violence.

- v. **The Ijumu-Kabba Conflict (2016-2017):** Ijumu-Kabba crisis that resulted from the differences in land use and hereditary rulership system started in 2016 and represents examples of ethnic and communal crises in Kogi State. It made some part of the Ijumu and Kabba people of the Okun ethnic nationality abandon their homes; reduced farm production; affected markets; destroyed property; worsened poverty and paved the way for tribe, religion and ethnic resurgence (Olayiwola, 2013; Agbese, 2014). It buried the local economy, created a lasting enmity and did not allow work towards creating trust in the community. Thus it remains largely tense even after the violence has been reduced although there has been some progress in mediation with a possibility of being reignited again (Folami, 2023).
- vi. **The Lokoja-Koton-Karfe Conflict (2018):** The 2018 Lokoja-Koton-Karfe crisis due to political rivalry, ethnicity and leadership over land led to blood bath, loss of lives, properties, displacements, loss of necessary facilities which investigated socio-economic disparities in the affected communities. It distorted commercial operations by halting business endeavour thereby leading to the loss of jobs and other commercial opportunities; Moreover, it closed schools and destroyed health facilities, thus eradicating educational and health systems respectively (Atadoga (2018). The emerging long-term consequences are poverty, newly preventable sickness and death, and slow rates of reconstruction coupled with political animosities that compromise regional stability.
- vii. **The Okunland Communal Clashes (2018-2019):** Some communities in Okunland in the western part of Kogi State experienced communal crises that occurred between 2018-2019 because of land and traditional leadership issues within the Okun ethnic people which led to a high level of violence, loss of lives, displacements, and destruction of affected

people's sources of income. It adversely affected farmlands, livestock, and businesses which worsened poverty and food insecurity. Many were affected with most of them being subjected to human rights abuses as they lived in camp-like settings with little or no access to necessities. The people received little to no health care, and their facilities were dusk, while educational institutions were either closed or in ruins, and the medical staff either fled or were killed (Obafemi, 2019). This had effects on reconstruction, and land ownership and there are more issues on who controls traditional leadership making problems of stability and social harmony persisting in the region in the future.

viii. **The Ogori-Magongo Conflict (2019):** The conflict in Ogori-Magongo in Kogi State occurred in 2019 over land and traditional rulership that created displacements, residential and economic losses with business properties' destruction, which in turn affected agriculture and food security leading to food insecurity and increase in poverty rates. The conflict also made schools shut for months making education even more difficult for the learners than what was initially taken to be a challenge. The lack of mental health services left many residents especially women and children emotionally strangled and traumatized. Nonetheless, conflict between the two communities persists thus there is the potentiality of the conflict escalating again (Jooji, 2019).

ix. **The Dekina-Ankpa Conflict (2020):** There is a longstanding conflict between Dekina and Ankpa local government areas in Kogi State which started in 2020, due to land and ethnic issues and this has affected agricultural production by causing farmers to lose access to their farms (Usman, 2020). As a result of this conflict, the economic development is retarded, poverty and unemployment have become the order of the day, and many people have been displaced, thus exaggerating the maintenance of local resources and facilities. The two parties in conflict have agreed to be mediated and to some extent, the violence is now periodic though this poses serious challenges to development and long-term socio-economic stability in the region (Achimugu, & Alexander, 2024). The conflict shows the need for peace transition, and complex themes such as land and ethnicity as well as engaging in social inclusion for affected parties against recurrent conflicts.

x. **The Igala-Bassa Conflict (2020-Present):** Ethnic strife taken in Kogi State since 2020 between the Igala and Bassa people stem from ethnic tension, alleged land disputes, and political representation firmly affecting the area by prompting violence, displacement and property damage. Several people have become affected and displaced, and are suffering from severe food shortage, water, and inadequate medical facilities, and these are the women and children who suffer most. This conflict

has led to the loss of lives, homes and other structures including schools and health facilities making education and health care difficult (Usman, 2020). Crops and animal farming downturns and hiccups in imports and exports compound poverty levels while lack of investment also worsens the economies' problems. Despite these efforts, acts of senseless violence reoccur from time to time posing threat to socio-economic structures further underlining the need for constant post-conflict reconstruction and development, ethnic and land issues that fuel the conflicts and social cohesiveness that would offer support to the affected grievances societies.

Theoretical Framework

The framework of this study is the tri-theory involving Piaget's Theory of Adaptation and Conflict Theory. These theories give a good perspective and understanding of conflict and its effects on socio-economic development, the causes of conflict and possibly the ways that may be used to address conflicts and foster sustainable development.

i. Piaget's Theory of Adaptation

Piaget's theory of adaptation emphasizes the human ability to adapt to changing environments through two processes: assimilation and accommodation, Integration includes both assimilation as well as accommodation. In this regard, assimilation is referred to as the act of using existing cognitive structures to solve new problems while accommodation entails the process of altering existing cognitive structures to cope with new emergent difficulties (Piaget, 1980). Hence, where there are conflicts as in the case of Kogi State, such as land disputes, political struggles, and inter-ethnic rivalry, there are pointer to the failure of the concerned groups to manage changes in the socio-political and economic realms. Piaget's theory is ideal for application in this study when seeking to understand how communities cope with scarcity and Competition. Most of the time, conflict in Kogi State is found around issues of land and political power struggle, hence, the Ebira, Igala, Bassa-Nge, and the Bassa-Kwomu have to change and embrace new practices of population explosion, deforestation, and political vices. It is Piaget's theory that makes the understanding of why adaptation – or the lack of – is that vital factor towards their co-existence. For example, the failure of the farmers and the herders to change their customary practices of using the land to meet new concerns such as environmental and political aspects has worsened conflict (Morphy, 1993).

ii. Marx's Conflict Theory

According to Chappelow (2019), reviewing Marx's Conflict Theory, society is into constant conflict because of the competition for resources. This theory holds that society operates based on conflict, particularly whereby the dominating groups keep the dominant groups in check. About Kogi State, thus position this theory is more or less valid, if not reliable, in the given circumstance, more especially, in the perception of ethical conflicts as well as political rivalry that characterizes present-day Nigerian society, particularly in Kogi State where ethnic group and political factions fight for control over land, natural resources and political power. Marxist analysis indicates that the dominant groups in Kogi State – which are usually those who possess superior political power or the land – would ensure that the subjugated do not obtain these resources. This leads to a conflict fog where the politically

and economically marginalized groups will resist domination hence more incidents of conflict. By this, the conventional perception of conflict can be viewed; the Ebira-Igala and Bassa-Nge conflicts are excellent examples where ethnic groups are fighting over rights to resources such as land. The theory in this regards also provides for understanding of why the injustice in Kogi State contributes to such struggles and how powerful elites in the state do not support change that is likely to deny them their authority (Chappelow, 2019).

Thus, these theories offer a good ground through which one can understand the conflicts in Kogi State. Piaget has presented his Theory of Adaptation stating that groups should adapt to socio-economical change and on the other hand, Marx's Conflict Theory has defined that there is always a fight for resource scarcity. These theories indicate that the crises that have ravaged Kogi State are not random but are rooted in the socio-economic and political structure of the state. Derived from these theoretical frameworks, this study seeks to offer pertinent policy implications that seek to redress modicum triggers of conflict as well as the complex socio-economic structures that underpin them.

Effects of Conflict on Kogi State Development

There have been a series of clashes in Kogi State which led to massive migration and many a citizens have been forced out of her homes and community for dear lives. Ethnic rivalry, land disputes and political rivalry in Kogi State in particular had been major factors that have slowed down development in this state (Sheidu, 2016). The first effect is the displacement of individuals. Crisis and conflict in the state have led to a high incidence of homelessness as it has been noted that most of the displaced persons are using tents or crowded and congested camps thus receiving very little or no assistance in basic needs like food, water and health care. Housing displacement impacts the affected people in a significant way most especially in the contributing place as land is a central input in farming and other related economic activities. This displacement implies that people cannot be able to get food from their previous source which leads to an increase in poverty level and more displacement according to Ibrahim in 2006. Another effect closely related to this is the psychological battle or aspects that persons displaced experience which includes trauma, loss of belonging and amongst others that compound the existing issues (Idakwoji, Ojomah, Usman & Orokpo, 2018).

Also, noticeable is the fact that most of the people affected relocate to other areas with less risk of attacks in or outside of the state where many people are finding shelter hence stretching the available resources beyond their limit. This has led to some areas experiencing rapid growth of population, which makes it difficult to supply necessities such as water supply and sanitation facilities or even housing. Another example of the predicament, and is that infrastructure which is already inadequate gets overburdened making living standards worse. Also, other human needs such as health and education are overburdened and the increasing pressure makes it difficult for the local governments to provide adequate necessary services. This further compounds the frequency of destruction of facilities during conflicts including roads, schools and health institutions which hampers the state in equal distribution of the basic needs of the people (Achoba, 2023).

The conflicts have also impacted the education system of the state; the schools are closed damaged, or occupied by the violent forces and children cannot attend classes. When families are affected especially in the case of displaced families that is worse since the

children are compelled to drop out of school and fail to find schools and education facilities that they can comfortably attend to in new unfamiliar locations. The disruption of learning is not only a problem for learners but also leads to consequences on further staff development in the state in the long term (Paul & Edino, F. 2015). Similarly, there is a great effect on the health care system also as some of the hospitals and clinics were reduced to partial and destructions; health workers either affected or killed, thus, there are inadequate medical personnel and other relevant products. This is very much the case experienced in the disruption of health care services which has even worse repercussions on the general population with worse impacts on vulnerable populations such as pregnant women, children and the elderly (Aladejana & Ebijuworih, 2024).

Further effect of conflict in the state has significant implications for the state's and regional economy including its commerce, agriculture and investment. Vandalism, break-ins, and other acts of insecurity have led several enterprises to either fold, or be necessary to move, and in the process, lose a great deal of money and people their jobs. Most affected is the farming sector of the state economy which is very strategic for the development of the state (Umar, 2017). The fear of the unknown or potential attacks by the farmers would not take them to their farms. This affects consequentially the food production level and makes food insecurity rise higher. The loss of crops, livestock and farming implements add on to this also. This has long-term implications for food security and the general economic development of the state (Ibrahim, 2006). Despite the great investment opportunities in Kogi State, business investment has also been affected in the state because of the problems of conflict. The insecurity and instability discourages investors as no business person would invest his or her money in a place characterised by crisis or violence. This has a negative impact in slowing down the rate of economic growth and development in the state and consequently results in a decline in jobs available for her populace (Olayiwola, 2013; Kogi Reports (2015).

From the state, the recorded cases of conflicts in the state have aggravated the level of poverty and social inequity among its people. This connotes that they had to abandon their homes, property and economic activities would be at standstill (Abdullahi, 2013). All these resulted in low levels of income, hence low employment opportunities, many families ending up in more grievous levels of poverty where they could not feed their family members due to loss of source of income in farming and small business. Therefore, they are forced to seek help from other people which increases social inequality (Usman, 2020; Agbese, 2014). Unpleasantly, conflicts whether in the form of physical or non-physical slows down growth and achievement of development goals. Hence, there is a need to ensure that conflict solution approaches that address issues of sustainable development are embraced (UNDP, 2016).

Recommendations for Improving Conflict Resolution Strategies in Kogi State

It is time to understand that conflicts arise from multiple factors and solving Kogi state problems call for multi-dimensional solutions. Some of these causes which are often mentioned are; Poverty, unemployment, and poor or no access to necessities like lands and water. To tackle these vices, government should develop good policies that will allow for a fair distribution of wealth and resources together with providing the people with means and

channels of empowering themselves through economic productivity. Concerning conflict resolution, the existing culturally sensitive practices should be incorporated into legal practices to provide the means to resolve existing conflicts (Achimugu & Alexander 2024). However, to solve the conflicts in Kogi State requires appraisal of the causes of the conflicts to solve them adequately. This calls for policies which address economic, social, political and environmental pillars. Proactive participation is critical in the attainment of conflict solutions mainly because of the incorporation of inclusive development.

Significantly, any form of sustainable development that may be desired in a conflict-affected state such as Kogi State, depends on the achievement of fundamental goals in combating conflicts which cardinally begins with addressing the root of such conflicts and discouraging further recurrences. One of the development approaches to sustainability is the promotion of successful conflict resolution is the help of dialogue and partnership between government and other actors, which include local communities, non-governmental organizations, and international partners. In this manner, it becomes possible to build peace sustainably and effectively without leaving out any group of people. As opined by Adebayo (2020), the promotion of rule of law, equal distribution of resources and institution building are some of the mechanisms of sustainable peace and stability as argued. This study therefore firmly established that durable development in Kogi State depends and can only be attained in an environment that is most peaceful and stable.

Sustainable development can promote peace and stability since it seeks to eradicate factors that lead to conflict within the society such as inequity, poverty and exclusion (UN Development Programme, 2016). There is a strong relationship between peace, stability and development. Most time the resources that are supposed to be used for sustainable development are being channelled towards addressing the conflict situations in the state. When it comes to conflict resolution strategies, the state has the potential of stabilization through which it is possible for the implementation of sustainable development programmes (Egwu, 2016). For development to be sustainable then there must be peace and stability in a given place. Conflicts make resources scarce, disrupt economic activities and erode social fabric which pushed back the development of many sectors (World Bank, 2018).

There is a need to embrace the aspects of inclusive development and social cooperation to advance the agenda of post-conflict societies towards lasting peace and stability. As all groups feel included it is easy to embrace the feeling of equal Membership hence minimizing conflict among the groups (UNDP, 2016). In Kogi State, any development programme that is being implemented must encourage participation from all ethnic groups or region of the state since some feel marginalized and this leads to conflict. Besides, social integration could be achieved through the enhancement of community participation in determining developmental projects that would impact their lives (Oluwaseun, 2023). Increasing the provision of and access to economic resources to ensure people have a fair share in society can prevent and mitigate cases of poverty and hence reduce inequality that fuels conflict as stated by the World Bank in 2018. Institution-building and enhancing transparency and accountability can address corrupt practices and misuse of power hence fostering progress which reduces conflict (UN Development Programme, 2016; World Bank, 2018).

Education plays a very significant role in conflict prevention and the prevention of any further escalation. The government in Kogi State should allocate resources into programmes that educate individuals about ethnic groups thus enabling the Kogi State to embrace tolerance and peace. Another area that should also be incorporated in education is conflict resolution so that future conflict may be prevented. It can help in teaching students and people in general how to resolve their disputes without resorting to violence, which is an important factor in ensuring that the societies in the end meet their goal of achieving a stable and prosperous future (Bello, 2022). Promoting education, empowering the economy, and political liberties and democracy are critical succeeded as preventive measures for conflict. Also, education prepares people so that they can be in a position to effectively and positively interact in society and development. This will in the long run influence their economic resources which can help enhance people's standard of living thereby enabling them to avoid turning to negative coping strategies.

Also, economic empowerment can serve as a strategy for peacebuilding. This is because economic empowerments play a vital role when it comes to freeing communities from the vice of economic grievances hence leading to conflicts. In Kogi State, the poverty, unemployment level and youth unemployment can be addressed through intervention aimed at creating employment, business and skills acquisition among the youths. Entrepreneurial ventures, micro-finance, vocational training, and agricultural-based schemes can bring about change on the people thus reducing the occurrences of conflicts (Abdulrahman, 2021).

Political liberalisation is also required to resolve governance-related issues that fuel conflict in Kogi State. For the state government, it means that political processes should be as transparent, accountable, and inclusive as possible to represent all the population's segments. Holding of powers and espousing of people's participation also lead to political decentralization and thus eradication of conflicts as well. If an ideal political system has been upheld and safeguarded then the chances of people resorting to conflict resolution on grounds of political injustices are reduced (Okechukwu, 2023).

People's interdependences, solidarity or social cohesiveness are basic to conflict prevention and management. In Kogi State, measures towards improving effective community relations, embracing common cultural endowments and holding frequent cross-ethnic discussions would go a long way to reducing on such conflicts. These are efforts towards building understanding as well as cooperation from one community to another hence fostering the development of a peaceful society (Adewale, 2021). Civil society organizations (CSOs) have an impact on conflict resolution as mediators, advocates and conversation conveners. Some of the roles which CSOs can actively engage in Kogi State include community engagements to address issues of disagreement, the implementation of peace and reconciliation processes and Twitter Participation in advocating for the rights of victims of conflict. It is suggested that the government has to collaborate with these organizations to establish sustainable and community-based conflict resolution programs.

Encouraging communication and dialogue is a significant aspect of conflict resolution because it is a vital process that hinges on negotiating, amending and healing broken relationships. Dialogue and reconciliation are relevant in conflict transformation, especially in an ethnocentric political setting like Kogi State. It is

important to have programmes that involve direct communication between the conflicting parties and reconciliation that would involve working on past injustices. The government and the civil society should actively ensure that there are forums where the diverse groups come for purposes of airing their grievances and seek peaceful ways of resolving their differences. In all, for the discussed conflict prevention, management and resolution strategies to work effectively in Kogi State, it thus requires to have effective and efficient monitoring and evaluation mechanisms put in place. Regular feedback from local communities is key and useful to maintain the relevancy of the strategies with the evolving nature of conflict in the state.

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