Early Warning System of Conflict Prevention Strategy in Nigeria

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Abstract: - The entire globe is heated and faces immense annihilations that no single country can vouch to be truly free from. Though, conflict is an intrinsic and inevitable part of human existence, the nature and volatility of conflict experienced in Nigeria brought with it a quantum of warning signs which predominantly is not noticed or ignored. This study examines the Nigerian security sector as regards the disregard for available early warning signs of conflict in the polity which ordinarily form a whole 'Early Warning System' (EWS) of Conflict. The study employed historical method of analyzing data generated from both primary and secondary sources. A hundred key informants were systematically stratified and interviewed in each of six geopolitical zone of the country making total of 600 respondents while simple percentage frequency count and other statistical tools were used to analyze the derivatives in order to consolidate the mixed methodology. Findings show that significant early warning signs (EWS) precede most conflicts unawares and when the conflict signs are visible, we are not enlightened or informed to respond correspondingly let alone taking preventive actions. Also, government is complacent in the direction of conflict prevention policies and advocacy etc. The author therefore recommended an apt conflict prevention and management model which, if mainstreamed, would network all the security architectures hence, enhance security in the nation by fully engaging all the security operatives. It will ensure citizens' rights and privileges while dignifying the nation in the international scene.

Keywords: Conflict, Early warning signs, Security.

I. Introduction

The entire globe is under severe heat arising from unprecedented conflict trend which portends heinous danger to mankind and which threatens human extinction. It gets worse that the world is now getting attuned to armed conflicts cum collateral annihilation witnessed on a daily basis especially in the developing climes. In-spite of efforts by the international community and Africa regional intergovernmental 'collective security' organizations to maintain peace and security in Africa and to manage conflict and build peace, the continent lacks the 'depth of relevant knowledge' sustained capacity and critical mass of expertise for conflict prevention, management, resolution and peace building. (David 2007:4).

Nigeria's plural context which is inherently conflicting being the general feature of several plural societies all over the world has attracted overwhelming concerns lately. Conflict issues in Nigeria has gone beyond counting numbers of occurrences or casualties owing to medium and large cases of conflicts reported daily and her current conflict rate which, 'Global Peace Index' ranked one of the highest in African sub region has been so unprecedentedly alarming to the point that certain individuals in the polity are calling for 'Revolution Now' (Sowore, 2019). However, we need to have a clear picture of what conflict is all about here as well as its nature. Conflict is the absence of peace at any given time. The absence of peace in the country invariably halts efforts at achieving meaningful development in all ramification. (Adamu and Tochukwu 2011; 65).

Quite naturally, ''humans exhibit differences not only biologically or physiologically but also socially and psychologically. Even identical twins who may be very much alike physically develop different personalities and orientations as they grow and live together and perceive assets or development resources as well as socio-economic problems differently'' (Otite, 1999; 121). Therefore, differences between individuals and groups are natural and not mutually exclusive of social variables but the divergent perception and manipulations or exploitative tendencies of people with reference to scarce resources at the disposal of individuals or group advantages are products of diverse interests of man. This is what necessitates social conflicts in Nigeria today.

The North/South dichotomy and especially what scholars like Alex Gboyega (2003) called 'Marriage of inconvenience' is another pitfall in group interest as regards conflicts in the polity hence, conflict is a dominant factor among the diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria. The Northern part of the country has its grouse against the South as well as against the Eastern parts and vice-vasa. The political atmosphere has always been cloudy during periodic elections as the gladiators have embellished the system with large scale fraud hence, violence. Government itself seems insensitive to the plight of the common man. Countless debates generated from issues surrounding resource control while several constitutional conferences have been staged to correct the lopsidedness in governance as well as in the constitution. The current perceived northern hegemonic reign in the Nigeria state is also a ground breaking causer of conflicts today. Arsons and incessant assaults on INEC facilities are rampant in some states leading to mounting

fear towards 2023 general elections. These and many other related factors characterize terrific and tensed atmosphere majority of Nigerians live in.

The nature of conflict experienced in Nigeria therefore is summed up in; kidnappings, killings for ritual purpose etc., robberies, vandalism, terrorism and insurgencies. Studies in social conflicts have proved however that more than 97% conflicts exhibit signs/signals often disregarded far earlier before such conflicts attain escalating dimensions. (Robert, 2008; 4). Hence, the major objective of this study is to appraise the early warning system of the conflict prevention in Nigeria's conflict scenario to unravel the early warning signs inherent in the system.

The author therefore proposed a modern approach to conflict prevention and management to ameliorate conflict incidences by drawing conflict timelines, building conflict prevention models and thorough monitoring of conflict signals which are all inclusive of 'Early Warning System' (EWS) which is the thrust of this paper.

Statement of the Problem

"The closer you get to a giraffe the less of it you see…" (Aluko,1993.6). This prefatory assertion on the efficacy of Nigeria's planning and expenditure process on handling insecurity and entrenching peace and tranquility is decried with huge gap between intention and delivery.

The major delivery expected from the state is to provide peace and security for all the people living within its specified geographical boundary. The importance attached to security of Nigerians was captured in the Nigerian constitution of 1999; section 4 (2b) which states ''…the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government'' Nevertheless, a challenge facing the polity called Nigeria more grievous than conflict does not exist aside corruption.

Conflict cum insecurity in Nigeria has become so endemic in spite of being a democratic setting. Little wonder that Adekson (1979) refers to Nigeria as a social jungle where higher form of animals live. This assertion is sin quo non to the idea of the ancient Greek philosopher, Aristotle (321 BC) who posits that we are all political animals. For instance, conflict seems to have become the second nature of Nigerians during elections to the extent that Nigerian elections are traditionally violent affairs, and conditions this time around are particularly combustible. (Malley R. 2018).

''The requirement of any democratic system is the commitment by parties to pursue their interests in non-violent ways and a political system which provides fair mechanisms for addressing everyone's grievances'' (Derrick, 2008; 8-9). Before any meaningful infrastructural development can take place in a country, the un-arguable and basic requirement is effective reduction of conflicts hence attaining relative peace.

Though, much has been done as regards securitization of Nigerian polity as many authorities in this sector, most especially in areas of resolution and management of conflicts would be consulted, certain degrees of conflicts evolve daily in Nigeria that defy various assumptions and which dimension is far ahead of recommendations of these authorities. For instance, as we are already familiar with terrorism, insurgencies, herdsmen/farmers clashes, banditry and vandalization of pipeline installations in the south/south part of the country etc. the taunting conflict phenomenon in Nigeria now includes but not limited to different form of rape (especially of minors) as well as ritual killing where an individual regardless of age will suddenly be knifed or hit with club on the head while a small portion of his or her blood will be taken in an handkerchief for God-knows-what. (gazette.com)The researcher noticed that little research has been carried out in areas of nipping the issue of conflict in the bud as it culminates into conflict prevention unlike conflict resolution and management. For instance, Albert, Derrick, Alanamu, Lawyer, Sweedler, and Shaw, have all made immense contributions to conflict management literatures but not much has been written on conflict prevention.

There is therefore a vast gap in knowledge as regard conflict prevention strategies and policy statement in Nigeria especially taking early warning signs of conflict into consideration with all its benefits and that is the vacuum this study wants to fill.

II. Literature Review and Conceptual Discourse

No meaningful development ever occurred where un-checked conflicts are prevalent. Nigeria as sovereign nation is long due for both technological, industrial growth and development yet no substantive home-grown industry till date even the erstwhile foreign investors majorly in production sector had eloped to other peaceful neighboring nations due to uncontrolled conflict in Nigeria. According to Ayinla (2005) conflicts are of differing trends and the most debilitating is violence which as concept serves as a catch-all for every variety of protest, militancy, coercion, destruction, or muscle flexing which a given observer happens to fear or condemn. Ademola (2005) states that central to the concern of Nigerians including their political actors, is the consolidation of the hard-earned democratic rule in the country but since 1999, when the nation resumed democratic governance, it has experienced unprecedented rise in political violence ranging from increased crime wave, armed robbery, political assassination, religious riot, inter and intra ethnic clashes, communal crises etc. For instance, Onwe, Nwogbaga & Nwakamma (2015) observed that Nigeria has witnessed numerous communal conflicts such as Zango-Kataf crisis in Kaduna State 1999- 2001, Tiv-Jukun crisis in Taraba State

1999-2001, Ife-Modakeke in Osun State 1999-2000, Eleme-Okrika crisis, Itsekiri-Urhobo crisis 1999-2000, Itsekiri-Ijaw crisis, Aguleri-Umuleri conflict in Anambra State 1995-1999, Umuode-Oruku conflict, the Igbo-Ikom conflict in Cross-River State and the Ezza-Ezillo conflict in Ebonyi State among others. Oruku/ Umuode conflict is an intra-ethnic/intra-communal conflict which Idowu (2001) and Oladoyin (2001) attributed to an internal phenomenon like a dispute over ownership of land and population escalation. Akinteye (1999) attributed it to a tussle for a chieftaincy title.

In view of the above, Hamid et al (2019) recommended 'early warning system' (henceforth-EWS) with its divergent models of warning signals entailing different structures to tackle conflict incidences anywhere they may reside. Meanwhile, studies have shown that no systematic review of conflict via early warning system in Nigerian has been conducted so far. A systematic study of 'EWS' with its component and structures to exigent conflict is hereby examined. Many scholars in the field of conflict management like Patterson, K., Beer J. E. Albert I. O., Alanamu A. and others whose efforts have engineered the wheels of government in conflict prevention and containment suffice. For instance, diverse reviews and evaluation sheets on conflict prevention agencies and organizations like National Human Right Commission, National Orientation Agency, National Intelligence Agency and the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution- The Presidency as well as Nigerian Police Force, Nigerian Army, National Security and Civil Defense Corps etc. revealed that most conflicts do not just break out without prior signals which, to a large extent, are often ignored.

Cursory look into the efforts of the current regime of Gen. Muhammadu Buhari (Rtd) in his untiring efforts in stemming the tide of conflict/insecurity lately and the government budgets in that direction is also necessary here.

> *"...Unfortunately, like in most conflict situations, some Nigerian*
>
> *criminals are taking undue advantage of a difficult situation*
>
> *and profiteering therefrom with the misguided belief that ad-*
>
> *herence to the democratic norms handicaps this administration*
>
> *from frontally and decisively tackling them. We are already*
>
> *addressing these obstacles and we will soon bring some of these*
>
> *culprits to justice"*   - (Buhari, M. 2021)

The above extract demonstrates that Nigerian government is never sleeping on security matters only that issues surrounding it are quite overwhelming and some concerned agencies visibly lack capacities to contend with them.

Meanwhile, for avoidance of ambiguity, the foregoing necessitates further clarification of some peculiar terms frequently used in the context of conflict resolution hence, the following conceptual clarification;

Conflict: This is by definition, an intrinsic and inevitable part of human existence. It starts with pursuit of incompatible interest and goals by different individuals and groups. Conflict primordially involves arguments, dissatisfaction, displeasure, strive, fight, crises, conflagration, violence, war etc.: It can also be referred to as contradictions inherent in power relations and which manifest themselves in individuals and groups interactions with one another and with nature in the pursuit of limited resources or opportunities. Therefore, conflict resolution scholars argue that conflict has an ontological basis in human needs and it is the denial which causes violent conflicts…" (Francis, 2007:20). There are several types of conflict but for our purpose of unraveling its prevention, the author only alluded to armed conflict.

Armed Conflict: It is a resolve to the use of force i.e involvement of small arms and light weapons in the pursuit of incompatible and particular interest and goals. Example of armed conflict is large scale crises like terrorism, conflagration, ethnic cleansing or one involving two communities with the use of lethal weapons, genocide against unarmed civilians. etc. Meanwhile, conflict is the vehicle of social transformation and is neither positive nor negative, i.e. conflict is necessary at some point in human relations. The following are the modes of either conflict prevention or it's resolution;

Conflict Prevention: This is an act involving a lot of activities that result into nipping the root cause of crises in the bud. According to 'Draft ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework" (ECPF, 2007), the term conflict prevention refers to non-violent (or creative) conflict transformation that encompasses activities designed to diffuse tensions and prevent the outbreak, escalation and spread or recurrence of violence. Operationally, these activities more often engage early warning and its signs, mediation, conciliation, preventive disarmament and preventive deployment using interactive means like friendly overtures and employment of common community development projects.

Conflict Resolution: This is a deliberate and calculated attempt to douse the tension of conflict or fight between two parties. It may be an attempt between the two warring parties themselves but sometimes, it involves efforts from a third party. This translates also into agreement to settle an ongoing or already escalated armed conflict by two or more groups by drawing peace agreement, treaty or an accord for common ground..

Dialogue: This is literarily a conversation or discussion between two or more people to explore a subject matter or resolve a problem. In a conflict sense also, dialogue is a planned conversation between two parties that are aggrieved with intention to resolve their grievances and without neither an arbiter nor third party.

Negotiation: This is a process in which two parties resolve a dispute or come to a mutual agreement. This is a social process in which parties to conflict are enabled to discuss possible options and reach a settlement through face-to-face interaction. The unique feature of negotiation is borne out of the fact that it takes place between the two parties at war without any third party.

Mediation: This is an alternative dispute resolution process. It is a special form of negotiation in which a neutral third party(person) is sought for. That is someone who has a role, such a role is to help parties in conflict achieve a mutually acceptable settlement. It is usually called third party intervention which becomes necessary in a conflict where negotiation is not feasible given the divergent interest, needs and emotions of the disputants. It is applied in low intensity conflicts involving divergent interest and position like in industries.

Intervention: This is an occasion in which persons or groups at war are confronted by a person or group of people to persuade them to address the issue. Therefore, it is usually a third party affair. Third-Party Intervention is an involvement of person/team into on-going conflict of two parties like management and union to resolve conflict. Generally, third party interventions help parties analyze consequence of their action and manages/ resolve conflict in mutually beneficial way. The major difference between mediation and intervention is that the former is mutually inclusive of overtly friendly environment to settle issues which is not yet escalated and the parties seek solution (help) by themselves while the latter involves violent enforcement of peace when the conflict is or has gone beyond territories and assuming dangerous dimension. This is sometimes called 'peace enforcement'

Early Warning and Early Response: Conflict Early Warning and Early Response (CEWER) is an approach that aims to prevent or mitigate the escalation of conflicts through the timely detection of warning signs and the implementation of effective early response measures as regards conflict brewing stage. The CEWER approach involves monitoring and analyzing various indicators such as political, economic, and social developments, as well as tensions between different groups or communities. This information is used to identify potential conflict triggers and to develop strategies to prevent or manage conflicts before they escalate.

The early warning component of CEWER involves the systematic collection, analysis, and dissemination of information about emerging conflicts. This can include the use of tools such as conflict mapping, risk assessments, and scenario planning. Early warning enables stakeholders to anticipate and prepare for potential conflicts, including the identification of potential actors, triggers, and escalation pathways.

The early response component of CEWER involves the development and implementation of strategies to address the underlying causes of conflicts and prevent escalation. This can include measures such as mediation, dialogue, capacity-building, and conflict resolution training. Effective early response requires coordination and collaboration between multiple stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, and local communities. Overall, CEWER is a proactive approach to conflict prevention that emphasizes the importance of timely detection, analysis, and response to potential conflict situations. By identifying and addressing the root causes of conflicts early enough, CEWER aims to prevent the escalation of conflicts and promote peace and stability by transforming the conflict into peaceful trends.

Meanwhile, in contemporary literatures, a clear convergence is noted between early warnings signs of conflicts and conflict signals as they are pointers to soon-to occur crises in any polity. Most parallel organizations working in the field of conflicts had coopted a singular term 'System' to accommodate all the paraphernalia of factors included in warning signs of conflicts. The origin of such systems dates back to the 1950s and lies in intelligence and military reconnaissance. As Herbert Wulf, and Tobias Debiel (2009) posit, early warning systems were established in the fields of natural disasters, humanitarian emergencies, gross human rights violations, the spread of diseases and economic crises. Several regional and sub-regional organizations have established, or are building up, 'Early Warning Research' (EWR) mechanisms. For instance, the researcher focused on the Continental Early Warning Systems (CEWS), an intelligence-gathering and analysis center of the African Union and the West Africa Early Warning Network (WARN) of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to reflect on Nigeria's conflict state. (see fig. 3.0)

Early Response, accordingly, means: 'any initiative that occurs in the latent stages of a perceived potential armed conflict with the aim at reduction, resolution or transformation. The term mechanism will refer to the individual units of an E[arly] W[arning]

S[ystem] such as data collection, data formatting, data analysis with the understanding that there is a relationship and process between these unities for the system to operate.' (Austin 2004: 23) Then, early warning and response interventions are less effective if they fail to address the underlying causes of conflict. Early warning and response should be part of a wider peace infrastructure of a state.

A crucial, yet so far mainly under-reflected, issue is the question of who is going to be warned and who is supposed to act upon this warning?. Dorn (2004: 317) sees early warning as 'the act of alerting a recognized authority (such as the UN Security Council) to a new (or renewed) threat to peace at a sufficiently early stage' (Campbell and Meier 2007). It is the ideals of primarily addressing a 'recognized authority' a meaningful and sufficient criterion. As Casey Barrs (2006) rightly states, we typically 'wire' the warning toward ourselves so we can take action. But we have given much less thought to also warning those who are about to be attacked.' Thus, the underlying assumptions of most early warning systems is that international actors will take over responsibility as protectors as soon as adequate information is being processed along with rules and procedures for initiating appropriate action at the level of an international or regional organisation (Barrs 2006: 1), relying on Adelman (1999) and Darcy (2005). Accordingly, Barrs has proposed 'to focus more on a warning capacity within the killing grounds' (Barrs 2006: 4). Such an approach could facilitate the reduction or even overcoming of the gap between early warning and early response.

Theoretical Foundation

The importance of theory is to impact in meaning, predicting and analyzing academic phenomenon. Encarta (2004) posits, theory is an idea or belief about something arrived at through assumption and in some cases a set of facts, propositions or principles analyzed in their relation to one another and used, especially in science to explain phenomena.

The theoretical foundation on which this research rests is drawn from theories of social conflict. These are dialectical materialism and structural functionalism theories. Dialectical materialism is a tradition of social analysis of societal values and procedures through which society produces and distributes the means of its material existence and the struggles, usually among social classes that are integral to the process. It identifies material conditions as the driver of ideas contrary to opinion on Hegel's 'Dialectical Idealism. Therefore, this theory which originated from Karl Marx and Friedrich Hegel argues that a society is divided into class systems of 'haves and have not' arising from unequal material conditions and are justified by philosophical rationalizations of capitalism. The dominant class do less work but is appropriated giant part of the rewards. This exploitative relation is believed to have given rise to class struggle which often entails open and objective confrontation, unrest, riots in the society, for instance, violent attacks on villages and unarmed citizens by acclaimed unprivileged groups but most times includes covert/ structural violence.

Structural functionalism as a theory looks at the society via the lens of macro level orientation which is a broad focus on the social structures that shape society as a whole. Structural Functionalism is attributed to also Marx and Hegel's works but developed widely by an American philosopher, Talcott Parsons (1937) who was the major proponent. He analyzed the society as a mosaic of functions and the structures that perform them. For instance, in order to survive, a society needs to educate its children, produce goods and services to feed the population, keep checks on their health, enact and enforce laws, govern its affairs and provide security for its members. These functions necessitate a number of structures such as schools, industries, the parliaments, hospitals, courts, armed force bases etc. Thus, the structure involves a set of inter-related roles necessary for performing specific functions in the society. A common analogy popularized by Herbert Spencer, presents these parts of society as 'organs' that work toward the proper functioning of the 'body' as a whole. Failure of any of the structures leads to conflicts and this moves such society towards instability and coercion.

This theory is relevant in Nigeria's conflict case which, to a large extent, is a product of structural dysfunction. The structures of the society are failing hence institutional collapse while some government functional duties have ceased to exist For instance, according to 'The Punch Newspaper', April 11, 2023, KPMG in its 2023 first quarter report revealed Nigeria's unemployment rate in the trajectory of 41% increase from 37.7% in 2022 with 3% GDP growth. Also, the critical sectors of the economy e.g. service, manufacturing, education, security sectors etc. have all lost their senses of responsibility, meaning they have totally failed the people. Life does not seem to have meaning any longer as Nigerians experience blood-letting on a daily basis. The society is in comatose with a vivid hungry population. These anomalies have given room to encumbrances of life-threatening factors like anger, danger, insults, assault, threats, hate, fight at the slighted provocation leading to ground–breaking armed conflicts; for instance secessionist movement like MEND, IPOB as well as ethno-religious militant groups like BOKOHARAM, ISWAP, armed Fulani herdsmen and others

III. Methodology

This study addressed the Conflict Prevention Strategies In Nigeria by reviewing all existing paraphernalia of security operatives as well as building 'Model of Early Warning System' to help a functional cycle of all involved in the security sector of the nation. The

research design adopted by the author therefore reveals overall strategies the study will employ as well the analytical approach employed which is inferential statistics in order to ensure that the research question is thoroughly investigated. The whole people living in Nigeria are selected as the study population while six hundred respondents were selected as study sample. The author chose one hundred respondents from each geopolitical zone of the federation and through the use of stratified random sampling technique, three states were randomly targeted (eighteen states) for generation of data from the study area while both primary and secondary data were obtained from the six geopolitical zones. Simple percentage frequency module as well as other statistical analysis will be effective in case studies of this nature.

Area of Study

Federal Republic of Nigeria whose land mass covers 923,768 square kilometers including about 13,000 square kilometers of water (Library of Congress, 2008) is located, according to quora.com, just north of the equator and east of the prime meridian which situates her in the tropics and as result possesses a simple climatic condition in West Africa on the Gulf of Guinea. Nigeria borders Republic of Cameroon on the east and Republic of Benin in the west. She also shares boundary with Chad in the North East and Republic of Niger in the North west.

Nigeria is divided into six geo-political zones to ensure equality in political representation and fair administration of research instrument.

Table 1.0   Nigerian Six Geo-Political Zones

S/N	GEO-POLITICAL ZONES	STATES WITHIN THE ZONES
1.	North West	Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara
2.	North Central	Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau and FCT.
3.	North East	Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe
4.	South West	Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Oyo, and Osun.
5.	South East	Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo.
6.	South South	Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross-River, Delta, Edo and Rivers.

Source: Author's survey, 2022

Causes of conflict in Nigeria and its peculiarities to zones

The genesis and trend of the conflict in the northwestern part of Nigeria is one of West Africa's most pressing, yet under-examined, security issues. The conflict has no clear start date but follows a general trajectory of deteriorating rural insecurity: rural banditry and criminality grew throughout the late 2000s, with the first major instances of violence occurring in the early 2010s.

> '*The security situation quickly deteriorated thereafter, particularly in the middle of the decade when the state's response became increasingly militarized, while several peace deals intermittently brokered by governors proved short-lived. As of October 2021, over 12,000 people had been killed (though the real number is likely to be* higher*), one million displaced, and approximately another million children are out of school because of criminal violence known colloquially as banditry.*'

...Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD)

Abuja, Nigeria(2022)

The table below suffices for majority of the causes of conflict in Nigeria, nature of such conflict, its impact as well as variations in ways geopolitical zones are affected.

Table 2.0 Notable Conflicts, Their Impact and Their Causes In Nigeria

SN	Conflict nature	Causes	Affected Zone	Impact
01	Fulani Herders-Farmers Conflict	Collusion of grazing route and farm lands.	All zones	Farming phobia, food price hike, food shortage leading to inflation.
02	Banditry viz. Kidnaping (Insurgency)	Anger and dissatisfaction against democratic & western norms.	All zones	Deaths, disease especially in the IDP camps,fear and suspicion, People's phobia to travel leading to economic recession.
03	Islamic Fundamentalism (Boko Haram)	Religious Indoctrination.	North-central, North-east, North-west & FCT	Untold number of casualty, underdevelopment of the North, annihilation & monumental devastation leading to displaced persons.
04	Secessionist Movement (IPOB)	Socio-economic marginalization & Resource control	South East & South south	Rise of IPOB,MEND and ESN. Aggression and fear for residents.
05	Robbery and Burglary	Perceived Unemployment & government insensitivity to the teaming youth.	All the six geo-political zones	Death, family disoriented and increase in street roaming.
06	Ritual Killings	Parental failure & Unemployment.	South west, south east and south south	Psychological trauma on families of victims, low self esteem etc.
07	Organ Harvesting	Impatience	All zones	Same as above.
08	Political upheavals	Gangsterism & Cultism	All zones	Increased forms of social menace in the society. More and more youth are willing tools in the hands of politicians.
09	Youth unrest & crises	Insensitive government policies, Corruption and Inept Leadership	South west, south east and Abuja	Uncertainties of future and especially for the younger generation.
09	Street Fights and diverse conflagrations	Nepotism and absence of Rule of Law.	Majorly South-west, South-east & South_south	Unsafe communities and towns. Suspicion and fear on faces.
11	Government facilities & Pipeline vandalism.	Social Exclusion & Marginalization of oil-rich areas.	South East & South/South	No known social amenities seen in some quarters hence, residents migration.
12	Mass media Revolution	Hate Speech	All zones	Social malady on the path of central government e.g twitter ban (2021)
13	Perceived Northern Hegemony	Dual-Ideology of the Constitution	Southern and Eastern zones	Disparities in resource control & disfavor in making

			opportunity available for some segments of the populace.
14	Killing and Accidental burning of diverse filling stations.	Purported oil subsidy & Fuel scarcity.	South-south, South-east, South-west and FCT.	Untold suffering and hardships.

Source; Author's Field survey (2022)

Table 3.0 Key Informants Interview Analysis of EWS and Conflict Volatility Relationship

SN	Zone	Selected States	Pre-Conflict stage (*Conflict brewing*)	Year	Early Warning Signs ignored	Volatility Rate	Outcome
01	North-west	Kaduna	Religious differences & extremism due to introduction of sharia law in year 2000, tribal polarization btw Hausa-Fulani Muslim the north and Christians Muslim in the southern part,	1987	Residential segregation. Ethnic cleansing	EV	Frequent religious crises
					Perceived sentiment in state policy and governmental powers.	EV	Unprecedented record of casualties and fatal injury.
		Kebbi	Presence of Almajiris, Illegal migrants with small arms hence cattle rustling and conflicts over land and resources,	2019	Unchecked Cattle rustling.	EV	Fear & tensed environment.
					Fulani militia, Hausa vigilante groups becoming kidnapping syndicate	EV	ISWAP's presence, abduction, violent attacks
		Zamfara	Conquest, hate & natural resources, Land tussle btw **Hausa farmers and Fulani herders**, etc. Killing of a Fulani leader, Alhaji Ishe, of Chilin village in Mara LG	2013	Immigrants from other west African nations. Proliferation of militia groups	VV	Violent rural banditry, 13 out of 14 local govt. have experienced one form of violence or the other.
					Unequal appointment by state govt.	VV	Open discrimination and social exclusion
02	North-central	Benue	Herders infiltration, struggle over land, political motive, govt. insensitivity.	2011 2015	Increase in Herders number hence rape, displacement of people	EV	Desertification & food shortage death and injuries.
					Decrease in farmers population, mid-night attacks	VV	Increase in IDP as farms & markets abandoned ,food scarcity
		Nasarawa	Avalanche of ethno-linguistic and religious groups, boundary disputes, Skewed distribution of socio-economic resources	2001	Weakened security apparatus,	VV	Incessant communal conflicts
					Perceived injustice, marginalization	V	Casualties and displaced persons, hate & tension

			along culturally and religiously divided groups.	2006			
		Plateau	political crisis over 'indigene' rights and political representation. Tensions between ethnic groups rooted in the allocation of resources. Fears of ethno-religious domination.	2001	proliferation of weapons, well-organized armed groups in rural areas	V	Over 220,000 people are displaced
					Land rights tussle between the Berom (natives) and Hausa (settlers) amalgamated into a mix of explosion	V	Thousands of casualties recorded over time. Many have been maimed and raped.
				2010			
03	North-east	Borno	Politically induced thugs cum religious extremists eg. Boko haram (BH) Diverse health Challenges characterized the town due to water shortage .especially during dry season leading to epidemics. Politics of 'do or die affairs' entrenched religiosity hence, insurgency.	2005	Gross violations of human rights, militarization and youth restiveness	VV	Thousands killed and over 2 million people have been internally displaced. Extreme hardship for women. IDP- Over1.6 million out of the 2.2 million persons displaced across the three North-Eastern states. Gross malnutrition, shortage of food.
					Insensitivity to religious elements Increase in non-state armed groups (NSAG) Improvised explosive devices (IED)	VV	Diverse onslaughts from terrorists like BH, ISWAP Destruction of critical state infrastructure eg. economic, health and education systems.
				2010			
		Yobe	Long standing socio-economic deprivation and harsh environmental conditions Politics of 'do or die affairs' entrenched religiosity hence, insurgency similar to Borno	2000	Human rights violation had lasted in BAY states.	VV	Destruction of critical state infrastructure eg. economic, health and education systems.
				2010	Ditto of Borno	VV	Ditto of Borno
		Adamawa	Government neglect, Environmental		DITTO Borno	VV	Ditto Borno
					DITTO Borno		Ditto Borno

			degradation and other attributes of BAY states				
04	South-west	Lagos	Motorcyclist misdemeanor, NURTW-related urban violence	2020	Tax evasion, disregard to traffic rules. Deadly weapons caught on large number of immigrants, trucks and articulated vehicles from the north.	V	Public assaults, attack on police and their facilities, injury & death. Silent and mild annihilations. Increase in robbery attacks.
			End-SAARS and rampant police brutality. Incessant collapse of buildings due to Non solid ocean sand used for sand-filling of buildings.	1992 2020 2010	Corruption and government failure in quality control in construction sector. Get-rich-quick syndrome	V	Unprecedented deaths and injuries. Economic losses etc. Deaths record of youthful population. Insanity and death among youth
		Ogun	Influx of Fulani herders from other West African States causing mayhem, eg. Communal conflict Social vices among youth eg. Organ havesting		Sudden upsurge in crime rate especially around boundaries, report of missing motorbikes Ritual killings	M	Outcry resulting from Hausa,/Fulani communities. Miserable deaths caused in a bid to be rich.
					Ditto (Lagos)	V	Ditto Lagos
		Ondo	Kidnaping spree along highway, killing of victims if ransom is not paid on time.		Occupation of forest by herders of Fulani extraction	V	Thousand kidnap cases of kidnap, rape, maiming and other violence to farmers
					Influx of Fulani herders,	V	Ditto Lagos
		Enugu	Fallout of inherited conflict from Anambra eg. Umuleri-Aguleri communal conflict, Oruku	1995 - 1999	Unhealthy chieftaincy tussle, flinging of cutlass in the open etc.	V	Communal unrest leading to deaths and injuries

05	South-east			and Umuode Conflict background in Enugu		Burning of houses, excessive and unlawful force, and torture.	V	Countless cases of death of Nigerian Police personnel.
				MASOB repressive campaign for secession.	2020 - 2021 - 2023	Militancy, emergence of AK'47 assault rifles.		
				Influx of Fulani herders.			VV	Deaths, ransom taking, fear.
					2021			
		Abia		kidnapping activities and associated fatalities, including a high profile kidnapping of over a dozen schoolchildren from a bus.	2010	Rise of MASSOB and Bakasi Boys	V	Metamorphosis of existing militants to ESN
		Imo		Impasses from civil war. Hatred of Nigeria's federal arrangement.	1970	Rise of Masob and other splinter militant groups causing mayhem. Increased hostility	V	Violent attacks on NA, Police etc. Eastern Security Network in all eastern states causing fear and tension eg. 'curfew on every Monday' Economic hardship A number NA and Police were hacked to death via gun duel.
				Mismanagement of funds by successive government Ditto Enugu	2007	Autocratic leadership and non-payment of salary by the governor	M	Ditto Enugu
06	South-south	Edo		Low investment capital, predominantly agrarian state, Protracted politically-induced insecurity.	2003	Greed and Govt. insensitivity to welfare of the people.	V	High unemployment rate hence, increase in crime rate. Political assassinations.
				Muslim Fulani herdsmen Incursion from the north	2015	Minor hostility and kidnap reports. Farmers raped and maimed on farmlands.	V	Death, Injuries and annihilations.

	Rivers	Violence during election period, Controled territory and lucrative oil bunkering routes	2002	Utterances from political gladiators, Threats resulting from bunkering.	VV	State of chaos, fear, tension and death.
		Emergence of Armed Groups in Rivers state..	2019	Hostility and urban violence.		Hostage taking
		Agitation for resource control		Proliferation of small arms and light weapon.	V	Rise of militant groups e.g. IYC,NDPVF, NDV MEND etc.
	Cross River	Ditto Rivers		Ditto Rivers Stat	V	Ditto Rivers State

Volatility legend: *EV- Extremely volatile, VV- Very Volatile, V- Volatile, M- Mild*

Table 3.1 - Assessment of zones volatility and availability of EWS

The sample chosen for this study is six hundred. The author sampled one hundred respondents from each geopolitical zone of Nigerian polity and the table below shows indices and characteristics of early warning signs available as well as volatility rate of respective zones.

Zone	State A EWS		State B EWS		State C	EWS
North-west	92.4	90.2	72.9	70.5	71.0	69.0
North-central	87.2	80.0	82.8	74.5	78.1	77.1
North-east	78.0	70.6	76.9	74.6	70.5	53.7
South west	71.3	70.7	56.2	55.8	62.0	48.1
South-east	65.3	60.3	60.2	50.0	51.1	42.0
South-south	68.3	66.1	85.2	80.2	61.0	59.9
Percentage fragility						

Source- Author's survey by researcher, 2022

Volatility is the combination of exposure to risk, intensity of such risk and insufficient coping capacities of the state system and/or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks leading to fragility and vulnerability of affected state. According to wap.org.ng, Nigeria ranks 11th in Africa and 16th globally with 97.2 index of fragility and table 3.1 above shows characteristics fragility of three states from each geo-political-zone of Nigeria based on responses from respective zone. In the North west zone for instance, the overall highest, Kaduna state is extremely volatile with 92.4% volatility ratio with a corresponding 90.2% of unnoticed (henceforth-ignored) warning signs. Some parts of Kebbi state experienced extremely hot volatile conflict 72.9% in the past regimes and their early signs measured up to 70.5% whereas Zamfara state in same zone exhibits very volatile conflicts too with 71.0% and 69.0% warning signs.

In the north central zone, Benue came highest on extreme volatility scale with 87.2% and 80.0% ignored signs, Nasarawa state's volatility is next with 82.8% and 74.5% warning signs while Plateau is relatively lower, with volatility of 78.1% and a close corresponding warning signs of conflict, 77.1%

The BAY states of the north east are of equal volatility status though with spatial similarity in percentages. Borno came all high in the zone with 78.0% volatility and 70.6% warning signs are available though probably ignored. Adamawa followed with 76.9% volatility and 74.6% warning signs while Yobe exhibits 70.5% volatility and a lower 53.7% ignored warning signs of conflict. This portends a sporadic and unexpected type of conflict incidences in that state.

The south west conflict volatility trend is relatively lower than the north and an appreciable, almost matching early warning signs trail those conflicts. Lagos state exhibits 71.3% volatility ratio with 70.7% warning signs of those conflicts. Ogun state, which ranks lowest in the region, has mild volatility rate of 56.2% with 55.8% warning signs while Ondo has 62.0% volatility and a lowest warning signs ratio of 48.1% in that zone. This means that some insurgents attacks carried out on the border axis of the state has no clear indicator ahead of occurrences.

The south east zone is represented by Enugu, Abia and Imo states and their volatility is not as higher as that of the north too. Enugu has 65.3% of volatility with 60.3% warning signs, Abia has 60.2% volatility and 50.0% volatility with 51.1% warning signs while Imo is mild, having 51.1% volatility and all time low warning signs of 42.0%

The south south zone is more volatile than the south east. Edo has 68.3% volatility and 66.1% warning signs whereas Rivers has all time high of the zone with 85.2% volatility and warning sign of 80.2%. The lowest index of the zone is Cross river state with 61.0% volatility and 59.9% warning signs.

Figure 1.0 Pie chart showing degree of 'Early Warning Signs' of Conflict in Nigeria
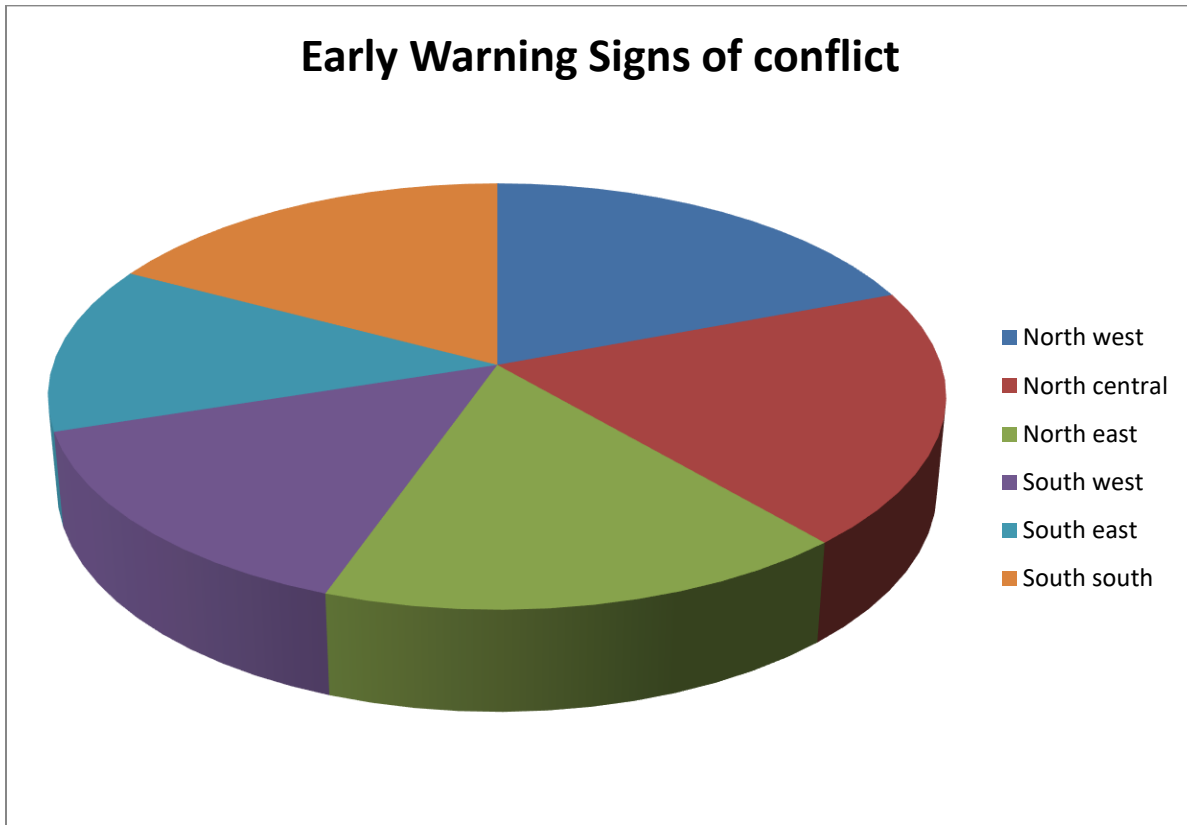
IV. Data Analysis, Discussion and Findings

Oluwatobi (2018, p.40) holds that "it is important to state that the Nigerian state fall

The respondents interviewed in table 4.0 above were classified by geopolitical zones and three states were strategically selected from each zone hence, eighteen states were selected for this study. Hereunder are the nature of their diverse conflicts, rate of volatility and especially perceived 'early warning signs'. It was discovered that average states in a zone possess common or similar types of conflict with slight variations and therefore their warning signs are generalized to all states in such zone.

> "...certainly, amalgamated Nigeria has failed to live up to its billing
>
> of proffering unity and strengthening every fabric of our co-existence.
>
> Instead, the bond further tears us apart by reinforcing a campaign of
>
> calumny on tribes   and   religious borders, especially in   the North

where more than 20,000 lives have been lost in the last decade between

Muslims and Christian residents". Aruleba (2017)

The above excerpt demonstrates the general research outcome of this study in the sense that the crises in the northwest was agreed to be ethno religious-centered as seen in Kaduna with introduction of sharia law in year 2000 which came with its attendant hitches with the Christian religion present in the state. The nature of conflict in Kaduna alone surpasses that of any state in Nigeria and the crises usually have ethno-religious coloration. The memory of Zangon kataf crises of 1997 still lingers and repeat itself frequently. For instance, another mayhem occurred on 15th April, 2023 in Runji village in Zangon kataf local government of Kaduna state where forty houses were burnt down and thirty three people were killed when a group of bandits struck at 10:25pm. Segregated housing pattern and perceived sentiment in state policy in terms of power sharing among ethno-religious groups are a major warning signs of conflict in the state which had been ignored for a long time. Kebbi and other states in that zone has been predominantly challenged by almajiri's vice and problem of violent immigrants from other west African nations. Importantly, ignored early warning signs of conflict here are issues arising from the fulani militia groups. They are believed to have polluted the population, proliferated arms, weapon and becoming kidnapping syndicate. Hausa vigilante groups therefore multiplied hence, tensed and militarized environment. Aggregated responses in this zone indicate that the pain and fatality in this region are unquantifiable. (Geneva Declaration: 2021).

The north central zone with exception of Kwara and Niger states which have lesser record of fatal ethno-religious crises had suffered immensely from increase in herders number, avalanche of ethno-linguistic and religious groups, boundary disputes, Skewed distribution of socio-economic resources along culturally and religiously divided groups, political crisis over 'indigene' rights and political representation in decision making organ of the state. Early warning signs in this zone are increasing decline in number of farmers, orchestrated marginalization and government insensitivity to the plight of the aborigines who are in the majority as well as proliferation of weapons. Others are well-organized armed groups in rural areas and weakened security apparatuses which all together causes armed conflict. "More than 13,500 people have been killed in communal violence since Nigeria returned to civilian rule in 1999 and The 'Middle Belt' region, to which Plateau State belongs, is one of the areas worst hit. The 2001 Jos riot alone claimed at least 1,000 lives" (HRW, 2010; 1) All the ignored warning signs had led to insecure and tensed society due to random killings, desertification, food shortage as a result of overnight attacks of agrarian communities, fear, rape, death and injuries.

The north east zone is characterized with diverse health challenges due to water shortage especially during dry season leading to epidemics. This predominantly marred social structure which was later compounded with government neglect, environmental degradation and need for water to tend the growing number of flocks of cattle in that region arising from the afore-mentioned influxes of other tribes of Fulani herders from other nations entering through our porous borders. Poor standard of living remains inevitable in this region. "The BAY states, Borno, Adamawa and Yobe, were not only some of the poorest states in the country prior to the conflict, but they also continue to bear the brunt of its effects," (UNDP Nigeria, 2015). This has frequently led to gruesome fights between the aborigines and migrants. Also in this zone, respondents are more assertive in terms of grounded insecure structure of the states in that region. They agreed, especially in Borno states, that politically induced thugs by the erstwhile governors had metamorphosed into religious extremist group called Boko Haram (henceforth-BH) Other states like Yobe, Gombe Adamawa etc. affirm issues arising from Politics of 'do or die affairs', entrenched religiosity hence, insurgency. These had also given room to tensions between ethnic groups rooted in the allocation of resources. The ignored warning signs in this zone are gross violations of human rights, government insensitivity to elements of religious extremism and militarization traits as well as youth restiveness. Others are Increase in non-state armed groups (NSAG) which is peculiar to BAY states and which gave birth to rampant production of Improvised explosive devices (IED) in that region.

The southwest region of Nigeria exhibits dynamic trend of conflict which is, though, low in intensity. The nature ranges from socio-cultural to economic and security ones littering among the states in the region. Major conflict background in this region does not surpass Ife-Modakeke crises of 1999-2000 in Osun State i.e the zone has been relatively peaceful compared to others except cult groups' demonstrations and uproars who invade people's shops in daylight, rape and maim, if attacked. Notable among them are 'One Million Boys' and 'local resurgence groups scattered around the zone. However, the majority of the respondents mentioned End-SAARS crises of 2020 as a landmark conflict with massive casualties. Also mentioned was incessant building collapse especially in Lagos due to nonsolid ocean sand used for sand-filling and erecting some buildings as well as periodic politically induced urban violence from National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) which cost the region many lives and properties .Other latest conflict discovered in all states in this zone are motorcyclist misdemeanor due to massive immigrants from the north during the 2020 'locked down' of the Covid Era and ritual killings for get-rich-quick syndrome. Meanwhile, there are basic warning signs in this regards too which predominantly have been ignored long before now. Part of these are stock-pilled deadly weapons caught on large number of trucks and articulated vehicles from the north under the cover of night in most cases. Tax evasion by okada riders of northern extraction and complete disregard to traffic rules. Other early warnings are government' incapacitation in quality control in real estate, sharp upsurge in crime rate for example missing motorbikes, stabbing reports by commercial

motorcycle riders at border areas, ritual killings by 'yahoo-yahoo' boys and other vices like organ harvesting regime. (The Guaidian Nigeria, 1, July, 2022)

For south east geopolitical zone, most conflicts are a fallout of inherited conflict either of the civil war of 1967-1970 or of Anambra state-centered Umuleri-Aguleri 1995-1999 communal conflict, Oruku and Umuode 1994 Conflict background in Enugu. However, kidnapping activities and associated fatalities including a high profile kidnapping of over a dozen school children from a bus in 2010 are part of the responses from the respondents as previous conflicts. The current crises being faced by people in this region are MASOB repressive campaign for secession resulting in aligning with the newly developed Eastern Security Network (ESN) as discussed above. Significant warning signs of conflict in this zone are; non-payment of salaries and emoluments by some region's governors, long time hatred of Nigeria's federal arrangement, brandishing cutlasses and other metal weapons like AK'47 assault riffles in day light, rise of MASOB, BAKASI Boys and other splinter militant and cult groups which should have been repelled. Meanwhile, majority of the respondents also affirm that continuous influx of Fulani herdsmen from the northern part of the country and their attendant violence, to a large extent, form part of early warning signs of the current conflicts which many of them said could have been averted.

From the data gathered, the nature of conflict in south-south part of Nigeria tilts more towards economic indices. The area suffers economic deprivation, marginalization and social exclusion as seen in Rivers states and other oil-rich states selected as samples for the study. It was discovered that majority of states in this region suffer social exclusion from government at the centre over time which account for socio-infrastructural neglect and decay leading to outcry by 'Movement for Emancipation of Niger-Delta (MEND) at the inception of twentieth century and later, 'Egbesu Boys' and Independent People of Biafra (IPOB). Secondly, most states here being agrarian, predominantly are either not giving at all or giving low commercial and agricultural incentives to their people yet no visible investment capital in-spite of being one of the food basket regions of the federation hence, lucrative oil bunkering enterprise which results in unquantifiable conflicts and its attendant killings. The United State Institute of Peace (2005) observes that the Niger Delta, an area of dense mangrove rainforest in the southern tip of Nigeria, comprises nine of Nigeria's thirty-six states:Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo, and Rivers. The region's oil accounts for approximately 90 percent of the value of Nigeria's exports, but the Niger Delta remains one of Nigeria's least developed regions. The Niger Delta is the hub of oil and gas activities in Nigeria and the nerve centre of the Nation's economy. The suffering of Nigerians in these states scaled up during 2015-2021 when most states in the southern part could no longer control their territories from herdsmen invasion and emergence of Armed Groups especially in Rivers state. Most noticeable warning signs here; agitation for resource control, urban violence, protracted politically-induced insecurity, greed, government insensitivity to the plight of common man as well as medium scale hostility and kidnap cases. Others are presence of surplus arms, ammunitions in the hands of wrong people and threats resulting from bunkering. As a result, people in this region had formed a military operation team of their self called 'Eastern Security Network' (ESN)

Building Institutional Early Warning System Model of Conflict Prevention in Nigeria

A model is defined as an abstract representation of a real system. A model can be used to investigate the effects of proposed system changes without modifying the real system. (Marzolla, 2004). Thus, early warning modeling can be used to study an existing conflict or brewing ones under various scenarios without modifying it, or for planning the construction of conflict prevention system far before the occurrence of such conflict. A model would be designed and applied here (see figure 4.0) to study security systems comprising Early Warning Stage of conflicts before they escalate as well as scenarios of resolving them if they accidentally escalate (Conflict Resolution).

Building an institutional model of early warning to conflict requires a systematic approach that involves the identification of potential sources of conflict, the development of appropriate monitoring and analysis mechanisms and the establishment of effective response mechanisms.

Attempt was made to categorize the model into two salient headings; the Institutional System Monitor of conflict situation as well as the conflict early warning dynamics. Arulogun (2019)

A.   We need to first identify conflict-related Institutional System Monitor. Arising from the field trip for this study, the researcher unraveled the Institutional System Monitors without whom no Model of Conflict can be effective in any democratic setting. The diagram below therefore buttresses four main monitors of either conflict management or conflict early warning system.

Figure 2.0   Institutional System Monitor (Nigerian conflict situation applied)
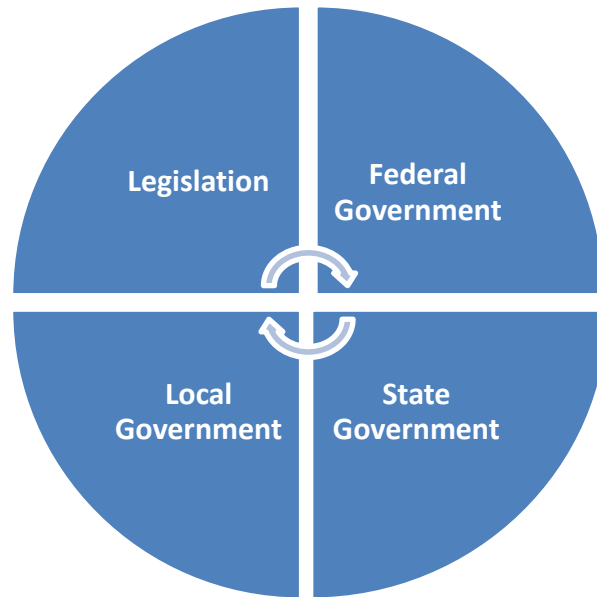
Source- Field survey by Author, 2022

All the four 'monitors' are equally important at any stage of conflict progression in the society.

 i. **Legislation**; It all starts from law making. There should be adequate legislation that covers all idiosyncrasies of people within the polity regardless of religious and ethnic affiliations. The parliament making these laws must be seen to be fair and just in making the extant laws for the land.

 ii. **Federal Government**; Rule of law must be upheld at all times most especially in security matters. The Federal Government must be seen to be active in adjudication and implementation of laws made by the parliaments and must enforce them through all paraphernalia of government and its security agents i.e The Nigerian Police, Nigerian Army, National Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC), Nigerian Air-force, Nigerian Navy, Nigerian Custom Service, Nigerian Correctional Service etc. There should also be proactive judiciary in whose domain litigations should not drag for too long and justice should not be denied.

 iii. **The State Governments** ; These, on their own must enforce all extant laws at the instance of the   state. All citizens in the state must be seen to be catered for in any policies of the State especially those bothering on security.

 iv. **The Local Governments**; The whole bulk stops at the local government level. The local   community dwellers are the most vulnerable and therefore are the most important to monitor in this model if the whole country will be violence-free. It is unarguable that everyone in the country lives in a local government hence, local communities should be under close watch or monitoring in order to nip any brewing conflict in the bud.

B. The second category is the early warning dynamics of conflict. The following are the key components of   an effective institutional model for early warning of conflict in the polity:

Stakeholder Analysis: The Nigerian Government's first step is to identify key stakeholders of conflict in the country including government agencies, civil society organizations, and local communities. It is essential to understand their interests, power dynamics, and potential roles in the conflict situation.

Risk Assessment: We may need to conduct a comprehensive risk assessment to identify potential sources of conflict, including ethno-political, socio-economical, religious and environmental factors.

Early Warning Indicators: We need to develop a set of early warning indicators that can help identify and track potential conflicts at the brewing stage. These indicators may include social and economic indicators, such as unemployment rates, social exclusion or marginalization, income inequality, and ethnic tensions, as well as political indicators, such as election results, insensitivity in public policies and the state of civil liberties.

Monitoring and Analysis: The above mentioned security stakeholders should endeavor to establish mechanisms for monitoring and analyzing data on the early warning indicators. This may involve the use of technology, such as social media monitoring tools and data analytics software, as well as field-based pilot studies, research and interviews.

Response Mechanisms: We must make conscious attempt at developing effective response mechanisms to address potential conflicts. This may involve working with local communities to promote dialogue and conflict resolution strategies, providing targeted support to vulnerable groups, and engaging in preventive diplomacy.
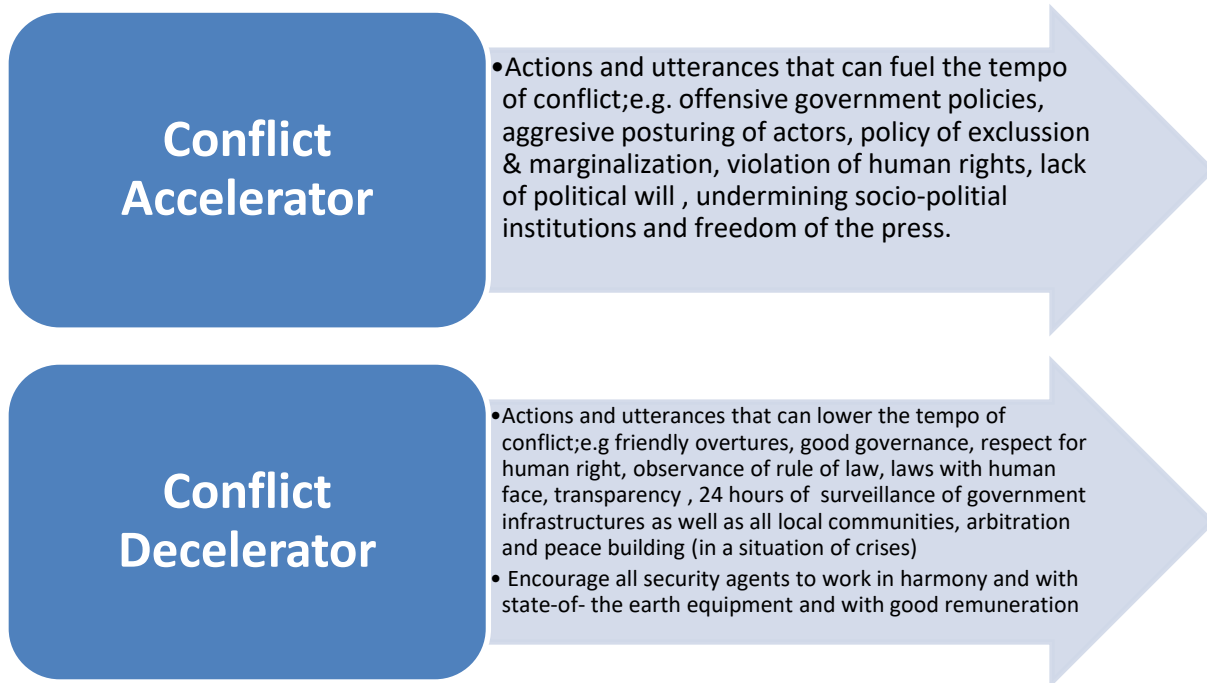
Coordination and Collaboration: Also, we must establish effective coordination and collaboration mechanisms among security stakeholders to ensure that the early warning system is responsive and effective. This may involve regular PCRC meetings and communication channels, joint planning and decision-making, and the sharing of information and resources.

Evaluation and Continuous Improvement: The stakeholders must regularly evaluate the early warning system to assess its effectiveness and identify opportunities for improvement. This may involve conducting surveys and focus groups, analyzing trends and patterns in conflict data, and incorporating feedback from the populace.

Above all, building an institutional model of early warning to conflict requires a multi-dimensional approach that is grounded in a deep understanding of the local context and stakeholders. It also requires a commitment to continuous learning and improvement to ensure that the system remains effective over time.

As posited by Abolurin (2011), the best way to nip violence in the bud in community security architecture and to continually maintain it is to form synergy between the two categories highlighted above in such a manner as to embrace the following design;

Figure 3.0   Conflict Decelerator Model

Conflict Accelerator

•Actions and utterances that can fuel the tempo of conflict;e.g. offensive government policies, aggresive posturing of actors, policy of exclusion & marginalization, violation of human rights, lack of political will , undermining socio-politial institutions and freedom of the press.

Conflict Decelerator

•Actions and utterances that can lower the tempo of conflict;e.g friendly overtures, good governance, respect for human right, observance of rule of law, laws with human face, transparency , 24 hours of surveillance of government infrastructures as well as all local communities, arbitration and peace building (in a situation of crises)
• Encourage all security agents to work in harmony and with state-of- the earth equipment and with good remuneration

Source: Author's field work, 2022

The above diagram is a simple conflict analytical structure combining the recipe of both accelerator and decelerator of conflict in Nigeria's system. Decelerating factors however involves enabling laws, responsibly active government, good and timely policies, security funding as well as patriotic citizens. It also makes it clear that there is need for a synergy among all security operatives to nip any uprising in the bud before it gets accelerated and this is the center point of 'early warning signs' of conflict.

Gross Conflict Timelines in Nigeria

There are chronological factors of conflict buildups in Nigeria which serve as time-awaited negative conflict events but not tracked and nipped. In some respects, one leads to the other and they are interwoven. The following are discovered from this study to be perennial timelines of conflict which we pay little or no attention to;

Social Decadence; This refers to the decline or decay of social norms, values, and morals in the Nigerian society, leading to negative consequences. In Nigeria's case, it refers to the erosion of traditional values and the rise of corruption, crime, and societal inequalities, leading to various social, economic, and political challenges cum conflict. Use of drugs and narcotics is now rampant among youth that on almost every street in the urban centres you would see them in droves with different sachets of alcoholics and chemical substances. Sniffing and smoking hemps, marijuana and other stuffs is a common sight these days. All these have their associated negative effect on societal conflict aside from the fact that these teaming youth live on streets and are willingly ready for inordinate actions like drug abuse, rape, political hooliganism, violence and other vices, hence, we all live in unsafe society. This is sorely responsible for inhumanity against humans. For instance, Muanya, C. (2022: 2). is sore hurt by human trafficking, organ harvesting and sales of human parts in many parts of Nigeria.

Ethnicity and tribalism; Sanni O. (2021).posits that Nigeria is a very ethnically diverse country with 371 ethnic groups. These are major issues in the country. The three largest ethnic groups are the Hausa-Fulani in the north, the Yoruba in the southwest, and the Igbo in the southeast. On the other hand, tribalism refers to the excessive attachment or loyalty to one's own ethnic group, often resulting in discrimination against members of other ethnic groups and this is prevalent in Nigeria. This has been a significant problem in Nigeria, with some ethnic groups feeling marginalized and discriminated against in political, economic, and social spheres. Ethnic tensions and conflicts have been a major challenge to Nigeria's unity and development. There have been several instances of violent clashes between different ethnic groups in various parts of the country, leading to loss of lives and destruction of property. The government has tried to address the issue of ethnic tensions and tribalism through various policies, such as promoting national unity and integration, creating a sense of national identity, national integration and encouraging inter-ethnic marriages and cultural exchanges.

Unequal Development Pattern; This refers to the uneven distribution of social resources cum economic growth and opportunities among communities, regions, countries and nations of the world. In Nigeria's experiences it encompasses significant regional disparities in standard of living and economic development, with the southern regions generally more prosperous than the north perhaps through the oil explorations in oil-rich states of the south, though the oil discovery has been of more woes than good. Noticeable also is the government policies favoring one above the others or a particular tribe being a sacred cow. This seamlessly causes a lot of strife and killings in the country.

Politics and Religion; Politics in Nigeria has had a significant impact on the country's development, with corruption, ethnic and religious tensions, and weak governance contributing to economic underperformance and social instability. Government and people alike politicize economic distribution and other livelihood variables. This contributes to government failure rate and conflict among the governed. For instance, politicians sell employment slots to people at ward level instead of generalizing job opportunities to enhance healthy competition among job seekers. Meanwhile, religion has a significant impact on Nigeria, with the country being roughly evenly divided between Islam and Christianity. Religious tensions have fueled numerous conflicts and violence in some parts of the country which is still a reason for numberless deaths in states like Kaduna, Plateau and Sokoto (memory of Deborah Yakubu on 12th May, 2022 still lingers) but religion also provides a sense of community and identity for many Nigerians.

Media and Hate speech; Though the media has a big role to play in averting or sponsoring conflict in any society, Nigeria's experience has demonstrated a mix of this functions especially the online News platforms with no statutory gatekeepers. This has caused a gap for hate speech in the country as gathered by the author. Hate speech has played a significant role in exacerbating the conflicts in Nigeria, particularly those based on ethnic and religious differences. In recent years, Nigeria has experienced a rise in hate speech, particularly on social media platforms, which has fueled tensions between different groups and contributed to violent clashes. One of the most significant examples of the impact of hate speech in Nigeria is the conflict between Fulani herdsmen and farmers in different parts of the country. This conflict, which has resulted in thousands of deaths and displacement of communities, has been fueled by hate speech and misinformation, with some individuals and groups using inflammatory languages to demonize and dehumanize the other side. Similarly, the conflict between the Nigerian government and separatist groups in the southeast region of the country has also been exacerbated by hate speech. The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), a separatist group seeking the creation of an independent state of Biafra, has been accused of using hate speech to incite violence and spread anti-government sentiment. (Wodu, N.2022).

The impact of hate speech in Nigeria cannot be overstated. It has led to the loss of lives and property, contributed to the breakdown of trust and social cohesion, and hindered efforts to promote peaceful coexistence between different groups.

Immigration issues; The impact of immigration on Nigerian conflict is a complex issue with various factors at play. Immigration can refer to both internal migration within Nigeria and international migration into Nigeria. One way immigration has impacted Nigerian conflict has been through competition over resources. For example, if immigrants are moving into areas where resources are scarce, such as water or land, they tend to struggle for insufficient resources too and this, more often, leads to conflict between the existing community and the immigrants. This competition can be exacerbated if the immigrants are perceived as receiving preferential treatment from the government or other institutions. For instance, the government of Gen. Muhammadu Buhari (Rtd) made a proclamation in 2019 welcoming all Fulani descents of North Africans into Nigeria on visa-on arrival policy. Issues around immigration had led to cultural tensions and clashes in Nigerian state. When people from different ethnic or religious backgrounds come together, there may be misunderstandings and conflicts over cultural practices, beliefs, and values. This can be especially true in Nigeria, where there are over 370 ethnic groups and multiple religions. (Sherif, 2023).

Additionally, immigration can exacerbate existing political and economic tensions in Nigeria. If immigrants are seen as taking away jobs from locals or benefiting from corrupt practices, this can further fuel resentment and mistrust. It has also lead to political tensions where immigrants are perceived as influencing political decisions or having an unfair advantage in the political process. Similar cases like this were discovered by the author to have ravaged the North-east and the North-central regions of the country.

Dearth of Implementation ordering in Building and Road construction; This is a significant issue that affects the quality of construction projects and contributes to a range of negative outcomes. One of the main reasons for this problem is the lack of effective regulatory frameworks and enforcement mechanisms that can ensure compliance with building codes and standards. Another factor is the prevalence of corruption and fraudulent practices in the construction industry, which often leads to substandard construction and the use of low-quality materials. Additionally, there is a lack of skilled workers and professionals in the construction sector, which can further contribute to the problem of implementation ordering. The consequences of the lack of implementation ordering in building and road construction in Nigeria are significant. It has led to the failure of structures and the loss of lives and properties, as well as increased costs for repairs and maintenance. It can also have a negative impact on the overall development of the country by reducing the quality of infrastructure and limiting economic growth and opportunities.

Figure 4.0 Combined Institutional Multi-Track Model of Early Warning System of Conflict   (CIMTEWSC)
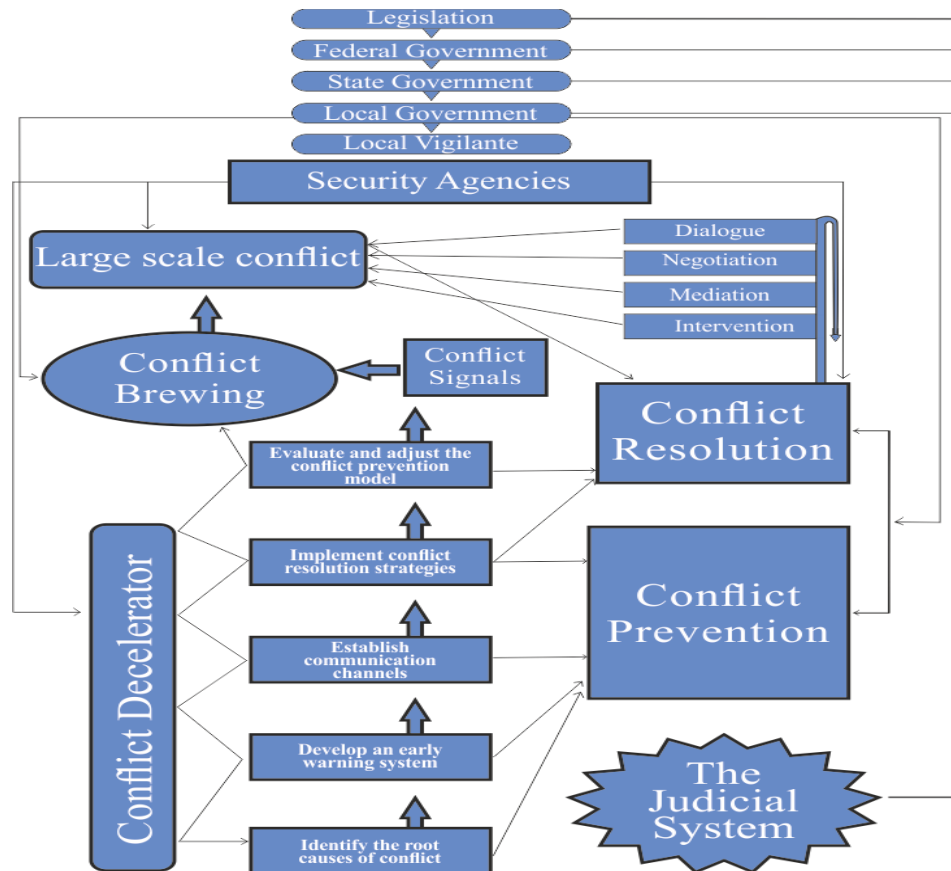
Source: Author's field work, 2023

The above is constructed as a multi-track simulation (CIMTEWSC) from the available literatures and development scholars' submissions which centre on supremacy of the law, regard for human right and life, equitable justice system and respect for human dignity. Therefore, for any model of conflict prevention to achieve its purpose, there should be good legislation in the country which must be respected and allowed to operate above everyone. The three tiers of government in Nigeria (Federal, State and Local) should be operated only by the dictates of law and must be seen to allow the judicial system to function without any interference. All the security agencies should synergize and must be fully equipped and trained to be on red alert to conflict brewing stage (before acceleration), to conflict resolution, if the prevention mechanisms fail to achieve their objectives. The elements built into the model are interdependent but inextricably linked. Using local knowledge by the vigilante groups to tame intended crime in the community is crucial for early warning and response to be successful at the local level. The synergy among the security operatives in Nigeria are expected to be within; The Nigerian Police Force (NPF), State Security Service (SSS), The Nigerian Armed Forces comprising of Nigerian Army, Nigerian Navy and Nigerian Air force. Others are; National Intelligence Agency (NIA), Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Nigeria Security & Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC), Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), Nigerian Custom Service, Nigerian Correctional Service and all Private Security Agencies (Guards).

However, the followings are the conflict signals depicted in the model which are simultaneously the decelerators to any conflict situations;

- Always identify the root cause of conflict so as to avoid such in the future. This is a time-bound action in early warning system and it requires intelligence gathering, modern surveillance equipment and community relation strategies.
- Developing an early warning system of conflict is a task that must be carried out by the governments at all levels because diverse nature and intensity of conflict illuminate over time that a particular tier or level had either compromised or ignored the warning signs of such crises. This system must be built into each tier's apparatus of operations for conflict signals to be timely eliminated.
- The communication channels between and among people and government as well as the security operatives respectively should be made open. For instance, people must not withhold information from the police and the police as well as the other security agents should establish a joint 'Electronic Security Information Portal' (ESIP) to facilitate networking process in securing the state especially for long time achievement of securitization agenda. Hence, slogans like '…if you see something, say something' must be encouraged in Nigerian polity.
- Implementing conflict resolution strategies must then follow this chain of process. The principles of conflict resolution strategies like; 'dialogue, negotiation, mediation and intervention' must be followed to letters during conflict progression.
- Evaluating and adjusting conflict prevention model is sometimes necessary for the system to accommodate newly discovered overtures, trends, events and other conflict seeds that may escalate in the future.

All the above mentioned decelerators (early warning signs) are overriding factors mitigating conflict not to degenerate into large scale from brewing stage.

V. Conclusion and Recommendation

It is established by this study that it is better and more economical to prevent conflict than to resolve it after it has accelerated. Conflict prevention is germane in conflict studies and more sensible than its resolution as this cost more funds and lives. The diversified explanation of the model above involves identifying and mitigating the root causes of conflicts before they escalate or accelerate. Therefore, African nations, importantly Nigeria are advised to employ the above as basic Institutional model for conflict prevention and management by monitoring 'Early Warning Signs of conflict. Thus, they must;

i. **Identifying the root causes of conflicts**: The first step in conflict prevention is to identify the underlying causes of conflict. This could involve analyzing historical data on conflicts, conducting surveys, and interviewing key stakeholders. It is important to identify both the visible and hidden causes of conflicts.

ii. **Developing an early warning system**: Once the root causes of conflict have been identified, an early warning system should be put in place to monitor potential conflicts. This could involve setting up a team to track social, economic, and political indicators that may suggest a potential conflict. The team could use data analytics and machine learning techniques to identify patterns and predict future conflicts.

iii. **Establishing communication channels**: Effective communication is crucial in conflict prevention. Establishing communication channels between different stakeholders can help to build trust and prevent misunderstandings that may lead to conflicts. Communication channels could be in the form of regular meetings, email updates, and social media platforms.

iv. **Implementing conflict resolution strategies**: Conflict resolution strategies should be put in place to address conflicts as soon as they are identified. These could include mediation, negotiation, and arbitration. It is important to have trained mediators and negotiators who can work with different parties to find mutually acceptable solutions.

v. **Evaluating and adjusting the conflict prevention model**: The conflict prevention model should be evaluated regularly to determine its effectiveness. This could involve analyzing data on conflict prevention efforts, gathering feedback from stakeholders, and making adjustments as necessary.

vi. **Monitoring the media outlets and hate speech:** To address this issue, it is important for individuals, community leaders, civil society organizations, and the government to work together to promote respect for diversity and tolerance, and to combat hate speech in all its forms. This includes developing and enforcing laws and policies that criminalize hate speech, promoting media literacy and responsible journalism, and investing in education and awareness-raising initiatives to promote inclusivity and respect for human rights.

vii. **Ethnic-politics on immigration**: Nigeria government needs to braze up and stop playing ethnicity on immigration matters as this has impacted Nigerian conflict. It is important for policymakers to consider these factors and address them proactively to mitigate the potential negative impacts of immigration on conflict in Nigeria.

viii. **Safeguarding indiscriminate building collapse**: There is an urgent need for government as well as the professional bodies in the construction and real estate sector to coalesce especially in the south west of Nigeria, where we mostly have skyscrapers, for instance, Lagos, Ibadan etc. It is important to implement effective regulatory frameworks and enforcement mechanisms that can ensure compliance with building codes, standards and international best practice. This can involve the establishment of independent regulatory bodies and the implementation of effective monitoring and inspection mechanisms. Also, it is important to invest in the training and development of skilled professionals in the construction industry, as well as the promotion of ethical and transparent business practices. Additionally, there should be greater public awareness and education about the importance of implementation ordering in construction projects and the potential risks associated with substandard construction.

ix. **Decelerating ethnicity and tribalism**: More needs to be done to address the root causes of tribalism and promote peaceful coexistence between different ethnic groups in Nigeria. This includes addressing issues of marginalization and promoting inclusive policies that ensure equal access to opportunities and resources for all ethnic groups in the country.

Overall, conflict prevention requires a systematic approach that involves identifying the root causes of conflicts, developing an early warning system, establishing communication channels, implementing conflict resolution strategies, and evaluating and adjusting the model as may be necessary.

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