**ROOT CAUSES OF CONFLICT IN NIGERIA**

Conflict is inevitable and it exists alongside human beings. Every society has its own peculiar causes and nature of conflict which differ from one society to another. In Nigeria today, there are many causes of conflict but these are some of the root causes of violent conflict.

**Indigenes versus Settler Conflicts**: The manifestation of indigenes versus settler’s crisis in recent times is the question of land ownership and the right of occupancy generated by unprecedented migration of people from one place to the other due to ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors. The push factor is as a result of socioeconomic situations that compel people to move, such as war, famine, diseases and other disasters. While the pull factors are those related to economic opportunities such as employment, trade etc.

**Farmers versus Pastoralists**: Conflicts between farmers and pastoralists is one of the root causes of conflict in Nigeria, predominantly in the north eastern region of the country where there is large concentration of cattle and herdsmen. According to Hagher, (2003) the nomads constantly traverse the nation in search of pasture for their cattle and are willing to sacrifice their own lives in defence of their herds. So too are the farmer’s attitude to protecting their crops. The increasing violent overflow of brutal wars between nomads and farmers according to him can be attributed to state collapse, injustice etc.

**Minorities versus Majorities** **Domination:** Some ethnic groups feel dominated and marginalised by other ethnic groups. Domination in this context, according to Okafor, et-al (1997) refers to the superior and advantageous position occupied by some ethnic groups to the detriment of other ethnic groups who are deprived of or discriminated against in the distribution of national wealth, offices, resources, opportunities and sharing of political power. Some ethnic groups have long lamented their relegated position in the affairs of Nigeria. These ethnic minorities feel cheated, neglected and marginalised by the government in collusion with the larger ethnic groups.

**Religious Domination**: Some politicians use religion to generate conflict for their own selfish gains. Over the years there has been an incessant clash between two most dominant religions of Islam and Christianity. Where Muslims are dominant Christians suffer and vice versa. This can be attributed to religious intolerance among both religions.

**Power Struggle**: The proliferation of political associations provided an opportunity for promoting and protecting parochial interest rather than the purpose to which these associations were established.

**Conclusion**: The root causes of conflict and violence in Nigeria are numerous but the above causes are the major ones. Many researchers in Nigeria have indicated that factors such as poverty, underdevelopment, and redundancy are some of the remote causes of violence.