
Survival Strategies of Market Women and Violent Conflicts in Jos, Nigeria

Lohna Bonkat, University of Bayreuth

Abstract: *Jos, the capital city of Plateau State, Nigeria, have over the past one decade been subjected to internecine violent conflicts. The causes had range from mutual communal, ethnic to religious mistrust. Efforts have been made to halt the senseless violent disturbances to no avail. The conflict situation by any measure can best be described an active conflict, considering the abrupt and rampant nature of how the conflict most times occur. Women, in most conflict situations remain a vulnerable social category. Women engage themselves a lot in petty trading and marketing. They sell vegetables, fruits and also participate in wide range of other commercial activities in most markets that pervade Jos city. Centrally, the paper seeks to examine and analyze the various strategies and initiatives these market women employ to survive and make a living in their respective chosen businesses given the conflict prone nature of the environment within which they conduct their business activities. The paper depended on interviews and Focus Group Discussions carried out in 2012 and 2013 part of PhD research. The paper concludes that the strategies and initiatives employed by small-scale women entrepreneurs in Jos during violence has kept them safe and ensured their livelihoods especially for women who have assumed new roles of household heads. It further made suggestions to government and the general public on how to mitigate the intractable violent encounters in Jos in order to further promote women participation in commercial activities without unnecessarily resorting to stressful and risky survival strategies.*

Keywords: *Market Women, violent conflicts, survival strategy and conflict mitigation.*

1. Introduction

Nigeria has been confronted with numerous conflicts that have inflicted monumental damage on the economy, politics and peaceful co-existence amongst groups (Sha:2005:4). Paradoxically, increased conflict is often a byproduct of the democratization process, most especially in developing countries where there are numerous people and interests competing for scarce resources. Plateau state is one of the major theatres

that have experienced violence which has increased in intensity and frequency from 2001 to 2010. Although the first significant outbreak of violence occurred in 1994 it was summarily quelled by military intervention and concession to local demands (Para-Malam: 2011). However, immediately democracy returned in 1999, Plateau State has had major outbreaks of violence in 2001, 2004, 2008 and 2010. This constant reoccurrence of violence has had negative impact on the people ranging from, destruction of lives and properties, livelihoods, created hate and mistrust among citizens of Jos, as well as the partitioning of the city along religious lines. Even though, peace is returning to Jos it still remains in a condition of pervading and volatile tension.

2. Literature Review

Most studies on the conflict in Jos have tried to explain the dynamics and causes of the conflict in Jos from an ethno-religious context; however, there are literatures that see the Jos conflict as a fall out of elitist political rivalries (Danfulani and Fwatshak: 2002). The focus of other works have looked at the macro level, that is looking at the nature, causes and general impact of the on the people. In his study “Can we meet at the Market Tomorrow? Commerce, Authority, and Economic Power Relations after Violent Conflicts in Jos, Nigeria” (Mang ; 2012) . He focused on power relations in markets after violent conflicts in Jos. Porter et al: 2003 study explored changing socio-environmental interactions in the vegetable producing areas of the Jos, Plateau over the decade 1991-2001. No study has been carried out focusing on women with a particular focus on market women and how they survived and their livelihoods strategies in Jos, which is a micro study looking at the impact of the violence on every day livelihoods (livelihoods in the context of my study focuses on the living conditions of women before and during the violence).

Understanding Plateau State, Jos Environment and the violence

Plateau State derived its name from the geographical feature that dominates the state. Its terrain is mostly rocky, treeless with many beautiful rock formations. It is commonly referred to as the Jos-Plateau. It covers nearly 26,809 square meters in land mass, with a projected population 3,178,712(2006 census projection) and is said to possess the most conspicuous feature in the federation, it has been likened to a tourist haven being richly endowed with scenic beauty (Bagudu 2004). It was called the home of peace and tourism, until the recent spate of conflicts in the last 10 years.

Jos is also an old mining town. During the colonial era, mining camps were established using a set of military campaigns to subdue the hostile local populations. By the middle of 1905 an administrative section was opened in Bukuru, on the road between Keffi and the tin mines in Naraguta, and by the end of December 1942, 14,880 permanent employees and voluntary laborers from various regions adjacent to the Plateau Province were absorbed in the eighty-five European companies operating mines at different places on the Jos Plateau, (Bukuru, Dilimi, Gurum, Warrang, Barkin Ladi, Ropp, Rayfield, Federe) (Gwamna and Kudu : 2010). Similarly, in the early 1940s, the colonial state recruited through forced labour workers from Bauchi, Benue, Borno, Kano, Katsina, Niger, Plateau, Sokoto and Zaria provinces (Sha 2005:37). The Hausa and Fulani alongside other ethnic groups in the country must have migrated to Jos to work in the mines or are a part of the forced labor recruited by colonialist. During that time, the residents lived in peace with both the indigenes and one another up till the founding of Jos as an urban centre in the early part of the 20th century, when issues of political power, leadership and ownership of Jos began to rear its head.

These contestations might not be unrelated to the temperate climate of the state, which makes it one of the coldest in Nigeria, and whose land is very fertile for agricultural purposes and its scenic beauty has contributed to its status as a minor tourist attraction within Nigeria. Plotnicov describes Jos as one of the healthiest places in West Africa (Plotnicov; 1967: 30-31). Lord Frederick D. Lugard, the first Governor of Nigeria, even considered establishing a health and rest station there for Europeans. The story has not changed, and today, church missions and foreign commercial firms maintain rest houses in and around Jos for their staff members on local leave, and before the rise of local violence since the 1990s, European expatriates stationed elsewhere in Nigeria would often visit Jos to spend a holiday at the Miango Rest Home and other places alike.

The West African headquarters of several missionary societies, are still located in Jos. Plateau State is the home to the headquarters of major religious organizations from both Christian and Islamic constituencies (Best; 2001:63-81). In particular, Jos has been home to the headquarters of many of the Christian missions (Gwamna; 2010:32-33) which dominated Nigeria in the colonial era. In recent times, newer Christian organizations have also preferred Jos as headquarter (Best; 2008). This has always attracted residents from the different parts of the country and from other parts of the world, and this has continued to contribute to the population growth of Jos. Some of those who came also married from the

state and have continued to live in Jos since then. Furthermore, Jos is also a home to a growing Islamic presence and activity, and it hosts the National headquarters of the Jama'atu Izalatu Bidiyah Ikamatu Sunna (JIBWIS) and the Jama 'atu Nasul Islam (JNI). Jos has therefore attracted attention to itself from diverse religious groups (Gwamna;2010:32-33). This partly explains the strong interest for the control of Jos by members of these faiths.

It is also the capital city of plateau state which is cosmopolitan with residents drawn from the different parts of the country, and from other parts of the world. The residents have also lived in peace with both the indigene (a term at the center of identity not only in Jos, but everywhere else in Nigeria, and has been a major cause of conflict), and with one another since the founding of Jos as an urban center in the early part of the 20th century (Best; 2007). Because of the cosmopolitan nature of Jos with people drawn from different places, they carry along religious tags to gain acceptability as soon as they arrive.

The situation from the 90s has been a running contest over "ownership" of Jos among the Berom, the Afizere and the Anaguta. However, the contest is more intense between the Berom and the Afizere. After the creation of Jos North Local Government in 1991, the Anaguta became a visible key party to this conflict. There has also been the agitation by the Hausa community for access to political statuses, traditional rulership, and indigeneship of Jos. The agitation by the Hausa community has been strongly resisted by the Berom, the Anaguta and the Afizere communities. The conflict became structured following the creation of Jos North Local Government in 1991, which was not acceptable to the Berom, the Anaguta and the Afizere communities. Given this history, these communities became suspicious of any future political events. Therefore, "all elections and appointments since 1991 have been accompanied with higher levels of competition, tension and potential conflict from 1994 to 2010, thus the state became a tourist and citizens nightmare"(Fwatshak; 2007).

Since 1994, Jos has become one of the conflicts states in the Middle-Belt or North-central Region, with the occurrences of conflicts simultaneously every year and of recent at intervals of months and sometimes no day passes by without reports of violent attacks in one community or the other. In 1997, 2001, 2004, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 conflicts assumed ethnic and religious dimensions, this is because the boundary between ethnicity and religion has become thin and it can easily be said to have disappeared. Moreover "The natives are largely Christians

with few traditionalists, while the Hausa and Fulani are Muslims and these ethnic groups have appealed to religion as a mobilizing force and even manipulated it to suit their ethnic projects”(Sha; 2007).

In January 2010, hundreds of people were killed in sectarian clashes in and around Jos, including a massacre on January 19, 11 of more than 150 Muslims in the nearby town of Kuru Karama. On March 7, at least 200 Christians were massacred in Dogo Nahawa and several nearby villages. All you could see after the massacre is mostly women and children crying helplessly for their loved ones. A few of the men who survived the massacre were those who perhaps went on vigilante or escaped during the attack.

The violent conflicts that have occurred in Jos over the past ten years had devastating effects on men, women and children. This argues that conflict affects men and women differently, therefore, I will focus on the effects of conflict in Jos on women, their experiences, and roles and how they have survived despite the violent nature of the conflict.

Impact of Conflict on Women

Women play roles in conflict and are also affected by conflicts whether violent or non-violent. Violent conflict can be seen as a phenomenon that comes with loss of lives, destruction, forced migration, humanitarian crises and long-lasting socio-economic impacts. Similarly, the impact of conflicts is noticed easily because it does not end in loss and theft of property, but it has also affected family structure, particularly with the loss of husbands (bread winners), internal displacement (which has psychological impact).

The recurrent conflicts in Jos have left a lot of impact on the society and on women in particular. While, conflicts inflict suffering on everyone, women are particularly affected by its short and long term effects. For example apart from their properties being destroyed, they pass through emotional trauma, they become household heads, because of either the death of their spouse or being caught up in the fighting and are not able to provide for their families, instead of the traditional role of care-giving. More women are at the receiving end than the men. This therefore goes to suggest that, the experience of women and men in conflict differs.

I have observed that the impact of the conflicts have reduced visibility of women in markets where their petty trading normally takes place (This is most visible in Dilimi, Bukuru, Farin-gada, Gangare and Yan Doya

markets in Jos). As a result, women are now venturing into so many other activities that otherwise was referred to as the business of men; some have become unprepared bread winners and widows with its attendant consequences. Part from women affected their sons have been forcefully recruited into militias, while daughters were raped, given to early marriage or dropped out of school due to the poverty that the conflicts have brought into the family by the loss of one bread winner.

In an interview with Dauda Damparimi of the Jama 'atu Nasril Islam (JNI) at Wase in 2004, as put forward in Best (Best; 2007), women and children suffer as a result of the conflicts. Women suffered, were injured, forcefully abducted, and raped. In places like Kadarko and Saluwe, women were abducted. The chief of Pilgani intervened and released the women after their husbands had been killed. The women confirmed that they were moved from one place to the other, and men were raping them (Best;2008).

Conflict also shatters the means of survival of the citizens especially that of women and as a result women have to flee their homes in search of the basic necessities of life: security, food, shelter, and health care for themselves and their children.

It also displaces them, therefore sometimes; the women will be forced into prostitution, trafficking and other criminal activities just to survive. Apart from displacement there is also movement or migration of people from areas of insecurity to areas of security. For example Jos is now divided into two; we have the Muslim dominated areas with little or no Christian presence and vice-versa. The city of Jos Plateau State now has a redefined settlement pattern. Certain areas are predominantly occupied by Hausa who are coincidentally Muslims and the various ethnic groups who also dominate certain areas are coincidentally Christians. Places like Angwan Rogo, Fillin Ball, Yan Shanu, and Ali Kazaure are said to be dominated by Muslims and thus a no-go-area for the Christians, while places like Angwan Rukuba, Gada Biyu, Hwolshe and Apata are Christian dominated and a no-go-area for the Muslims. There are areas that seem to be fairly safe for everyone like the Dadin Kowa, Miango State Lowcost and some parts of Congo Russia where both faiths still live and interact with one another though with a level of suspicion.

The implication of this segmented and segregated settlement pattern is that businesses that were otherwise beneficial to women in these communities using cross-faith customers no longer exist. Muslim women who normally conduct businesses within the premises of their homes lost

their Christian female customers and vice versa, as it is no longer safe for them to visit each other for fear of being killed. This loss of livelihood for women has a significant impact on household economy (Dayil and Bonkat; 2012). Women are the most visible in the informal economy in Jos, and so because of insecurities and displacement caused by the conflict, like the burning of Bukuru market in 2010 and the fear of trading in areas termed unsafe where most markets are located and women vend their goods, it has an impact on their lives and livelihoods. However, despite this, they played some roles and faced some challenges during the conflict.

Roles and Challenges of Women during Conflict

Women have been playing active roles in conflicts behind the scenes, and sometimes visibly. But due to their low numerical presence at the scenes of conflict, they are usually not noticed. In my interaction with women in the state within markets (Rukuba road, Kugiya and Bauchi Ring road), I found out that they mostly volunteer to cook for the youths who go out to fight. They also assist them in gathering stones, to be used against the enemies. They spend a lot of time praying for the safe return of their fathers, brothers and sons.

They also serve as combatants and supporters. For example, in 2004 during the conflict in one village called Wase, some women from Langtang served both as combatants and supporters. The combatants were seen carrying bows and arrows going to fight, while the supporters made local drinks (kunu and Burkutu) and cooked for the men on the battle field. Therefore, I argue that women are not always victims, but they play other roles that help men fight as well as getting the physical strength to fight by providing food.

Other roles women play during violence include, but not limited to women are;

Perpetrators, agents of change, as active participants (combatants): Women have actively participated in conflict and served as support to men during conflict. For example during the 2004 conflict in Wase and Yelwa in Plateau women were seen carrying bows and arrows to fight, as well as carrying water and food for the men.

Facilitators of resolution processes: Conflict opens windows of opportunities for women to actually participate in formal peace negotiations. They are found mostly in the civil society and very few

within government settings. Their contribution to conflict resolution and peace building is regarded as positive, because they bring their diverse experiences to help in the peace process. This gives them the opportunity to enter the public and political arena, through their associations such as women groups and organizations.

Peace Activist: Conflict creates opportunities for women's peace movement. During conflict sometimes get organized so as to call the attention of government and security agencies to protect their sons and husbands. This was seen during the 2008 and 2010 conflict when women wore black and carried leaves and marched from State house of assembly to Government house in Jos, protesting for the killing of their husbands and sons during the conflict, and also the killing that happened in Dogo Nahawa (www.osundefender.org).

Newly responsible care providers: The traditional role have changed by forcing women to become household heads and breadwinners, that is by taking over responsibility traditionally carried out by men.

Coping and Surviving Actors: Women have shown the capacity to survive in difficult situations especially during conflicts by developing ways of coping with life. They have displayed new ways of adapting to their new living conditions.

Praying role. It is expected by family members that women should pray for their husbands and wards while they remain at home with younger siblings for safety. They are to intercede for divine protection for their wards in conflict situations. It is often assumed that family's draw closer to the divine being in times of conflicts and it is often the responsibility of the women to do so on behalf of the family. This shows how people rely a lot on God for safety and security.

Protection role: Some Hausa/Muslim women played positive roles during the violent conflict. For example, in Angwan Rogo , some Muslim women shielded their Christian women friends from being killed and same protective treatment given to some Muslim women by their Christian neighbors. In an interview with a woman hawker she has this to say:

Not all Muslims are bad oh especially their women. I was in Angwan Rogo when a conflict erupted and I didn't know what to do because I was surrounded by Muslims. But this kind woman asked me to in and stay at her place. I stayed there for three days before I was able to go home. If not for her I would have been killed.

Challenges of Market Women

Conflict comes with its burdens and challenges because of some of the changes that goes with it. The case of markets in Jos is no exception. Some of the challenges market women faced are:

Loss of Customers: Because of the change in market most women loss their customers. In a Focus group discussion some women said they had loss most of their customers because of the change in market. Their customers don't know their where about as a result they will have to start looking for new ones. Some of them said they had big customers who buy goods from them in bulk. But now they have to start all over again.

Proximity of market: Market is far from the people and so people find it difficult to go there, as a result there is sometimes low sales which make their goods bad. This automatically leads to reduction in income. This also has implication on the livelihoods of women, because they depend on their daily income to make a living.

Difficulty in transporting goods: There was difficulty in transporting goods to the market, especially during conflicts because of constant eruptions and so most transporters are careful not to fall victims in a situation of an eruption. This therefore, leads to scarcity of goods and consequently they become very expensive.

Low patronage: There is low patronage because of the location of the market. It is located in an area where not everyone can go because the fear of insecurity of their lives. This is replicated in the settlement patterns in Jos.

Adaptation to new environment: The process of adapting is one of the outcome and process of violent conflicts (Justino; 2013). Violent conflicts sometimes entails changing and moving to a total new environment which is one of the difficult things to do. Once there is a change then there is a need to get used to the new environment, which most of the women felt is one of the challenges they are facing is in adapting to the new market they have relocated. They see it as a challenge because they will have to build new stalls and space is not enough but they have no choice but to manage the space they get.

Loss of customers: Another challenge most women faced was loss of customers because of change or relocation. There is this culture of a trader having some steady customers who always buy goods from them, which gives them guarantee that no matter how bad business is they are they are

sure they will be patronized by at least one of their customers. However, because of this change they will lose these customers, which implies that they will have to look for new ones or find a way of informing the old ones of their whereabouts. And so for them it is a setback.

3. Markets, Women and Conflict

In the context of this study, markets are much more than a given space for commerce, profit and earning a livelihood. First they define communities; they are a reflection of who are in the community and what they are all about. The market place is a space where societal processes are played out on a day-to-day basis. It is where people are confronted with societal oppositions, where social networks intermingle and where communication and identity play important roles in creating a feeling of belonging (Butter; 2011:5). They open a community's door to wider social interaction and thirdly provide commercial significance. Market also focuses upon a milieu of social interactions through informal trade relations, bonding and exchange of information. The informality of the market arises from the fact that activities within it are centered on long-term relationships based on trader-customer mutuality, kinship or identity-based recruitment systems. The market therefore, is seen as an informal setting because all the people there are self-employed and have no fixed income (Mang; 2013:3). Therefore, most of the relationship that takes place there is based on trust and respect. People who exist in the market space have different religious and ethnic identities, and this defines the way they see or relate to one another, especially in a violent environment where the cause of the violence is said to have been religion and ethnicity. Markets in Jos have been affected by conflict like any other place. Markets will help us understand how violence affects women, however in this article the focus will be on small-scale women entrepreneurs.

Throughout the developing world, women who are not educated or who don't have any form of formal jobs get themselves gainfully employed in the informal economy in order to provide cash to their families and themselves (O'Brian; 1997:3). This is the situation of women in Nigeria and Jos who are poor, and are illiterates. The only way women who are not educated and poor survive and help in making their livelihoods better is by trading in markets. O'Brian argued that women learned to vend as girls, like their mothers before them. Street vending is concentrated among the poorest indigenous women and is a common strategy among single mothers (O'Brian; 1997:3). Building on O'Brian's arguments most market women in Jos are poor, they vend and also a few

are lucky to have small spaces to sell, even though not all are single mothers.

A market woman confirmed this argument in the interview below:

‘I am actually into this business because I never went to school and I needed to do something to help the family’.

I observed that, markets in Jos are dominated by Muslim men and Christian women. Even though there are young Hausa- Muslim unmarried girls that hawk in the market, however majority of the traders in the market space are women. Muslim women on the other hand are not seen selling in the market, because of Islamic laws which prohibits their women to be seen in the public space (purdah). In an interview with a Muslim trader in Farin-gada market he had this to say:

“Our women cannot be seen selling in the market because our religion does not allow women to be seen by everyone”. This Islamic law made it impossible for Muslim women to sell in the market that is why it is mostly Christian women and Muslim men that are found in this space.

Since markets are a place where people from different religious and ethnic groups converge to trade and it is affected by violence like any other place; the market therefore will be used to study the society and understand what survival strategies women employed during violent eruption and provision of livelihoods in the home.

Survival Strategies Employed by Market Women

Violent conflict creates a situation of uncertainty and insecurity but people make efforts to continue their lives and survive despite these problems. Therefore arguing in line with Justino (2013) he argued that people living in areas of conflict and violence are more than victims: individuals, households, groups and communities suffer greatly from the effects of violence, but they also build tremendous resilience in the face of extreme forms of uncertainty(Justino;2013:3) and insecurity. I argue that market women are not just victims but they have employed or took some actions to ensure they continue their lives despite violence in Jos. Justino further argued that, strategies adopted by people in areas of conflict and violence to secure their lives and livelihoods are typically a function of two important variables. The first is related to initial characteristics, which determine people’s levels of vulnerability to poverty. The second is the likelihood of being targeted during conflict, in other words their vulnerability to violence (Justino;2013:4). This is the situation of market

women in Jos who need to survive both in their vulnerability to poverty and violence because most of them are either household heads or supporters and the need to protect themselves from physical harm. This is so because, during periods of eruptions it is not possible for them to go about their normal lives of selling and even if they want to they could get killed, beaten and their goods destroyed despite the fact that they have taken new roles of family head. They therefore depended on their relatives for clothes, kitchen utensils, foodstuffs, and so on. Those who lived in camps received assistance from various agencies, particularly religious groups. The observation above was illustrated in Nwaka (2011) where she argued that Biafran women depended on such groups to meet their basic needs (Nwaka; 2011:53). Arguing in line with Nwaka women in Jos equally depended on their relatives from the villages and the ones who are better off in the city, religious group like churches and Mosques and civil society groups for food, shelter and other basic needs to be provided.

“I depended a lot on my relatives from the villages to send us food and even sometimes money to buy some basic needs that was how we survived during the conflict and even many weeks after”. The statement above shows how family plays an important role in helping to meet the needs of women affected by conflict, as well as other organizations like religious and civil society groups.

Dangote a businessman for example, donated food, clothing, and mattresses to Muslim communities in Jos. The Plateau State government through the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) provided food and money to displaced persons as well as widows and some women whose property was destroyed. The Nigerian Red Cross Society (NRCS), THE International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (ICRC), as well as the Medicines Sans Frontiers (MSF) or Doctors without Borders also provided some relief materials for many of the victims across gender. It should be noted that most often, these relief materials are inadequate and sometimes come after a very long period after some assessment. This means that many affected families cannot depend solely on these for survival. Thus, the practices of families fending for themselves in various ways to ensure basic needs are met.

Survival strategies employed by women in markets are two folds:

1. Survival strategies or tactics employed to ensure safety when an eruption occurs.

- a. Pre Conflict Survival Strategies

b. During/after Conflict Survival Strategies

2. Livelihood Strategies.

Pre Conflict Survival Strategies: Focuses on how information is passed to enable leave the market before violence erupts because of past experiences. They are discussed below:

Use of telephones: One of the survival strategy employed by women to ensure they leave the market before violence erupts after 2001, was the use of telephones through their social network of family, friends and customers informing them of an eruption, which has helped them to leave the market before the violence gets to their place. This has enabled them take along with them a few of their goods (food stuff), which they depended on for a few days before selling again. In an interview with a woman had this to say;

“One of my neighbors a Hausa man who sells close me asked me to leave the market because he heard there might fighting today. Immediately I told the other women around me and we picked a little food stuff and ran home. That was how nothing happened to me and a few of the women”. Unlike the 2001 violence in a focused discussion where most of them argued that the conflict affected seriously because they didn’t get any prior information about the violence, as result many women were killed, some were beaten and even maimed in an attempt to get to safety or home.

Use of Local language: Some market women employed the use of their local language to pass information as another strategy. Women passed information to each other using their local dialect informing each other of eruption in the city before it reaches their own part. These women cluster/stay together according to their ethnic affiliations which have enabled them to inform each other of an eruption using their mother tongue. Because conflict always starts from one part of the city and before it gets to their place they would have left the market. That is how some escaped been harmed or beaten when violence erupts.

During and after Conflict and livelihood Survival Strategies:

Creation or relocation of markets: One strategy employed by women was the relocation of markets from areas perceived or termed to be unsafe or popularly called “no go areas”. The violence in Jos created a sense of insecurity in the city, as a result people congregate and create a community in a space where they feel will expand their territories if the opportunity arises, either through peaceful means or during the course of a

violent conflict . Settlement patterns in the city of Jos is divided/ polarized along religious lines. Major markets are located in the so called “*no go areas*” that is, located in Muslim dominated areas and so for most market women who are mainly Christian felt in secured and afraid, as a result new markets were created or there was a relocation existing markets for surety of their security and the also to be able to sell even when violence erupts. A woman had this to say in an interview:

“I had a shop in kwararafa(new)market, but I had to sell the shop to them because, it wasn’t possible to continue there this is simply because of the high level of insecurity. I had to leave the market in 2008 because the situation was too serious and our lives were under serious threats”. Most women who left old markets to new ones were not happy with the change but they had to because of insecurity in environment where these markets were located.

Creation of Opportunities: Relocation of markets to safe neighborhoods has also created opportunities for women who have been displaced from other places and also those who had no any form of trade. They used this opportunity created, and the proximity of markets to their neighborhoods, as a source employment to unemployed women.

Some women combined selling with farming to help in them catering for their families, because they had been displaced and the income they were getting was not enough, and business was not thriving like before. Some of the women moved to the village for some time to farm and get food.

Contributions: Daily, weekly and monthly contributions by women through associations also helped the women and their families to survive. They were given soft loans without interest from women association, and they sometimes collected the money they have saved which has helped. Apart from these contributions, the association meets weekly and every woman buys provision or foodstuff which is given to one woman until it rotates among them. This has helped these women in surviving when violence erupts and they are not able to start selling immediately.

“There is a new type of contribution we just started recently. We contribute 1 thousand naira (5 Euros) after every 2 weeks. The money contributed will be used to buy food stuff which is given in turns to every woman in the group. This has helped us at home, because we don’t have to depend on our income to buy all that we need at home. And so the income helps in buying clothes, drugs and in paying school fees”. This illustration

above shows how women have depended on other sources to ensure their livelihoods despite violence.

Diversification of selling: Women diversified their sources of selling as a strategy to meet livelihood needs by having more than one source of income. In a focus group discussion most women admitted that their daughters come to help them by either having their own tables or hawking around. Some of them even stated that, their sons also help not only daughters and this has enabled them pick up, especially now that they have to adapt and get new customers to buy from them.

In an interview with a widow *“she said that her husband was killed during the violence and so she is now both the “father” and mother of the children as result it has not been easy for her to provide for the family. Because of this two of her daughters dropped out of school to her help in selling to enable them meet their basic needs. However, before they started selling with her, there were days they went hungry because there was no food in the house. One of the girls has a table where she sells goods, while the other girl hawks around in the market and safe neighborhoods. My daughter comes to help sell in another space in the market. She is doing this to help us at home and also to enable her register for SSCE”*.

From observation and in an informal discussion with women, some of them mention how their children have been very useful in the homes. They do this by helping sell their goods. For example in Farin-gada market I saw quite a number of young girls hawking, while some sat at their mothers place selling with their mothers.

Selling of Belongings: Some women sold their belonging as a strategy to survive during periods of eruption, while some exchanged some of their belonging to get food for the family

Dependence on Civil Society or Church Organisations: Some other women depended on civil society groups and church organizations for relief materials to survive during and after violence. The relieve materials provided enabled some women to resettle in neighborhoods they termed safe. In the case of a widow she is still supported by an NGO in paying the school fees of her daughter whom the husband left her with as an infant when he was killed. She has this to say;

“My little daughter who my husband left when he died while she was very small is being sponsored by an NGO called Africa service”.

“Yes we had churches and NGOs as well who contributed both in kind and cash to enable us start all over again”. Illustrations above tell us how groups have tremendously contributed to the well being of ordinary people especially women in times of conflict.

Borrowing: Some women had to borrow money to enable them survive. The money borrowed was also to enable them start business all over again because their goods were destroyed, spoiled or stolen during violence.

“Normally when violence and our goods are stolen or destroyed we report the case to the chairman of the traders’ association, but nothing has been done about it. When calmness returns we go to villages and buy goods on credit from the farmers, and then we pay them later after selling. That’s how some of us have been able to start selling again. In my own case, I have never bought goods with only my money; some goods must be on credit. But prior to that, I never bought goods on credit”. The strategy used enabled women to start or begin life afresh, even though, with some difficulties but most of them are adapting to the new way of doing things.

Change in areas of hawking: While women who vend or hawk their goods changed the neighborhoods in which they hawked their goods. They had to make this choice because quite a number of women have been killed, beaten or maimed in areas they called ‘no go areas’ because of the people that stay there.

“Hmmm it was God that helped me through a good Samaritan woman in Angwan rogo during the first conflict in 2001 if not I would have been dead. I was selling when I saw boys running and shouting we will finish these infidels, I immediately went back to my customers house and told her what was going on. That was how she hid me for two days. Some of these people are still good despite these conflicts”. Women vendors normally hawk in neighborhoods especially in Muslim dominated ones because most of their women don’t go out. The conflict has made it necessary for the Christian women because of the danger some of them face as they go about hawking in those neighborhoods.

4. Conclusion

The paper looked at the survival strategies of small-scale women entrepreneurs in conflict situation in the informal market in Jos. The conflict that has occurred and reoccurred in Jos for the past 10 years has had devastating impacts on the people, especially women and in particular

market women. Some women have been forced to assume new roles of house hold heads because they lost their husbands during the violence. The conflict has partitioned Jos as well as markets. The movement to these created markets has made it difficult for women to get their customers, while some markets are in the outskirts of the city, as a result most of the women don't get patronage, and so it is a little bit difficult to build their capital. Some women are still traumatized because of their experiences. For example, some women refused granting interviews because; they felt it will open old wounds which they don't want to remember. However, I argue that, the survival strategies most women have implored have helped sustain their livelihoods, despite the new roles some have assumed as a result of the violent conflict. The paper suggest to government and the general public on how to mitigate the intractable violent encounters in Jos in order to further promote women participation in commercial activities without unnecessarily resorting to stressful and risky survival strategies in the market place.

5. References

- Best, S .G. (2007)Conflict and Peace Building in Plateau State, Nigeria. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.
- Best. S G. (2008), ed. Causes and Effects of Conflicts in the Southern Zone of Plateau State. Ibadan: John Archers Publishers Ltd,
- Bonkat L (2008) in Best Causes and Effects of Conflicts in the Southern Zone of Plateau State. Ibadan: John Archers Publishers Ltd.
- Butter I (2011): A market space ethnography: Insecurity, communication and identity in Chad. CERES Preliminary Research Design
- Dayil, P and Bonkat, L (2012) Ethno-Religious Conflicts and Women in the Middle-Belt Region of Nigeria. Unpublished conference paper, in University of Texas.
- Fwatshak, U. S (2007): "Ethno-Religious Conflicts in the Jos-Plateau Region in the 19th and 21st Centuries: In Search of A Comparative Framework". In *The Middle Belt in the Shadow of Nigeria*, edited by Okpeh, O.O & Fwatshak, U. S. Benue: Oracle Business Ltd, 2007.
- Gwamna, J. D and Kudu, A. (2010) Sliding Towards Armageddon: Revisiting Ethno-Religious Crises in Nigeria". *Theological College of Northern Nigeria Research Bulletin*, No.52, pg 30-44.
- Gwamna, J.D. (2010) *Religion and Politics in Nigeria*. Jos: Africa Christian Textbooks.

- Hoomlong K (2008) in *Best Causes and Effects of Conflicts in the Southern Zone of Plateau State*. Ibadan: John Archers Publishers Ltd.2008
- Mang, H.G.(2012) *Can We Meet at the Market Tomorrow? Commerce, Authority and Economic Power Relations after Violent Conflicts in Jos, Nigeria*. Unpublished Master Thesis.
- Nwaka. J.C (2011): *Biafra Women and the Nigerian Civil War: Challenges and Survival Strategies in Africa* *Peace and Conflict Journal*, Volume 4 Number 1 June 2011.
- O'Brian. R. (1997). *Maya Market Women's sales strategies in a stationary Artesania market and Responses to changing Gender Relations in Highland Chiapas, Mexico*. Working paper series.261, *Women in International Development*, Michigan State University.
- Para-Mallam.O.J (2011) ed. *Finding Durable Peace in Plateau*. Haytee press and publishing company Nig Ltd.
- Plotnocov, L. (1967) *Strangers in the city: Urban man in Jos*. Pittsburg: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Sha, Dung. Pam. *The Politicisation of Settler-Native Identities and Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Jos, Central Nigeria*. Ibadan: Stirling-Horden Publishers Ltd, 2005.
- Shut, Thomas.T "The Settler/Indigene Phenomenon and Conflict Generation in the Middle Belt Region of Nigeria" In *The Middle Belt in the Shadow of Nigeria*. Okpeh, .O.O and Sati.A Fwatshak. Benue: Oracle Business Ltd, 2007. Pp. 91-107.
- Justino P (2013): *Research and policy implications from a micro-level perspective on the dynamics of conflict, violence and development*, HiCN Working Paper 139, January 2013.
- Nwaka. J. C (2011): *Biafran Women and the Nigerian Civil War: Challenges and Survival Strategies in Africa* *Peace and Conflict Journal* Vol 4 No 1

INTERVIEWS

- Daniel, L. (2013), *Women Leader Farin-gada Market*. Interview by Lohna Bonkat in Farin-gada Market, 18.03.2013.
- Eddy, L. (2013), *Market woman*. Interview by Lohna Bonkat in Tomato Market Angwan Rukuba 08.04.2013.

Lohna Bonkat, University of Bayreuth

Esther John Pam, E. J.(2013), Market Woman. Interview by Lohna Bonkat in Farin gada market 11.03.2013

Maman Tabitha(2012) Market Woman. Interview by Lohna Bonkat (in person) Farin gada, Market. 03.07.2012

Madam John(2013) Market Woman. Interviewed by Lohna Bonkat (in person) Tomato Market, 21-02-2013

Mrs Chundung Ayuba(2013) Vendor,. Interview by Lohna Bonkat (in person), Jos. 07.03.2013

Monday,M. (2013),Widow, Market woman. Interview by Lohna Bonkat (in person) Tomato Market 8.4.2013

Victoria Ayuba(2013) Market woman, Interview by Lohna Bonkat (in person) Terminus market 10.02.2013

Yahaya,M. (2012) Trader. Interview by Lohna Bonkat in Terminus Market 15.06.2012

Observation by Lohna Bonkat in Terminus and Farin-gada Markets in Jos in 2012 and 2013.

Based on informal discussions with women from Langtang during my field work in 2012.