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RESEARCH ARTICLE

EXHUMED CONFLICT IN EAST AFRICA: CAUSES AND IMPLICATIONS OF ETHNIC CONFLICT IN BURUNDI.

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Abstract

The world-wide conflicts around ethnic identities remind that communal identities can be a potent force in contemporary societies. Ethnicity is more central to the political process of many African countries including Burundi as the oppressed population struggle for their share of the national cake. As a result, ethnic conflict gives rise to unstable domestic system as it takes place within national borders. This research employed qualitative research method so data collection was dependent on primary sources in addition to the researcher's know-how. The complementary secondary data was through the internet and library materials to help the understanding of the matter at hand. The paper examined the causes and implications of ethnic conflict in Burundi. It is done with the hope that trends that lead to conflict and those that lead to cooperation can be identified. The study found lack of equity and justice, high illiteracy levels and an external threat as factors which fuel ethnic conflict in the country. Besides, the education system by ethnic and regional entities has created a gap between state institutions and the population resulting in vicious cycle of frustration in which ethnic conflict triumph. Ethnic conflicts can thus be interpreted as struggles for the collective goods of the country.

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Introduction:-

Burundi is densely populated, with over four-fifths of the population involved in subsistence agriculture. As such the most important natural resources are land and agricultural produce which are the basis of material wealth for the state. The most important source of income for the state is its foreign currency earnings through the sale of coffee, tea and cotton. The lack of natural resources such as gems, minerals, oil or timber has a great bearing on the economy which affects the way the state is shaped. The state benefits through the sale of resources to the external market and through controls and regulations earn some income. Conflict and peace practitioners show that a larger diversity of natural resources have powerful influences on security and social unrest globally (1 2 3 4). The actual production or extraction of resources itself is not a major concern. In Burundi rebel activity on coffee plantations was not so much concerned about capturing the coffee harvest per se but rather as a means to weaken the government's income. To this end, there was occasional looting of the agricultural produce. The development policy

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