Crisis and Challenges Encounter By African Union When Achieving Regional Integration

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ABSTRACT: *Present situation in Africa has heated up due to power struggle, political instability, terrorism and civil wars. Also today, the Africa is full of many problems like human rights, women rights and child right violations, crimes, mafias, drug rackets and etc. Moreover day by day increasing such problems result the growth of the number of refugees which is becoming more complex trouble. As a collective action of African states, African Union is the key organization which was established to address such issues. The study mainly focus on to find out such challenges that continent need to be addressed and emphasize how important to find resolute solutions in order to achieve their future objectives. To achieve aforesaid objective qualitative approach has been adopted and documentary analysis and descriptive analysis has been used on secondary data gathered from data triangulation method. Descriptive statistics describe main features of the data in the study providing simple graphical analysis. Modern world often depend on interconnection of states than in past. Today most of the African states try to find solutions for above mentioned unresolved problems by working with other states in mutual cooperation. Although African Union is a good platform for it various criticisms, doubts and evaluations are being triggered against the African Union.*

KEYWORDS: *African Union, Political instability, Terrorism, Violations, Economy, Integrations*

I.   INTRODUCTION

Today we can identify regional organizations as a distinguished and important element in political, economic and social activity of the world. During last decades many regional organizations were formed due to various reasons and some were being abolished. But one could clearly identify that tendency of formation of regional organizations due to various factors is becoming relatively high since last few decades. Established organizations carry out their mission centering various regions around the world and basing various aspirations as Inter Governmental Organizations (IGO`s) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO`s). With time they evolved in a manner they could influence their member states as well as other outside states. After the Second World War many international organizations were emerged and most of them were a result of unpleasant experiences of Second World War. Thus their aspirations were to stop repeating the same situation, ensure security in global and regional level, rebuild economy and reach future economic development. For an example WARSAW, NATO and UNO can be mentioned. During Second World War human lives and property were destroyed in millions and it was a catastrophe. Majority of the people who died were civils and from it majority were children and women. Even today one could see dreadful wars and conflicts are reporting from various parts of the world. Thus since the origin of human posterity still war remains to be an unchanging catastrophic phenomenon.

Furthermore day by day augmenting natural disasters and diseases has risen loss of human lives. Today almost every country in the world is experiencing climatic changes. As an example world is experiencing global warming, scarcity of food and drinkable water, droughts, liquefaction of ice, rise of sea water level and etc. infectious diseases, unidentified diseases and poverty are some other suffocating conditions that could be mentioned beside those climatic changes. According to reports of World Health Organization majority of the world population are distressed due to non-infectious diseases. Moreover WHO reports half of the world population is lack of fundamental sanitary facilities and it increases the growth of diseases.

Beside these unresolved problems every state is eagerly work to reach their national aspirations. In this case working to achieve their own aspirations by suppressing other`s aspirations cause more conflicts. Or else if any state is achieving their aspirations according to their desire by neglecting another state`s aspirations and if that distressed state is not strong enough to challenge the other state easily the powerless state become a pray of powerful state. The process carried out by imperialistic Europe before many years is still followed by them in a different manner. Like in history still they spread their power over underdeveloped states. Even today it`s uncomely effects can be seen in Asian, African and Latin American continents.

Thus every state has happened to reach their future development by obviating these conditions, facing challenges and controlling conflicts. Here every state should understand that by working collectively they could minimize conflicts, achieve more benefits and promulgate more opportunities regarding it. Through this it will be not that difficult to reach the economic development, stability and political stability as expected by every state.

II.   THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Regionalism and Regional Integration

As per Joseph Ney a region is introduced in international system as a collectivity of limited number of states who have got together based on geographical connections and depending on that particular region establishing inter-governmental organizations or working collectively on interdependency is known as regionalism. Working together in a manner collective work of a certain geographical area is developed and identity of the region is highlighted is also known as regionalism. Today the aspirations of regionalism are being carried out as collective attempts only through regional organizations.

When examining about regional integration, main factors affecting can be found from the year 1880. However a proper idea regarding regionalism is emerged between 1950 and 1960. These ideas were emerged centering Europe when European community is established and those very first ideas about regionalism are known as ideas about old regionalism. By the year 1980 with the new concepts emerged after the ideas spread about regional integration affected for the expansion of ideas about new regionalism. Those ideas have renewed the operation of regional organizations and still the same process is going on. This paved the way for a new political wave during last few decades. By the year 1990 one could identify regionalism is targeting economic and political factors of international system. In this case states try to find new dimensions regarding various fields and eagerly work towards regional development. Regional organizations has become new geographical index. However subject scope, institutional structure, membership and identity of these regions differ from region to region.

In order to resolve conflicts and achieve economic and political development individual national states work using new strategies and with the concepts like regionalism and regional integration they try to get together with neighboring states while working by thinking beyond the qualities of independence. This can be introduced as integration or unity. Accordingly states reach regional integration by having agreements with neighboring states which are being designed to improve cooperation through common institutions and regulations. Objectives of those agreements could run from economy to politics and become wider objectives when it comes to different subject areas. In order to achieve social, political, economic and security aspirations states have allured to work on political economic system which includes commercial aspirations. Thus taking decisions regarding regional integration can happen through a powerful regional organization or a process of inter-governmental decision making or even both ways are possible to establish integration. Although regional integration was operated in past to remove the obstacles of free trade in the region it gradually developed allowing free movement of labor, capital and goods across the borders. Today regional organizations fulfill tasks like reducing the risk of out breaking armed conflicts, providing provisions for the improvement of security and trust, providing provisions to work on a common policy regarding climatic changes and migrations, carry on necessary coordination and etc.

2.2 Functionalism

During post Second World War period functionalists and non-functionalist ideologists presented various concepts and ideas to form a logical background for international cooperation. Among those functionalism can be identified as an approach which is helpful to build international organizations. According to functionalists if states share their mutual trust, cooperation and responsibilities through various fields it paves the way to reach both regional and international integration. They emphasize working together for a common interest by mutually exchanging responsibilities of national states is very important to establish integration. The main feature of functionalist approach is when establishing organization as a collectivity of different states particular institutions

must assigned with limited definite powers. This approach was successfully used during the time period from 1945 to 1975. Basic principles of functionalism are based on David Mittrany`s assumption about war and peace.

As per his ideologies social and economic irregularities are the main reasons of war. On the other hand social and economic welfare are the prior conditions of peace. Further they assume that having a national state system states cannot successfully deal with complicated social and economic problems. Because global social problems have been divided in to units based on geography rather than elements based on problems. Accordingly functionalist`s idea is that national states cannot work with main social and economic problems. They suggest that to solve aforesaid problems institutions which are based on function but not on one geographical location are ideal. Modern functionalism is used as a strategy to achieve integration depending on ideas of David Mittrany. At the beginning of this process states work together in a limited arena of work or economic fields. Later half integrated states work together in fields relevant to them. According to new functionalists there are two types of integration. Namely as functionalist and political. Functionalist integration often conduct interrelationships with various economic sectors or with areas having problems or conflicts. Here integration taking place regarding one fact of a policy field spread to other fields also. Political integration is creating institutions like European Union or volunteer institutions like United Nations who have powers beyond the borders. In this way functionalists have been able to provide logical background for the international organizations and for their existence.

2.3 Regional organizations

Regional organizations can be defined as a subset of international organizations. When establishing an international organization at least there should be agreement of three state`s controlling authorities and it should possess its own legal frame work. After the Second World War many regional organizations with different structures were formed. Regional organizations are like international institutions which join together states attached geographically. After the Second World War with time many factors have affected for the emergence of regional organizations. Cold War, weaknesses of United Nation`s security council, rising of individual free states after receiving independence from imperialism, those states working towards a common objective, their aspirations regarding economic cooperation are some examples for this. Organizations concerning security like WARSAW, North Atlantic Treaty, organizations concerning regional cooperation like Arabic League, African Union and American Union, organizations concerning global security, peace and cooperation like United Nations, organizations concerning economic cooperation like World Bank, European Union were emerged. In this way many organizations are spread over world through different fields and among them priority has given to regional organizations. Today regional organizations have been established covering each continent.

III.   AFRICAN UNION

3.1 Origin and Expansion

In 19th century there was a great competition among European colonial powers to establish political integration covering whole African continent. The main reason behind their intention was the vast and valuable natural resources possessed by African continent. Moreover using Africans as slaves was another concern or an objective of them. However, during this period existing rivalries and conflicts among Europeans powers like Great Britain, Belgium, France, Italy, Germany and Portugal resulted more conflicts during aforesaid attempts and it ensured the fact that no European nation could establish the power over whole African continent by obtruding other European nations. Thus instead of winning whole continent they established their power on the areas which were possible to easily get in to their hands and especially their attention was driven towards the natural resources distributed in those areas. Everyone was very cautious not to lose their rule over those areas for their rivals. In this way until 20th century European powers ruled their African territories. However with the time their thinking and policies began to change and between the years 1950 and 2000 whole African continent liberated from European colonial powers. Later on African Union was formed with all the liberated states in African continent.

Before the origin of African Union (AU), there was an organization with the name Organization of African Unity. This organization was formed by the declaration which was signed in the year 1963 at Addis Ababa in Ethiopia with the participation of 32 African states. However the organization displayed many weaknesses, especially it was failed to protect rights and independence of African citizens and this emphasized the necessity of a better and regular organization for African states. As a result of this in the decade 1990, all the necessary

measures were taken to establish African Union under the leadership of Muhammar Gadhafi and a new declaration was signed under those measures. This is known as Sirte Declaration it was signed at Serta in Libya. Accordingly 51 member states voted for the formation of new organization and in 2001 African Union was established at Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. It was officially declared in the year 2002. The objectives of the African Union can be mentioned as below.

❖ Enhancing the unity and cooperation between African states and African citizens.
❖ Protecting the freedom and territorial integrity of member states.
❖ Prompting political, economic and social cohesion of the continent.
❖ Taking account the problems which continent and citizen are interested and establishing, promoting and protecting a common stability in the continent regarding those problems as a region.
❖ Working according to the United Nation`s enactment and Universal declaration of human rights and enhancing international cooperation regarding it.
❖ Promoting peace, protection and stability in the continent.
❖ Promoting democratic principles and particular institutions and participation of the public and good governance,
❖ Promoting and protecting human rights according to African enactment of human rights and other relevant human rights.
❖ Promoting resolute development of the areas of economic, social and cultural and establishing cohesion between African economies.
❖ Promoting every field of human activities in order to enhance the life standard of African people.
❖ Formulating and coordinating policies which are existing and between future economic community in order to gradually achieve objectives of the Union.
❖ Promoting researches in the fields like Science and technology in order to carry over the development of the continent.
❖ Working with relevant international organizations in order to promote good health in the continent and eradicating diseases which can be prevented.
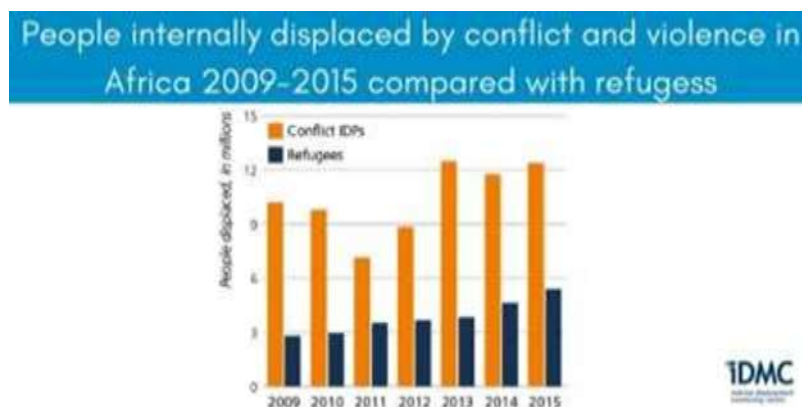
3.2 Crisis and challenges in African region

The structure of African Union is lot more similar to the European Union. Although it has taken many attempts to work as an individual unit like in European region they have not been able to achieve expected victories in their journey so far. Especially unlike the European union they have not been able to find resolute solutions for the problems which are affecting African union`s success, development and as well as their evolution.

Firstly the main reason causing direct influences towards the stability of African Union is complex diversity among its member states. In this case African Union has happened to give the priority to the political facts instead of the economic facts. Puissant political crisis and conflicts prevailing in the continent have largely affected this. Under this circumstance as a regional unity towards such situations it is rational to pay more attention towards political facts. But many other goals it should achieve as a regional organization will be escaped from the hands of African Union.

States like Egypt, Sudan, Nigeria, Somalia, Republic of Congo and Libya which can be recognized as strong member states of African union are now have become unstable due to various conflicts and war situations. Instead of improving regional cooperation these states are struggling to solve their internal tumors. African states just use democratic principles to decorate their constitutions rather than taking account the practical usage of those principals. This weakness can be often identifies among African states. Even when compared with European states easily these weaknesses are noticeable among them. Therefore prior to having structural reforms in the Union it is important to have a better comprehension regarding the responsibilities and duties of each individual member states and dedicatedly work in this process. Not conducting such process for the present conflictive situations among those states continuously makes situations more complex. Moreover the frauds and corruptions cause by the leaders governing those states has become a great menace for the benefaction of those states. Instead of serving citizen of the state civil servants and armed officials serve their rulers and for their own well-being and this has undermined the public in those states. Under such governing backgrounds, even elections are being organized amidst rough circumstances and various irregularities. As a result, while those states bearing many unsolved internal tumors war situations and conflicts make regional stability and insecurity more complex. Due to unresolved conflicts and terrorist acts people`s lives are being sacrificed in large number.

❖ 2011- Egypt revolution and after resulted agitations and conflictive situations.
❖ Continuing Sinai insurgency since 2011
❖ 2013- remonstrance of Egypt
❖ Continuing Darfur war since 2003
❖ 2005-2010 Chad- Sudan conflicts
❖ Continuing internal conflicts and ethnic conflicts in Sudan since 2009 (As a result of this Sudan was divided in to two parts as North and South. But still conflicts between two states are continuing.)
❖ Libyan civil war which was erupted in the year 2011 and still continuing conflicts.
❖ Continuing Barbarian insurgency and terrorist acts in North African states since 2002.
❖ Tunisian revolution in 2011 and after resulted conflicts
❖ Yet unresolved tumor and conflicts of Western Sahara since 1970
❖ Continuing civil war situations and anarchism in Somalia since 1991 (under this background Somalian pirates who are operating centering Somalia have become a threat to other neighboring states and ships travelling along the nearby sea routes.)
❖ Continuing Ethiopia-Eretria border conflicts since 2000
❖ Continuing conflicts of Burundi since 2015
❖ Continuing Bokoharam conflicts centering Nigeria since 2014
❖ Continuing constitutional crisis of Gambia since 2016
❖ Continuing conflicts prevailing in North Mali since 2012
❖ Religious conflicts existing in Nigeria
❖ Continuing conflicts centering Niger delta since 2009
❖ Continuing civil war of Republic of Central Africa since 2012
❖ War situations erupted in Republic of Congo
❖ Internal conflicts in Chad and Mozambique.

Above have mentioned some examples for the conflicts which have emerged in recent years. In a background like this states in the region have happened to take immense efforts to achieve political stability. Due to afore said conflictive situations and unstable politics migration percentage of the region is increasing rapidly. Furthermore number of displacements and refugees in the region has risen up.

Reference: (http://www.internal-displacement.org)

According to above graph conflicts and violence in Africa has resulted an increase of the amount of refugees and internal displacements in millions within few years. Although African Union has taken necessary measures to minimize conflicts in the continent above graph clearly shows that they have been failed in achieving expected outcome.

The influence of internally displaced people and refugees in African region is concluded according to services and facilities provided for them by the states and in this process policies and operation of the army of those states result the increase or decrease of regional conflicts. Which is to say if any state is implementing their policies considering refugees as a threat and intend to continuously use those policies, a tendency of refugees and displaced people joining various armed groups and terrorist groups in order to win their independence and rights can be clearly noticed. This is one of the main reason for the continuation of conflicts and expansion of conflicts from one place to another in African territory. Thus optimistic policies conducted by a state against the

internally displaced people and migrated refugees from another state encourage political violence among them. This can be identified as one of the common and dominant problem in the African Continent. A good example for this is Kenya. Kenya`s Optimistic attitudes towards refugees and as well as the neglect of refugees created rioters in refugee camps and later on not only around the camp but also those rioters were spread out till the borders between Kenya and Sudan and Somalia . Because of the continuation of those weak policies by Kenya refugees were diverted towards more violence and fierce activities. However, when this situation is compared with the policies conducted by Malawi and Zimbabwe towards Mozambique refugees, it is a must to mention that such conflictive and fierce situations have been able to control through favorable refugee policies. Accordingly the refugee policies conducted by the region affect the increase or the decrease of the conflicts in the African territory. Another important fact that should be emphasized here is, beside Syria and Iraq in the Middle East region Africa is the highest intruding migrants reporting region in Europe. Those migrants intrude in to Europe after a dreadful journey in the sea after crossing the borders of African states. Thus this accretive situation in the African territory directly or indirectly influence other regions.

Reference: http://www.unhcr.org/

According to the above report issued by the United Nation`s High Commission for the Refugees African Continent has become the highest number of refugees reporting region in the world. Indeed war conflicts, internal tumors and political instability in the African region have become a menace to the region.

When resolving aforesaid internal conflicts and political conflicts African Union is far behind from their common currency unit. In order to have a common currency unit, like European Union did in last five decades African Union must achieve economic integration, have discussions and spend more time to find resolute solutions for the problems regarding religion and ethnic. Because many African states are not strong from the aspects of economy or moral. Thus a state which can has a voice and dare to stand against corruption, fraud, suffering and conflicts has not yet emerged from the African Union. Not having such a strong state is also a very piteous fact.

Amidst these critical situations existing in the region certain measures taken by African Union have intense those situations. Coordination of many fields including economic and political for the all 53 states of African continent are done through African Union and other institutions affiliated to it. Some affiliated institutions were born with Organization of African Unity which was existed before African Union and other institutions imitated European Union. As a result of this often they are unable to work with their own identity and at the same time they are unable to find prompt solutions for the regional problems by identifying them. Once during a visit made by Barak Obama in Ghana, he said 'What Africa need is strong institutions not strong men.' These institutional weaknesses of African Union result institutional failures during practical activity of the Union and it also causes the augment and spread of critical situations all over the continent. Because these institutions are lack of logical mind or comprehensive vision based on cultural principles to manipulate and regulate states in the region and their citizen. The truth is these institutions are not the reality of African culture and they are not even structured basing values of the African culture. But they are a result of values and policies of global capitalism. While this chain of regional institutions are working with policies of global capitalism by neglecting their origin whole region has already embraced the instability, underdevelopment and insecurity.

Insecurity becoming an obstacle for the regional and national development has spread out all over the African continent in a way that it is difficult to suppress. Africa becoming an ideal place for urban crimes, regional terrorism like Al Shabaab and Boko Haram and international terrorist groups like ISIS, al-Qaeda and Taliban

further explains aforesaid situation. Furthermore civil wars and conflicts that are being emerged under this background allow terrorism and anarchism keep their heads up in the region. Moreover this insecurity can affect all the factors of production and it can cause huge displacement in people`s lives and great loss of lives, investments and direct foreign investments.

Although African states were freed from imperialism they continued to struggle to gain independence from authoritarianism which continued to rule the continent. Still those states are in conflicts to establish a democratic ruling system in their countries. Progressive African nations have happened to engage in these continuous struggles amidst obstacles directed from rulers, region and international. An unwholesome political feature which can be recognized in African region is many African rulers continuously retaining in power for their own wellbeing without considering democratic principles or without formulating policies which address timely and future aspirations of the public and suppressing civil social servants and rulers of the opposite parties.

From the fifty countries of most weak food and nutrition security more than thirty countries are reported from African continent. Due to lacking of resolute measures for the agricultural, food and nutrition security majority of the population in African are died from hunger. The piteous fact is majority who are dying reported be children.

The main obstacle for the augment of food supply is not having a resolute agriculture, sufficient investment and considerable social security. Climatic changes have also affected unfavorably in this region. However as a region they have been unable to reach resolute policies to challenge all aforesaid conditions.

70% of the Africans are engaged in agriculture based jobs. But they have happened to come across many challenges as necessary services and facilities are not provided for them in order to assure their job security and maintain it regularly. Especially limitation of facilities bound to financial and legal security has degraded the development of agriculture. Farmers are unable to invest for agriculture as proper financial assurance is not provided and a risk regarding farming has appeared due to climatic changes and market instability. Thus also economic growth rate of African region is also degrading as a result of existing weak economic policies and management. When examining gross domestic production of 2015, it reported 1.4% of growth rate and accordingly to double the gross domestic production in this region it will take at least 50 years.

IV.   CONCLUSION

Considering all aforesaid problems in African continent it needs populist leaders who are desirous to find solutions for unaddressed lasting problems in the region. During several main elections held in the year 2016, new leaders were appointed in few states including Ghana and Republic of Central Africa. When choosing new leaders more space must be given to young leaders. Such changes can have a positive effect on decision taken for future progress of the region.

Lasting wars, corruption and arbitrary dictatorial ruling systems create continuous economic problems and crisis. Furthermore, division of power blocks during cold war and being a colony for a long period of time have also affected the slow economic growth rate of Africa. Possessing all the rare and extremely valuable natural resources distributed in African continent and exploiting labor of the people were main intentions of the European colonial powers in Africa.

Recently African states are trying to establish a common free trade agreement. Its main objective is to arrange necessary measures to establish a continental market as a free combination of business and investments. Here more attention has been directed towards uplifting internal commerce and opening new chances in the region. Moreover necessary drafts have been prepared to establish many institutions like African Central Bank, Investment Banka and African Monetary Fund. Although measures are undertaking to have a common free trade agreement in the continent it is a doubt that favorable political and social background is prevailing in the region in order to carry on commercial activities regularly. Thus priority must be given to construct aforesaid political and social background. Although economic integration could improve the cooperation between states if this political and social background is constructed at least for a certain extent it can continuously uphold the said cooperation between states. At the same time new industries and job opportunities must be created. African region is distressed by many infectious diseases like AIDS, Malaria and non-infectious diseases and many other health issues. Furthermore the region is facing non democratic constitutions, violation of human rights, poverty, wars and conflicts and economic problems.

When consider about the duties and responsibilities of African Union their aspirations should not be limit for having a common currency unit, designing economic agendas or having common security policies. It should

think beyond those and have plans by comprehending practical situations. For an example they should eradicate unemployment of youth generation, promulgate educational opportunities and uplift life standard.

However even surrounding many crisis as mentioned before recently African region has been able to achieve many victories with the support of African Union. But in few occasions African union`s system of resolving problem was questioned as many times they were unable to solve crisis emerged in the region. There was no any clear agreement regarding measures that union is following in the said case and often what happened was western nations enacting their agendas through African union. Intervene of western nations has directly affected to accretion of conflicts in African region.

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