

# **Ethnicity and Electoral conflict in Kenya: a case study of 2007 elections**

## **Abstract:**

This research is based on ethnicity and electoral conflict with specific reference to Kenya, 2007 elections. Causes and dynamics of ethnic related electoral conflict form an important component of the discourse. The objectives of this research, is to find out the root causes of electoral violence in Kenya. The research will also analyze the role of ethnicity in electoral conflict in Kenya and at the same. time, the actors in the conflict and their interests. A brief account of electoral conflict cycles that denotes the stages of electoral violence in Kenya will be of importance. Also in the focus will be the Kenya's ethno-regional map that influences the political party formation and voting pattern confined in the precincts' of rigid ethnic boundaries that causes electoral conflict. This will provide a profile of the genesis, and stages (phases) of violence that has bedeviled Kenya, with its climax in the 2007-2008 post election violence. Broad problem statement focusing on the perennial violence every election cycle, resultant destruction of property, and loss of human lives would be discussed. The research will incorporate both qualitative and quantitative data to determine the correlation between ethnicity and electoral conflict in Kenya. The findings and recommendations will provide an informative knowledge bank for mitigating strategies to avert occurrence and recurrence of ethnic related violence, a part from stimulating further research. This will save Kenya from sliding in anarchy and self destruction into 'failed state.' The narrow ethnic interests that have dominated its electoral scene are also in the focus of the discussion. An explorative literature review that involves the concept of ethnicity, electoral conflict, and the interplay between ethnicity and electoral violence forms an important component of this research. The research also employs 'relative deprivation' theory as paradigm of its analysis that attempts to explain the conflictual relationship between ethnicity and electoral violence in Kenya. The study concludes that there is relationship between ethnicity and electoral conflict in Kenya. However, a number of other factors ranging from proximate, structural and trigger equally contributed to the 2007 electoral conflict.