

Overcoming Ethnic and Religious Crises for Sustainable Good Governance in Nigeria

¹Akanle Tayo Dare,
²Shaibu Oguche Albert &
³Edigbo Michael Nonso

^{1&2}Department of Christian
Religious Studies
Kogi State College of Education,
Ankpa

³Department of Christian
Religious Studies
Ebonyi State College of Education,
Ikwo

Article DOI:
10.48028/iiprds/ijdshms.v13.i2.03

Keywords:
Ethnic, Religious,
Crises, Sustainable
and Good
Governance

Corresponding Author:
Akanle Tayo Dare

Abstract

Nigeria is a country with various ethnic groups and with different ideologies. With the rampant crises here and there in the country which often involved Christian and Muslims, one cannot believe this is the religious that preaches peace. The three main religion groups in Nigeria include Christianity, Muslims and Traditional Religion. The relationship among these religious bodies has generated the problem of mistrust and suspicious leading to incessant religious crises in Nigeria. These crises foster widespread social, economic and religious insecurities, including injustice and absence of good governance. These problems threaten Nigerian's social stability and its democratic values thereby making the Nigerian society unsafe for industrialization and economic development. The methodology adopted for this paper is critical analysis. This paper sets out to examine the causes and its effects in a heterogeneous society like Nigeria. With the analysis in the study, one is convinced that the problem needs urgent intellectual and practical solution to save the fourth republic from another disaster as witnessed in the past. The paper therefore recommends that, the Nigeria's government should at the Federal, State and Local levels, adopt an open and uncompromising neutral attitude towards religious organizations in this country. Leaders of various religious groups should conscientise their numerous followers on the great value of religious toleration in a pluralistic religious country. In dealing with people of other faiths, adherents of religion should refrain from using insulting language and from saying anything that could give offence.

Background to the Study

In the past as at now, there had been intra-religious conflicts arising among mostly from differences in doctrinal issues. During economic recession, as witnessed during Buhari first administration (1983 – 1985) the establishment of Churches especially the Pentecostal became one of the most lucrative businesses in Nigeria. Christian had to persecute Christians, religious intolerance, Holy than thou attitude and so on are common with Nigerian religion. Before the advent of the two historic and missionary religions traditions viz: Christianity and Islam, the indigenous religion of Nigeria exercised its control over the people. The economic, social, political and religious values of the society were well internalized, sanctions and prohibitions were imposed on actions which the society or the supernatural entities where they escaped the vigilant attention of the society. The force behind these values was the fear of the Supreme Being, ancestors and to some extent, the fear of reproach and alienation from members of the society.

Violence and wars are evil times that fall upon humans. They are not unexpected because they are human made. However, they do not snare and trap their perpetrators and victims. As Glen Stassen (1992,236) observes that the Gulf War, “The war had a major impact on many people's values and perceptions”. This statement is not only true of the Gulf War but of any other war or violence that happens anywhere on our planet earth. So, in order to understand the misery perpetrated by crises or war, we need to analyze the short and long-term ethnic and religious ramifications of such actions. For more than four decades, Nigeria – Africa's most populous nation has been trapped in spiral cobwebs of crises. Christian and Muslim relationship have soured according to Boer (2003,35). What used of to be seen as ethnic and political crises under the auspices of regional politics, power struggles and competition has now translated into religious crises. In short, greed for political power welled up in each of the three regions struggling to capture more political clout and control of the economic resources of the country, resulting in the politics of numbers, which seeks to use the highest number of voters by using demagogic divisiveness. As each of the country's three major regions – the North, the Southeast, and the Southwest - have vied to capture more political clout and control of the country's economic resources, the country's two main religious communities (Islam and Christianity) have been drawn into this politics of numbers. Therefore, as Boer (2003) points out, “The fear of losing out to Christianity has made Islam even more nervous, for it stakes its claim based on an alleged continued majority. Increasing nervousness spells greater volatility”. Implicitly, the politics of numbers is a time bomb. It is explosive in nature. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why Christians in the Middle-Belt of Nigeria have been the target of Islamic onslaught, resulting in violent attacks and counterattacks.

Undoubtedly, people are aware that ethnic and religious crises have had negative impacts on Nigerians. Falola (1998, 1) notes, “The institutionalization of religious violence and the aggressive competition for dominance by Islam and Christianity continue to have a negative impact on the Nigerian nation”. That means, according to Falola, the bulk of the problem of violence in Nigeria arises from religious conflict. We can now say with precision, how violence issues are profoundly ethnic and religious. Finally,

my primary task is to carefully examine the thesis that religious and ethnic crises impact negatively good governance in Nigeria. In this vein, the paper attempt to under various subheadings, show the Nigerian situation, incidence of religious and ethnic crises, factors responsible for religious crises in Nigeria, remedy of religious crises as useful suggestions and to end with a conclusion.

The Nigerian Situation

Nigeria as it exists today is a pluralistic society, that is a society with different cultural and religious groups. The unification of the North and South by the British colonizers in 1914 by Sir Frederick Lugard put an end to the perception of Nigeria as one homogenous entity with one unifying dominant religion. Instead, Nigeria unity is sought in the strive for significant and relevant common goals, objectives and philosophy which takes cognizance of the common needs, aspirations and values of different ethnic groups within her. At the moment, the goals, aspiration and philosophy of the government of this country are enshrined in her constitution, national anthems and pledge and national policies. In the present Nigerian Federal governments' policy on education, fourth edition (2004), five objectives were outlined: A free and democratic society. A just and egalitarian society; A united, strong and self-reliant nation; A great and dynamic economy; A land of bright and full opportunity for all citizens.

It is the strong belief of the Federal government that if these five objectives are fully implemented in all sectors of education in Nigeria, the hope of a united, strong and self-reliant nation will not be a wishful dream. It is also envisaged that democratic government will be directed toward achieving these goals. This means that democratic government in the Nigerian context will no longer be based on ethnic, sectional, religious and non-cultural interests. The political common good is realized when Nigerian political communities recognize and appreciate not on paper but in practice the values of unity in religious, social, economic and cultural varieties. The unification of the various ethnic groups in Nigeria by the British colonizers, as Arazu (1990) rightly observed is providential and God-given. In his words:

“... Belief in God's creation of the universe and in His active and universal rule over that creation, does not allow for the emergence of change occurrences within the organized whole ... It is on the basis of this belief or faith that the genuine and faithful Nigerian sets out to continue the work of the evolution of the nascent nation into the full realization of what the author (God) meant. When he said 'let Nigeria be', 'He spoke and colonizing agents did the job and He got them out in due course. We are here to till the political, social, economic and religious ground and master or dominate it”.

Hence, in a heterogeneous society as Nigeria, religious is bound to be burning issue unless it is well regulated by effective and functional constitution operated by altruistic, selfless and open-minded politicians. Such leaders are yet to emerge in the Nigerian

context since the same homo religious (religious man) in Nigeria is also a political animal. For historical purposes, from the time the British colonizers set foot on Nigerian soil to the present moment, the three major religions have been and are still: Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion. The interactions between the adherents of these religions have not been so cordial. Consequently, the political life of the citizens has been adversely affected. Religious intolerance was sown by the British colonial government through her policy of indirect rule. Through this policy, which encourage the existing religious, political, social and economic institutions of ethnic groups in Nigeria in so far as they are not inimical to British government interests, the three dominant religions were tolerated. However, in practice, the British government learned more to Islam in the North and Christianity in the South to the detriment of African Traditional Religion.

These double standards in attitude towards the dominant religions of Nigeria filtered into the political mind set of the Nigerian politicians from independence in 1960 to this present moment. Hence, while freedom of religious thought and practice is officially embodied in Nigeria's constitution and official government papers (1989) in practice the politicians and leaders seem to say: my particular religion before any other thing else. The common good of all citizens in Nigeria should be evaluated and accepted through the prism of any particular system of government, its norms and values". This seems to be the crux of the religion – political life of leadership in Nigeria. Our politicians and other leaders have not been able to rise above the particularism of religious inclinations to the universality of acceptance of religious pluralism in a heterogeneous society as Nigeria. Consequently, the seed of religious intolerance sown by the British colonial masters are indirectly and often directly watered and cultured by subsequent Nigeria government.

However, the bottled-up discontents associated with ethno-religious conflict in Nigeria exploded with the return of constitutional democracy in 1999, intently throwing up issues beyond the capacities of the civil government. This circumstance invariably threatened the peace, security and survival of the country's long-awaited democracy and its corporate existence. Consequently, government not wanting to be seen as weak, adopted condemnable authoritarian use of massive force to deal with the problem, but it seems the more the fire of ethno-religious conflict is being doused, the more inflammable it has become. In Jos since 2001, ethnic clashes over cattle grazing and control of farmlands have pitched the indigenous ethnic Christian people in Berom against the Hausa-Fulani population. In sustained attacks on communities such as Riyom and Barkin Ladi, entire families have been wiped out in some instances, with attacks occurring daily on homes, fields and roads. Farms are looted, homes burnt, grain stores destroyed, and crops cut down, depriving survivors of shelter, sustenance and income.

Death and destruction resulting from ethnic clashes have been the case of Plateau state since the return to democracy. There is no end in sight to killings in Benue state, apart from the usual face off between the indigenous Tiv and Idoma, deadly clashes have recently occurred when the nomadic Fulani herdsmen slaughtered several Agatu ethnic group indigenes (Chris, 2018). This happened on May 5th, 2013 in which they raided eight

villages including Okokolo, Abogbe, Adana and Akpeko (Ugwuanyi, 2015). Before the latest massacre in January 2018, there have been clashes between the Tiv and the Fulani herdsmen constantly since May 2001. (SOF News 2018). No doubt, the Fulani herdsmen rage has added another layer to the growing incidence of clashes among ethnic group in Nigeria.

Incidence of Religious Crises in Nigeria

The history of religious crises in Nigeria runs like a colossus. Nigeria has witnessed about fifty (50) religious crises from 1980 to date. When these riots occur, numerous lives are lost, property worth hundred of millions of naira are destroyed. When religious crises occur, there use to be reprisal attack on other people and in another place or town. Christianity and Islam, the two adopted religions in Nigeria, have made social welfare services and educational development an important component of their activities. What is worrisome is the violence associated with those who have used the two faiths to propagate violence. From the Maitasane uprising of the 1980's to Boko Haram of today it's been violence associated with religious beliefs which have brought insecurity and massive destructions of lives and properties in Nigeria. The following are examples of religious crises in Nigeria.

Table 1.

S/N	Date	Town or State	Cause of Riots/Irritators	Number of casualties	Government response
1	December, 1980	Kano	Abubakar, Rimi Formar civilian Governor of Kano State issued quit notice to Muhammed Maitasine to leave the area illegally occupied by his group.	About 4,177 people were killed	Government paid N8 million as compensation to victims
2	1982	Bulukutu Maiduguri	Maitasine sects attack under the same guise of quit notice	400 lives were lost and property worth N3 million were Destroyed.	Military and police were used to quell the crises
3	1984	Jemita and Gombe	Maitasine sect attack under the quit notice	763 lives were lost And about 5,913 people Were displace	Military and police were used to quell the crises
4	April 26th 1985	Bauchi Gombe	Maitasine sects attack under the quire of quit notice	More than 100 people Died after about ten hours fighting	Government intervene Using armed force
5	1986	Ilorin	Muslim attack Christian palm Sunday procession	None	Government intervene
6	May 3 rd 1986	University of Sokoto	Muslem student Society attack Christian students	Injured but no death.VC Office set on fire	Government intervene
7	1986	University Of Ibadan	Uni-muslim community opposed to position of crucifies on campose	None	
8	1987	Kafanchan, Kaduna, Zaria and Funtua	A new Christian convert made comparism between passages in the Bible and Quran	Over 19 died 61 injured	Government intervene
9	1990	Kano	Triggered by an Igbo Christian, Gideon Akaluka who was alleged to have defecated on the Koran	Many people died and properties were destroy	Government uses police and military to quell the crises

10	1991	Kano	Triggered by Muslim Fanatics who claim to be protesting the Christian religious crusade of evangelist Reinhard Bonnke	People died, Churches and Mosques burnt	Soldier deployed to quell the crises
11	1992	Kaduna	Between Zango Kataf Christians and Zango Muslims	300 people died	Panel of inquiry was set up
12	10 th September, 2001	Jos	A Christian woman Attempted to cross a Barricaded street. This led to a scuffle Between her and a group of Muslims.	300 people died a reprisal attack in Aba, Owerri and Umuahia	Obasanjo visited the scene
13	2006	Maiduguri In Borno State and Onisha in Anambra State	Reprisal attack by the Igbos on the House indigene as a result of killing of innocent citizens under the guise of protesting against a publication of Prophet Muhammed by Dannish Newspaper	Over 50 died in Maiduguri over 30 churches and hotels were burnt	Governor Ngige and Borno counterparts intervened
14	December 4 th 2010	Potiskum	Consequent upon the conversion of one Cathrine Abbans to Islam	2 lives were lost	Government intervene
15	Jan.17, 2010	Nassarawa Gowon	Muslim youths attack Christians Worshippers on Sunday	Over 100 people died and properties worth millions of naira destroyed	Government intervene

16	July 26, 2009	Teshim in Bauchi and later Spread to Kano, Yobe and Borno State and other parts of Nigeria.	Boko-Haram crises started	Many lives were destroyed and properties worth millions of naira were destroyed	Government have been trying to put an end to the activities of the sect but to no avail
	August 27 th , 2016		This conflict emerged in Benue State and revolved around disputes between the Agatu ethnic group and Fulani herders, resulting in violence, displacement, and loss of lives.	Lives and properties were destroyed	Government Intervene
17	IPOB Agitation 2015 – present	Agatu, Benue State	The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) movements, primarily representing the Igbo ethnic group, have led to protests and confrontations with security forces, demanding secession from Nigeria.	People died and properties worth millions were destroyed.	Governments have been trying to put an end to the activities of the sect but to no avail.
18	Southern Kaduna Crises (Ongoing).	IPOB, movement, Anambra, Imo etc.	This crisis pertains to recurring violence in the southern part of Kaduna State, often along religious and ethnic lines, causing displacement and casualties.	Causing displacement and casualties of many lives were lost.	Government uses police and military to quell the crises.
19		Kaduna, Zaria.			

Sources: Onwubiko, and Okonkwo, (2012) and (SOF NEWS) 2018.

Factors Responsible for Religious Crises in Nigeria

Every problem has causes, and the crises of religions are not exempted. A quick look at history of humanity throughout the ages reveals that certain constraint factors breed and nurture religious crises with obvious consequences on the political, social, economic, and moral lives of the citizens. Certain things come to mind when one finds adherents of religions killing one another in the name of religion. Several factors are identified as source of religions conflicts.

Religious Intolerance and Fanaticism: In Nigeria the problem confronting the relationship between Christian and Muslims is attempted to interpret and impose the various doctrines by the various religious groups. To this effect, Umar, Ahmed, Musa and Abdullahi (2014) observe that;

... Describe the religion or ethnic group as majority or minority for the sake of access to resources. Huge energies are expended, and wild argument thrown around on who is the majority, minority e.t.c. Through careless handling, some of these arguments degenerate into violent ethnic or religious conflicts that tend to be extremely savage and bloody with no end, because either group can effectively, let alone permanently neutralize the other.

Oral or written statement made by the adherents or leaders either to show the superiority or inferiority of other religions lead to conflicts (Ezeh, 1999).

Particularity: This is the claim that there is no other religion but one's own religion. Demarest (1989).

Clearly represents this position in the following words:

Biblically speaking, the non-Christian religions ... are at best inadequate vehicles of salvation, and they are at worst demonic ... Christianity is true and the other religions are false... we affirm that other religions and ideologies are not alternative, if unredeemed by Christ, leads not to God, but to judgment, for Christ is the only way. In sum, we conclude from the Biblical evidence that religious plurality is a global manifestation of sinful humanity; flawed responses to general revelation and that the dogma of religious pluralism is false.

Viewed objectively, and in view of modern theological thinking, the attitude described by Demarest cannot be for Nigerian Christian and pastors. Whoever has listened to Paul in the Areopagus, or Peter in the house of Cornelius or Paul in his letter to the Romans cannot come up with that unacceptable particularity in the modern world (Acts 17:22-24; 10:34-35, Romans 1:18-21).

Poverty: Is another factor causing religious riots in Nigeria. The vast majority of Nigerians are desperately poor. They are simply living from hand to mouth. In many families, parents are out of work, children school fees cannot be paid, rents have accumulated, and food is in short supply (voice of the voiceless 2002). The poverty rate of the Northeast and North Central zones are 70% and 50% respectively (UNICEF, 2001). In 2004 the Northwest zone recorded 71.1% North East 72.1% and the North Central zone 70% (CBN, 2004). World Bank 2017 Atlas of Sustainable Development Goals shows that 35 million Nigerians are living in extreme poverty in 2013 than in 1990 which is defined as less than and £1.9 per day (documentsworld banks.org/crolated/en/275714938835556771/atlasofsustainabledevelopment). According to Ejeh (2007) "poverty manifests itself in insecurity as people are forced to take certain actions to sustain themselves. Poverty has the cumulative effect of raising tension that easily explode on the slightest excuse" (305).

Ignorance: This is the refusal to know something of other people's faith. It is amazing to know that many Christians who lives and preach among non-Christians know practically next to nothing about their religions. And yet, they focus on the fantastic, the bizarre and those things that strike them as unchristian and then make pronouncements about people's faiths that order on generalization and truths. Mala (1984) has summarized the situation in Nigeria:

As a matter of fact, the way Nigerians preach, teach and practice their religion betray the intolerance of the various adherents, their ability to accommodate other religious views, their false devotion to religions founders and there seemingly zealous but in fact fanatically uncompromising practices, contrary to the fundamental claims of their religions and the religious founder.

The foregoing is saying that what some people do in the name of religion is not part of that religion. An extreme and most ridiculous example is the claim by some that they have to defend God. Who is a man to defend God? Since God alone is Omnipotent, He is surely allowed to defend Himself.

Unemployment: Unemployment is always very high in Nigeria. Every year, hordes of young people graduate from secondary and tertiary institutions with no prospects of employment. Onwubiko (2012) observed that;

Unemployment occurs when people are willing and able to work but find it difficult to get a job because the supplies of labour outstrip the demand for labour. Unemployment becomes a problem when there is a saturation of labour market with labour to the extent that the supply of labour is far higher than the demand of it (p.19).

The increasing rate of unemployment has made many of the youths to be ready-made tools and vulnerable to the manipulation of agents to commit all forms of vices. Unemployed especially the Almajiri's can easily be mobilized to cause mayhem especially in the Northern part of the country.

Effect of Religious Crises on National Development

Religious crises in Nigeria have led to the destruction of lives and properties. According to Elaigwu (2004) between 1976 and 2009 over 100,000 had lost their lives and properties worth billions of naira have been destroyed. In more that fifty recorded ethno-religious crises in Northern part of Nigeria. Some of the people killed in these ethno-religious crises will no longer contribute to the development of Nigeria. The losses that come in the destruction of property affect the economy of Nigeria. The continuous escalating of religious crises in Nigeria is gradually creating and conditioning people to harbour bitterness, hatred, rancour and grievances against each other, which has the potential danger of bursting into serious crises. Lack of peace will affect foreign investment which would have contributed to national development.

It is a fact today that where religious crises have occurred, a lot of arms have been stockpiled as a measure to either checkmate potential “opponents” or as deterrent to opposing religious foes in the future. The scenario has serious security implications for the peaceful co-existence of Nigeria (Gwaman, 2010). To this effect Ekeh (2007) stated that, “no meaningful development can take place in an atmosphere of insecurity and a breakdown of law and order” (306). The image of the Nigeria nation in the international community has been smeared. The dislocation and relocation of people as a result of religious and ethnic crises have created socio-economic problems as some are thrown out of jobs. Some of these settlements have also become a haven of idle hands which constitute potential hands of armed robbers and other social vices (Adama, 2016).

Government Intervention

- i. 1980 - 1990:** During this period, the Nigerian government often responded to religious crises through security measures and law enforcement. Military and Police forces were deployed to areas experiencing religious violence, with attempts to restore peace and order.
- ii. 2000s:** In the 2000s, the Nigerian government initiated various efforts to address religious tensions and conflicts. The Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) was established in 1999 to foster dialogue between Christian and Muslim leaders. Additionally, the establishment of the Nigerian Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (NIPCR) aimed to promote peace building and conflict resolution.
- iii. 2001:** The federal government introduced the Religious Equity Promotion Bill in 2001, which aimed to ensure the protection of Religions right and prevent discrimination. However, the bill faced oppositions and was not passed into law.
- iv. 2006:** The Nigerian government established the National Inter-Religious Committee (NIREC) to further promote dialogue and Cooperation between religious groups.
- v. 2011:** In response to the deadly bombings on Christmas Day in 2011, President Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency in parts of the country, increasing security measures in regions affected by religious violence.
- vi. 2016:** The Nigerian government launched the National Policy on Religious Tolerance, aimed at promoting peaceful coexistence and mutual respect among religious groups.
- vii. 2020:** In recent years, government efforts have continued to focus on dialogue, reconciliation and conflict resolution. Various State governments have implemented community-based initiatives to foster understanding between religious groups at the grassroots level.
- viii. 1992 Kano Crises:** In responses to the Kano crises in 1992, where clashes between Christians and Muslims led to significant casualties, the Nigerian government established the Kukah Foundation to promote interfaith dialogue and understanding. Bishop Matthew Kukah played a key role in facilitating peace talks.
- ix. 2000s - 2010:** The Nigerian government continued to establish bodies and initiative aimed at promoting interfaith dialogue and religious harmony. For

example, the Presidential Committee on Inter-Religious Relation was set up in 2000 to foster peaceful coexistence.

- x. **2002 - Sharia Implementation:** The adoption of sharia law in some northern Nigerian States led to tensions between Muslims and non-muslims. The federal government intervened to mediate and encourage dialogue between religious groups to prevent further escalation of violence.
- xi. **2006 - Yelwa Massacre:** Following the Yelwa Massacre in Plateau State, the Nigerian government set up the Justice Niki Tobi commission of Inquiry to investigate the incident and recommend measures to prevent future violence.
- xii. **2010 - 2015 - Jonathan Administration:** The administration of President Goodluck Jonathan established Initiatives like the National Committee on Peace and Reconciliation to address religious and communal conflicts across the country.
- xiii. **2015 - Buhari Administration:** The government under President Muhammadu Buhari emphasized counter terrorism efforts against Boko Haram and aimed to strengthen security measures in regions affected by religious violence.
- xiv. **2021 - Onward:** Recent government interventions have focused on deradicalisation programs for former Boko Haram members, as well as initiatives aimed at continuing hate speech and promoting religious tolerance through educational campaigns.

Remedy of Ethnic and Religious Crises

So far, we have been trying to X-ray the root causes of ethnic and religious crises within the Nigerian context and their effects on socio-political and economic life of Nigerian citizens. In view of the magnitude of the problems posed by this cancerous vice, we hereby suggest:

- i. That the Nigeria's government should at the Federal, State and Local levels adopt an open and uncompromising neutral attitude towards religious organization in this country
- ii. Government should build, finance and control an ecumenical school to be run by experts drawn from various religious bodies in Nigeria. This school should be run on a short term bases for present and future politicians, civil and religious leaders.
- iii. Government should ban public preaching, distribution of tracts and others acts capable of provoking violent reactions from different religious group, in public transports and unauthorized public places of worships. As a further check on religious excesses, the government should discuss with at least major religious leaders in Nigeria on the possibility of producing a common code of conduct for the practice of religion in Nigeria.
- iv. Leaders of various religious groups should conscientise there numerous followers on the great value of religious toleration in a pluralistic religious country. They could do this by denouncing religious intolerance in any form and upholding the positive values and functions of religion. Some of these values are; peace, unity, harmony, forgiveness, love and toleration of others. Members of each religious group in Nigeria should be informed and formed by these noble

values.

- v. At all levels of education in this country, students and their teachers should constantly reflect on the value of religious toleration in a mixed community of religious believers and practitioners. In all tertiary institutions, symposium should be frequently organized on this topic.
- vi. In dealing with people of other faiths, adherents of religion should refrain from using insulting language and from saying anything that could give offence. They should avoid condemning other people's religion as false as this may warrant others to speak blasphemy against Christianity.
- vii. Government should create more jobs opportunities for the idle youths in Nigeria.
- viii. Challenges of poverty should be addressed in a more creative manner. The conditions of the poor must be ameliorated to reduce the vulnerability of the poor to mischief making.

Summary and Conclusion

The most important contribution of this paper is that religious pluralism offers to Nigeria the principle of "Live and let Live", as well as religious understanding, tolerance and harmony. In this paper an effort was made to examine the problems of religious crises in the heterogeneous society like Nigeria. Factors that give rise to this cancerous vice were exposed and its antecedents' effects. The paper rounded up with suggestions for meaningful co-existence in Nigeria multi-farious and multi-cultural set up.

Religious crises are problems and a bottleneck to national development in Nigeria. Peaceful practice of religion is a pre-requisite to national development. These crises bring about hatred, rancour, bitterness, and insecurity which are not indices for national development. The general knowledge about Nigeria should be promoted among the people. The various religious crises led to lost of lives and properties, lack of peace, the image of country is dented in the international community. No meaningful development can take place in a country that there is insecurity and breakdown of law and order.

References

- Abioje, P. O. (2002). *Christian recognition of other religions: Towards religious mutual respect to society*, A paper presented at the 23rd Annual Conference of the Nigerian Association for the study of Religious, October 14th – 18th
- Adama, T. (2016). *The role of Christian churches in upholding moral Standards in Kogi State, Nigeria*. A PhD Thesis submitted to the Department of Religious and Cultural Studies University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Arazu, R. (1990). The Nigeria of the 1990's: An Approaches Beyond Fronters (Transition 1990), (2); 25 A.O. (eds) *Issues in Peace and Conflict Studies and other social sciences*. Bel's Book.
- Central Bank of Nigeria (2004). *Annual report and statement of account documents*, Worldbanksorg/courted/en/217571-493883556771 atlas or sustainable development.
- Chris, M. (2018). Herders against famers: Nigeria's expanding deadly conflict, *International Crisis Group; Africa Report No 252*. 22.
- Demarest, B. (1988). General and special revelations: Epistemological foundation of religious pluralism in Dialogue and Alliance, *Journal of International Religious Foundation*, 2(4), 129 Ina, N.Y. Winter,
- Ejeh, P. O. (2007). *Ethnic conflict in Nigeria: Challenges for sustainable development in Edegbu*, A.O. (ed) *contemporary issues*. 28
- Ekele, P. A. (2007). *Morality, religion and the Nigerian pluralistic society*, Unpublished M.A. Thesis submitted to the Department of Religion, University of Jos.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004). *National policy on education (Revised)*: NERDC Press, Federal Ministry of Education.
- Gwamna, J. D. (2010). *Religion and politics in Nigeria: African Christian textbooks (ACTs)*.
- Ibenwa, C. N. & Ngele, O. K. (2010). *Religion, ethnicity and peaceful co-existence in Nigeria*, In Nnadozie O.U. and Uzuegbanami and the challenges of Sustainable development in the new Millennium: The Nigerian experience. A book of reading, 304 – 308.
- Mala, S. B. (1984). Religions pluralism in Nigeria: The way out and factors favouring It, In Mala, Sam Babs Mala and Z.I. Oseni (eds), *Religion, Peace and Unity in Nigeria*, NASR Publications, 243.

- Ogbu, K. (1980). *Religion is a factor in National development in E.C. Amudieazi ed. Readings in social sciences: Issues in national development*, Fourth Dimension Publishers; 310.
- Onwubiko, E & Okonkwo, N (2012). Youths unemployment and restiveness, *Daily Sun*. Special Operations News from Around the World (SOFNEWS) June 28th, 2018.
- The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, (Promulgation) *Decree 1989, No. 37* (1), 25, 29.
- Ugwuanyi, S. (2015). *Ethno-religious crises in Nigeria*, Retrieved from onlinedailypost.com on 12/July/2023
- Umar, A. P., Ahmed, H. S, Musa A. & Abdullahi, M. U. (2014). *Religions diversity and national Integration in Nigeria*, Research on Humanities and Social Sciences www.juste.org.
- UNICEF, (2001). *Children's woman's right in Nigeria*, A wake-up call.