



**Christian-Muslim superiority crises: Implication for Education and Sustainable National Development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in Nigeria.**

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**Abstract**

There has been a silent battle for supremacy between Islam and Christianity, within the country and these supremacy battles has resulted into a serious crises dimension that this has seriously affected education in the country. When crises situation occurs, most often than north, such crises occurs within educational settings, students, staffs and school administrators abandon such crisis situation for their safety, they also abandon studies and lectures. Most often schools within such areas and educational activities are truncated over a long period of time. At the end, schools and other educational facilities must be renovated and reconstructed, curriculum must be covered, and teachers must be in a rush to make sure curriculum contents are covered. Most often, courses are jammed packed to cover the school curriculum. The result will be that our students are not properly taught, hardly do they earn or acquire any meaningful knowledge to lead a self reliant and self sufficient live for themselves and the society. In the long run, they contribute absolutely nothing to sustainable national development. This paper looked at the roles the various religion played in bringing about education, the effect of these fights for supremacy, the impact on the students and how these students become self reliant and contribute to sustainable national development. The review found that religious crisis has caused a lot of damage to our educational system and most of the products of these educational institutions are hardly self reliant, they only acquire such certificates to gain white collar jobs, hence their contribution to sustainable national development is at best very minimal. This calls for a sober reflection on the future of our country, which this paper found to be very bleak if this continues. It was recommended that curriculum designers should introduce courses that will help different adherents of the different religion to understand the belief system, the teaching and practice of other religion and why they behave the way they do. It was also recommended that the best approach to reduce religious crisis in Nigeria is open dialogue.

**Key words:** Religion superiority; Christianity, Islam, sustainable national development, educational development, self reliance and self sufficient.

**Introduction**

Very few people in developed countries would dispute the very importance of education in our national lives and those of our children. Every country needs education in order to be professionally successful, to broaden citizen's horizons, to be able to question the status quo and to choose what kind of life they want to lead. Education allows nations over the world to influence their health. Indeed, education is what enables citizens to lead a self determined existence at all level. Education is fundamental for the complex organization of modern societies and it serves higher goals such as freedom and justice and sustainable national development. Better-educated people become more involved in political decision making processes, thus helping to further democracy thereby bringing about sustainable national development. In most countries of the world, extending education to broad sections of the population by following the principle of "education for all" and seeking the attainment of ever higher qualifications has brought about a marked improvement in living condition over a period of decades or even centuries (Nyblade, 2015). All over the world the prosperity of nations is closely tied to their citizens' level of education; it is for this reason that modern societies are called knowledge societies. However, because education began to spread at different times in different parts of the world and under very different conditions, the extent to which countries have traveled along the road of becoming knowledge societies varies enormously. Not all nations have been equally successful in disseminating knowledge and harnessing it for the good of the community (Ibhanawoh & Dibua, 2003).

Smith, (2015) saw Religion as the belief in the existence of a supernatural being, who is the creator and controller of the universe; solving men's puzzling word, many problems and human of solitude with perfect knowledge and mysteries of life known and unknown within and without the universe. It is based on this experience about God that "man, in the evaluation of his existence, enters into a new consciousness of an anthological bond between himself and God" (Anuibeze, 2005). Historically, Christianity and Islam have demonstrated a struggle for superiority and eventual conflicts which deprived not only peace and tranquility among the citizenry, but also serve as inimical vehicles against education prospects and development in recent times, particularly at the dawn of 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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One of the examples is the Boko Haram insurgency a group whose name implies western education is an abomination, a taboo and forbidden, which started in the country many years ago beginning from the Maitatsine era (Kukah, 2007).

Christian–Muslim relations, even at the best of times, have always been disturbingly marred by suspicion, accusations and counter-accusations over interpretations of history and experiences. This has been further confounded by the very complex nature of the colonial histories on the African continent, where the destruction of existing civilizations, empires and emperors provided the foundation stones for the establishment of the colonial states that later emerged. The major issues that serve as constraints in Christian–Muslim relations in some of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa were majorly that of superiority interest. The issue of Christian–Muslim relations against the backdrop of the return of democracy in most of sub-Saharan Africa in the last ten or fifteen years has been one of gory tales and sad endings (Oloyede, 2015).

Woodberry, (2012) posited that Christianity is the religion established in the person of Jesus of Nazareth in Palestine which theologians and people believe came into existence with the visit of the Holy Spirit on the apostles on Pentecost in the first century A.D. This great religion has grown over the years with the largest adherents among other world religions (Anyacho, 2005). Christianity has the Bible which has the Old and New testaments as its sacred scriptures. Jesus Christ as the founder and incarnate revelation of God, who worked miracles, raise the dead and called His apostles and Disciple to carry out His good News to all the nations of the world. He died and resurrected with power to redeem mankind from sin (Woodberry, 2012). Oloyede (2015) averred that Islamic religion is believed by Muslims to be founded by Allah (God) himself with Mohammad as the messenger of Allah sent to deliver his final and definite message to mankind, “Muhammad is the last and the greatest of the prophets” (Omogbe, 1993). Islamic religion is believed by Muslims to be founded by Allah (God) himself with Mohammad as the messenger of Allah sent to deliver his final and definite message to mankind, “Muhammad is the last and the greatest of the prophets” (Omogbe, 1993). The prophet Muhammed was himself a married man, Allah sent him with the message of salvation for mankind. It has been posited by a lot of scholars that Islam is a violent religion, where the adherent’s believe that the more killings one made for Jihad, the more reward the person will get when he goes to paradise. But the religion of Islam has always been seen as that of peace, where Islam itself is ‘‘peace’’. This contradiction has always trailed most activities of the Islamic religion globally (Patel, 2007). The Islamic faith is based on the popular five pillars of Islam; the Quran (Koran) is their holy book that contains the holy message of Allah to its adherents. The Muslims worship in a mosque, presided over by an imam.

African Traditional Religion (ATR) is the religion of the people with no sacred scriptures and founder. It is found in all facets of life and is very pragmatic and realistic (Mbiti, 1991). The ATR believe in the ascription of supernatural powers to some supernatural being, with abodes in streams, trees, forest, ponds, rocks or animal, their adherents derive their powers, blessing and protection from such deities (god and goddess). African Traditional Religion (ATR) or Traditional African Religion (TAR) had been in existence earlier before the arrival of the Christianity and Islam religions and their propagators in Africa and Nigeria. The ATR had established solid public morality towards peace and tranquility and conflicts in Africa were not as a result of religious crisis as each culture was based on its religious and ethics way of life. The ATR is a religion that can be seen in five parts viz: the beliefs and practices, ceremonies and festival, religious objects and places, values and morals, religious officials (Lieberman, 2005; Lee and Shultz, 2012).

According to Hariri, (2012), Religion and education, two of humankind’s most ancient endeavors, have long had a close relationship. Contemporary access to schooling; a solid pathway to educational attainment – depends on a country’s educational infrastructure. In many instances, the foundations of that infrastructure are based on facilities originally built by religious leaders and organizations to promote learning and spread the faith. In India, the most learned men (and sometimes women) of ancient times were residents of Buddhist and Hindu monasteries. In the

Middle East and Europe, Christian monks built libraries and, in the days before printing presses, preserved important earlier writings produced in Latin, Greek and Arabic. In many cases, these religious monasteries evolved into universities. Other universities, particularly in the United States and Europe, were built by Christian denominations to educate their clergy and lay followers. Most of these institutions have since become secular in orientation, but their presence may help explain why populations in the U.S. and Europe are highly educated. Apart from their roles in creating educational infrastructure, religious groups were foundational in fostering societal attitudes toward education (Hariri, 2012).

Gallego and Woodberry, (2010) however posited that there is considerable debate among scholars over the degree to which Islam has encouraged or discouraged secular education over the centuries. Some experts note that the first word of the Quran as it was revealed to Prophet Muhammad is “Iqra” which means “Read or Recite”; they say Muslims are urged to pursue knowledge in order to better understand God’s revealed word. Early Muslims made innovative intellectual contributions in such fields as mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, medicine and poetry. They established schools, often at mosques, known as *katatib* and *madradas*. Islamic rulers built libraries and educational complexes, such as Baghdad’s House of Wisdom and Cairo’s Al-Azhar University, to nurture advanced scholarship. Under Muslim rule, southern Spain was a center of higher learning, producing such figures as the renowned Muslim philosopher Averroes (Gallego and Woodberry, 2010).

But other scholars contend that these educational attainments, and the regard that Muslims had for intellectual inquiry in realms outside religion, were gradually attenuated by a complex mix of social and political events over several centuries. Some scholars argue that the educational decline began earlier, in the 11th and 12th centuries, and was rooted in institutional changes (Chaney, 2008; Austen, 2010; Gallego and Woodberry, 2010). In particular, Austen, (2010) contends the decline was caused by an increase in the political power of religious leaders who prioritized Islamic religious learning over scientific education. Their growing influence helped bring about a crucial shift in the Islamic approach to learning. It became dominated by the idea that divine revelation is superior to other types of knowledge, and that religious education should consist of learning only what Islamic scholars had said and written in the past (Austen, 2010). In the view of some historians, this shift severely constricted intellectual inquiry in the Muslim world as the natural sciences; critical questioning and art were downplayed (Bandyopadhyay and Elliot, 2012). Education became primarily the study of established, traditional religious and legal canons. This change also tightened religious scholars’ control over the education of Muslims in Africa and the Middle East; a hold that was not broken until colonial governments and Christian missionaries introduced Western-style educational institutions.

Becker and Woessman (2009) however observed that it is worthy of note to mention that Muslim populations in sub-Saharan Africa have been disadvantaged in the formal education sector since the colonial period. Christian missionaries were the primary providers of formal education during colonial rule, and Muslims were often prevented from attending these schools, or did not allow their children to attend these schools for fear of conversion. As formal education was a requirement for most professional jobs and work in government, Muslims were often at a serious disadvantage in the modern labor market as a result of their lack of formal education relative to Christians (Becker and Woessman, 2009). Orville, (2015) found that African Traditional Religions still have a significant but diminishing social impact. The major influence of the Christian missions and churches throughout the twentieth century is clear on education. That influence was diminished with an increasing role for the government in the educational and medical fields. However, with an increasing population, the demand for increased educational opportunities and medical care continued, especially in secondary and tertiary education and major referral hospitals.

Crises occurs where there is no peace, crisis could be defined as he absence of peace. Blaydes, (2010) defines peace as “freedom from or a stopping of war, a treaty or agreement to end war or disorder, public security, law and

order; freedom from public discord, an undisturbed state of mind; absence of mental conflict. “In the midst of two giant world religions in Nigeria, Africa and the world at large, one would believe that peace (one of the central doctrines of Christianity and Islam), Nigeria would be the most peaceful country of the world. Globally, education has become an imperative as a result of the opportunities it provides for sustainable national development. Every nation owes its citizens a functional and enterprising education for the willful growth of those who become committed to it, growth as used here is in ambiguous terms, social, economic, political, technological and peaceful growth (Blaydes, 2010).

According to the National Policy on Education, (2004), the education of Nigerian citizen is for self reliance, creating an egalitarian society, where citizens would have equal opportunities to all educational levels. The education canvassed by the national policy is to create a land of opportunities, where all citizens shall be developed technologically, socially, economically, scientifically, and above all for self reliance thereby contributing to national growth and development. Based on this, all citizens must have a peaceful and serene learning environment, where they can study and achieve these set objectives of the national policy. Once this is achieved, recipients of such education will come back to the larger society and contribute to sustain modern democracies and sustainable national development, but unfortunately, this has not been the case in Nigeria and world over (Blaydes and Linzer, 2008). It is on the basis of this argument that this review is carried out to assess how religious crisis has impaired Nigerian educational system leading to an unsustainable national development characterized by chaos, violence, war, militia activities and these unprovoked killing and destruction of properties of innocent harmless citizens.

### **Christianity and Islamic Superiority complex**

The belief of superiority of religions over each other is an established truth that cannot be denied by all religious bodies. A trace of the history of the founder of Islam (Mohammad) and Christianity (Jesus Christ) gives a clear picture of the religions. Jesus Christ is represented in the scriptures as God incarnate, that is, Christ revealed as both human and divine deities, born of the Virgin Mary who was betrothed to Joseph and a carpenter and popularly known as Jesus of Nazareth in Palestine. He was born in 4 B.C and the Holy Bible claimed that “he shall be great, and shall be called the son of the most Highest and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and his Kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke 1:32, 33). “And Jesus came and speak unto them, saying, all power is given unto me in heaven and on earth” (Matt. 28: 18). “The father loves the son, and hath given all things unto his hand” (John 3:35). Isaiah the prophet had declared about Christ that “His name shall be called Wonderful, Councilor, the Mighty god, the Everlasting father, the Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6). Christ resurrected from the dead after three days (Luke 24).

With the above scriptural claims, Christianity holds very strongly that Christ is superior to any religious founder. Furthermore, the Christian religion believes in the separation of religion from politics of powers. Before Pilate, “Jesus answered, my kingdom is not of this world, if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servant fight, that I should not be delivered to jews; therefore my kingdom is not on earth” (John 18:36). For it is written in the book of Romans, 14:17 that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. The foundation of Christianity rest on Christian believe that God exist and has revealed Himself in a unique way culminating in the Person of Jesus Christ as God incarnate and present in this present age in the Holy Spirit, affirming the existence of a tri-personal God...(as “Father, Son and Spirit”) (Bleck, 2011). Therefore, “He is God, living: personal, ethical, self-revealing, eternal and infinite in power and knowledge” (Manglos-Weber, 2016). The Christian’s view of a personal and Holy God, as the author of the universe and its moral legislator and ruler, is the only one in which the reason and the heart of man can permanently rest the central purport of Christian believe and religion is found in the teaching and belief on the incarnation of God in the unique person of Christ as the founder declared in the scripture to be God in the flesh. “And word was made flesh and dwell among us (Omoregbe, 2002; Jowitt (2010).

Pope Urban II appealed to Christians to go into a fight to reclaim the Holy Places lost when the Arabs overran Palestine, Egypt and Syria as a result of the hostilities with the Byzantine Empire which were Christian area in 1071. But the crusade, Christian Holy war did not last (Jowitt, 2010).

### **The Islamic claim for superiority**

Islam sees no rationale in the idea that Allah, a father, could have a son, therefore Moslems reject the Christian Trinitarian doctrine. In Omoregbe (2002) “Allah forbid that He Himself should beget a son, those who say “Thou Lord of Mercy has begotten a son’ preach a monstrous falsehood (Koran 19:29, 88). The Muslim sources of the biography of Muhammad the prophet is based on (1) Historical authenticity, (2) the hadith-statement of what the prophet said or did, (3) the Jirah-the biography of the prophet who was born about 870 AD. He is regarded in this document as among other pre-Islam Arab heroes. He was “also a hero; whose wars and achievements were related in the same way as the early heroic actions (Adul, 1976); (4) Poetry, “there was a great deal of this among the Arabs; some of these are authentic while there are others which are not”. The contents of the early poetries form in themselves some sources for the information about the activities of the prophet (5) Historical writings (Sirah Muhammaad, the son of Abdullah of Banuhashum in Mecca) (Adul, 1976 cited in Meshram, 2013). He was born in about 570 AD in Mecca (Now Saudi Arabia) and his father was Abdullahi and his mother Aminah. Muhammad received a revelation in which he was called to be the prophet of Allah in the land of Mecca which was of only idol worshippers. He was married to a rich widow by name Khadija. “He claimed to have had a revelation during which he was told to Iqra translated to mean ‘recite’ or ‘read’”, which the Islamic religion derived its name (Omoregbe, 1993). Moreso, Islam has no distinction between religion and the state. Yusuff (2010) declares:

Islam as a complete code of life regards politics as an integral part of its system. It gives no room for the separation of state and religion, or demarcation between temporal and spiritual affairs. Islam is a religion that stands for peace and submission to the will of Allah; its articles of faith are beliefs in oneness and fate. Its five pillars are belief in Allah....these are the tenets that makes the religion to be cohesive factor in the society, because it affords the people the worshipers the opportunity of getting closer to their creator and interacting with His creatures (Quoran: 477).

The Muslims has a popular belief that religion and politics are inseparable as such Islam must take over the governance in Nigeria state without which there can be no peace. Therefore, other religious adherents who are regarded as infidels must not be allowed to the seat of governance (Burstein, 2007; Nunn, 2010; Platas, 2016). Yusuff (2010) posits that it is a popular belief within the Muslims that Islam as a religion has apparatus of political system and government to make the state function as a nation. The Islamic politics is knowledge of Allah’s laws “Sharia”, and the power is the ability to implement the laws to one, and then tell others to follow. (Q. 33:35, Q 15:97, Q. 16:125, Q. 2:256 and Q. 22:35-50). Islam as a universal religion has its own approach to nation building, therefore, nation building in Islamic perspective is the creation of just human being that is conscious of his creator and his duties to human fellow through sacrifice without expecting material gratification or reward (Surah 76:110).

### **A review of religious crisis in Nigeria as a source of disintegration**

Religious crisis in Nigeria continues to give Nigerians surprises and unrest for the simple reason that religion should really be a major source to peace and unity in the society, the reverse however is the cases as religious crisis beget disunity, ethnicity, insurgency and destruction of lives and property. The following few religious upheavals in Nigeria as revealed by Adekunle and Adegbaiké, (2010); Jekayinoluwa and Egbetola, (2010) may refresh our memories of the ugly occurrences orchestrated by religious crises:

1978)The beginning of the Maitatsine and attempts to resist national authority by some selected few in the North

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- 1980) Maitatsine intra-Islamic puritanical insurrection which later spread to Jimeta, Yola, Adamawa, Bauchi and Gombe in 1984, Borno in 1985 and Kaduna in 1986.
- 1982) Islamic fanatics attempting to prevent Pope Paul's visit to the north where houses and other properties were burnt down and looting of Igbo businessmen shop in Kano.
- 1984) A major religious upheaval ignited by the conversion of a Muslim to Christian (Pastor Bako), the Muslims stormed Federal College of Education Kafangchan, Kaduna, and Jimeta, Adamawa leaving 763 persons death.
- 1985) (a) Religious fanatics in Gombe and Bauchi in 10 hours fought and attacked Brig. General Sani Sami during his inspection of damages done during the Gombe massacre.
- (b) Muslim Student's Society of Othman Dan Fodio University rampaged over the Students Union Government (SUG) events in commemorating the achievement of Nana Asmau, Othman Dan Fodio's daughter.
- (c) Muslim Student's Society attacked other students with dangerous weapons in Othman Dan Fodio University.
- 1986) The same occurred in the University of Ibadan in the Chapel Crucifix of 10,000 wooden sculpture of the risen Christ was said to have obstructed the Muslim's view to the East for prayer. Muslims objected to the match through the Muslim area and rioted in violence. Christians demonstrated against Babangida's attempt to include Nigeria into the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC).
- 1987) Fanatics riot popularly code named 'Mission 87' against the conversion and preaching of Bello Abubarkar to Christian and preaching about his past as a Muslim in Kafangchan
- 1988) In Kaduna Polytechnic / Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Muslim students rejected the declaration of a Christian student as SUG president when election favored them.
- Riot against the sale of pig and its slaughter at the public abattoir in Obudu by Muslims
- 1989) Riot against the German Reihard Bonke crusade in Kano by Muslims led by Alma Idris.
- 1992) Religious schism between Muslim and Christians in Zango Kataf in Kaduna, where Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) step in to protest against the verdict of the judicial panel.
- 1993) Two Muslim sects clash over the use of a mosque built in Tundun Wada area of Brigade quarters in Kano metropolis.
- 1995) Islamic bigots murdered Gideon Akaluka, an Igbo in Kano prison for using a sheet of the Koran to clean his anus after defecating.
- 1996) 35 Shiite members protested over the arrest of their leader, Mallam Ibrahim el Zaky-Zaky by the police in Zaria.
- 1997) In Kano, four Shiite fundamentalists sect shot dead in an encounter with the police at the Kofa Mata Eidil-Fitr prayer ground, attracted provocative statements accusing religious and traditional leaders in Nigeria of misguiding Muslims and distorting the concept of Islam religion.

The Shiites protested in Kaduna State against the authorities who prevented their staging a demonstration in solidarity with their leader, Ibrahim El Zaky-Zaky charged to court. The police killed four and dispersed them with tear gas as Islamic slogan prevailed.

1998) Five people were killed in Fage Jumat mosque, Kano in a clash between security men and Muslim group believed to be the Shiite movement demanding the release from detention of their leader, Ibrahim El-Zaky-Zaky.

Irate Muslim fundamentalists vandalized some churches in Maiduguri metropolis and burnt two vehicles over the so-call imposition of Christian religious studies in schools in the State.

1999) Muslim fundamentalists vandalized some churches in Maiduguri metropolis over their so-call imposition of Christian religious studies in schools in the State.

2000) Kaduna riots broke out over Sharia which claimed many lives. Retaliatory riot broke out in Aba, Uyo, Owerri and Umuahia over the killing of Ibos in Kaduna mayhem. Religious riots in Kachia in Kadun state, Jalingo, in Taraba state and Damba in Borno states respectively Religious fundamentalist in Saki in Oyo State and Iwo in Osun State rioted and caused by one Alfa Mafoya, an Islamic preacher with his fiery branch of Islam, using unprintable words to describe Jesus Christ, which infuriated some Christian group in the town. Kaduna renewed religious war which claimed 300 lives within 24 hours. Muslim fundamentalists demolished the ancient Moreso Shrine in Offa, Kwara State and many people wounded.

2001) Muslims sectarian crisis in Jos, Plateau State over an alleged move to convert the State to Christian State Islamic religious fundamentalist unleashed terror on churches and Christians residential houses in Osogbo, Osun State capital, to disrupt the Christian crusade organized by a German preacher, Reihard Bonke burning ten churches and claiming one live.

2002) The riot fuelled by Muslim youth protesting over an alleged blasphemous publication against prophet Mohammad on 2002 Miss World beauty contest with more than 200 people killed and 30,000 people displaced in Kaduna State.

2004) In Kano, fundamentalists youths hijacked a protest by Muslims (Council of Ulama) over an ethnic crisis in Shendam, Plateau State, alleged to have massacre hundreds of Muslims in Yelwa, Shendam where ten people were killed. In Jos, Plateau State, Muslim Hausa/Falani accused by road users of blocking the main road during their Jumal service accompanied by blood bath all over the main town of the state secretariat.

2006) In Maduguri, Bauchi and Katstina, Muslim protesters set fire on churches and killed many while the angry Onitsha people in Anambra State went on rampage at the sight of the bodies of their dead relations from the north.

2007) The killing of Mrs. Oluwatoyin Olusesan by Muslim students in Gandu, Gombe State over an alleged desecration of the Qur'an which sparked controversy nationwide when she stopped a student from cheating in an examination hall.

2009) In Makama new extension, popularly known as the Federal low Cost, in Bauchi State, an ethno-religious conflict erupted; killing 11 people, over 400 houses burnt, leaving 1,600 families displaced by Muslims.

In Maduguri, Borno State, tension went high following threats by a Muslim religious sect to avenge the maltreatment of its member by a state security team.

In Bauchi, Yobe and Maiduguri and Jos, Boko Haram sect protest against Western Education among other political reasons with the election of the Christian president Goodluck Jonathan (Jeke Yinoluwa and Egbetola, 2010).

2010-2014) The Jamaatu Ahlil-Sunnah Lid' da'awatiwal Jihad, popularly known as Boko Haram, a terrorist insurgency in the country bombed Eagle Square on 1<sup>st</sup> October Independence Day in 2010, UN Building in 2011, the restless attacks on the northern State of Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Kano, Kaduna and other cities and towns are clear evidences of Islamic Jihad war against Christianity (<https://ten-m.wikipedia.org/wiki>, 2011).

2014-2018) Series of unwarranted killings by the Muslim sect ranging from nomadic herdsmen killing in the name of struggling for grazing land with local tribal farmers, the most recent occurred in Benue state where 103 local farmers were ambushed in the night and killed, destroying properties worth more than 20 billion Naira. The Boko Haram killing here and there, accompanied by bombing and cattle rustling in the North and the middle belt region.

### **Religious Crises and Educational Development**

The persistent religious conflicts and insecurity in Nigeria has given meaningful Nigerians a cause for deep concern in recent times. Many scholars wonder why religion which used to be the major unifying factor for core national unity, peaceful co-existence and national development has become a tool for political manipulation, violence, destruction of lives and property in Nigeria in recent time. Having a deep knowledge about various religious and ethnic backgrounds of the country is a veritable condition for the promotion of peace and harmony among Nigerians. Education in Nigeria has had a lot of setbacks as a result of religious crisis in Nigeria. Taking a closer look at the chronicle of different religious crises as mentioned above revealed that most of the crises occurred within Nigerian educational settings with students as the major actors in these crises. Once there is any violent situation disrupting the normal functioning of the school system, students are forced to vacate the school and abandon their studies for security reasons.

Faced with the lingering effects of religious and ethnic conflicts on university education in the country, Oloyede, (2007) posited that there was urgent need for dialogue and understanding to bridge the gap in the education system., the author further observed that "Nigeria is a multi-religious and multicultural society has been affected by one form of situation or the other, hence these has affected even the school curriculum and school location within the country. Oloyede (2007) further contented that the country has more than 400 ethnic groups and two major religions (Islam and Christianity). It is unfortunate that the country's cultural and religious diversity is politicized and exploited by the elite in such a way that this retards the nation's growth and progress."The word security has to do with freedom from danger, anxiety and fear; a situation that shows that a country is not exposed to internal sabotage or external attack (Amadu, 1989). In the broader sense, security is seen as the struggle to secure the most basic necessities of life such as food, fuel, medicine and shelter (Obafemi, 2006). Any social unrest arising from the absence of these facilities can lead to human security problems. National security in the above usage refers to: The ability of a nation to prevent all forms of threats to its survival ranging from external aggression to threats of economic, political, military and environmental insecurities, whilst grappling with the challenges of nation-building and good governance (Gbenda, 2006). National security is the aggregate of security interests of all individuals, communities, ethnic groups and political entities to guarantee safety and security, prosperity of individuals and institutes within a nation.

Education cannot thrive well when there are crises, where in institutions of learning crises broke out, school administrators and teacher s must run for their dear lives, teaching and learning will be abandoned, school facilities may be destroyed especially when it involves the use of bombs and other lethal weapon. Business will close down as well as other social services. When properties are destroyed, government begin to pan for emergency relief services,



with millions of tax payers money spent on palliative care for the internally displaced persons, while government also loss huge amount of tax money that would ordinarily been accruable to government. Other social services like health care provision, industrial and commercial activities are also disrupted, thereby reducing and slowing the nation's economy. Above all, there will loss of family members and bread winners. Most often, the rate of dependency ratio increases and then national productivity is grossly reduced or paralyzed (Meshram, 2013, Wolfgang and Klingholz, 2017).

Meshram, (2013) further posited that in the process of rebuilding the educational infrastructure and other facilities, both government and private organizations are made to spend tax payer's money to renovate or rebuild such facilities. Private service providers pay to rebuild or renovate the destroyed or demolished infrastructure or facilities, the result is that bills are increased for the common man. In most situations, school fees and other charges are increased and the burden falls on the poor in parents. Studies have shown that it has been clearly established at various meetings of the Nigeria Inter-religious Council that the major cause of religious crisis in Nigeria is that many adherents of the two major religions in the country (Islam and Christianity) do not have sufficient information on what each other's religion preaches. "The Muslims are poorly educated about Christianity and the Christians are poorly educated about Islam. The reason is that there is limited opportunity for exchange of information between the adherents of the two religions (Ibhanawoh & Dibua, 2003). We believe that our students benefit significantly from education that takes place within a diverse setting. In the course of their university education, our students encounter and learn from others who have backgrounds and characteristics very different from their own. As the education system seeks to prepare students for life in the twenty-first century, the educational value of such encounters will become very important, not less, than in the past.

It is however said that the ethnic and religious conflicts in the country affect all aspects of Nigeria's national life, most especially resource allocation and management of public institutions. "The problem has produced several bloody crises across the country in addition to the 1967-1970 Nigerian civil war. The national crisis negatively affects higher education in terms of how religio-ethnic groups compete for the location and management of Federal Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education and Colleges of Agriculture. The university system is the most contested because of ethnic interests, Oloyede (2007) found that the aggressive competition between the diverse groups in Nigeria for the control of the universities have significant roles to play in elite formation and recruitment due to the fact that the institutions generate local employment and economic regeneration.

Nigeria today has 40 Federal, 39 State and 59 private universities, making a total of 138. But the universities are faced with the conflict of interest with respect to locality and tribalism making the need for fostering the culture of dialogue and understanding a major national project for Nigeria to develop its university education. Dialogue, understanding and tolerance is easier achieved where university administrators adhere strictly to the rules in governing the universities, adding that where the system is manipulative, both students and staff would expect their narrow interests to be served by the university administration (Ibhanawoh & Dibua, 2003).

Scholars also have explored how religions' cultural norms and doctrines may affect educational attainment by determining which subjects are taught in schools, how much emphasis is placed on religious knowledge versus secular education, and if there is gender parity in educational attainment. As noted earlier, the difference between Christian and Muslim educational attainment in sub-Saharan Africa is among the largest intraregional gaps in the world. The region's rapid projected population growth – both Christians and Muslims in sub-Saharan Africa are expected to double in number by 2050 – suggests that determining the reasons for the attainment gap will only grow in importance (Kukah, 2007; Woodberry, 2012; Smith, 2015).

## **Religious Crisis Education and Sustainable National Development**

Religion should be seen playing unifying roles among the citizenry by fostering unity and peaceful coexistence among Nigerians and citizens of other countries. Studies have shown that religious organizations and communities have built churches and mosque for the training and education of its members, once this duty of the various religious sect is properly understood, peaceful coexistence can be achieved. Education and social development go hand in hand, once there is peace, devoid of any crises situation, people would work together to improve their standard of living and be self reliant, a self reliant nation can be productive bringing about growth in the country's gross domestic product and income. Once this is achieved, there are equal infrastructural development, opportunity to participate in democratic process and decision making, hence there will be sustained tempo of growth in all aspect of our national life and economy of the country. Education therefore can create the needed change in value, attitude and belief system, bringing about peace, unity and national development.

### **Conclusion**

From the review so far, religious plurality and the competition for superiority has created a serious gulf in the educational system affecting Nigerian's sustainable national development. Therefore dialogue and discussion has become imperative to stem the tides of these religious crises from our national life. It is therefore necessary that most of these crises are avoidable if only Nigerians would learn to understand the teaching and belief systems of other religion and become empathic instead of looking at the negative side of these different religions. Once we understand and appreciate the teaching and belief system of other religions, we will learn to live happily and peacefully together. This will enhance our growth and sustainable development of the economy and also speed up our technological and scientific development as a nation devoid of fear, violence and unrest.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made

- i. Efforts should be made by all religious group to enlighten their adherents about the teaching, belief and tenets of the various religion to enable each adherents understand why things are done the way they are done in the country
- ii. Government should strive to make public policies devoid of ethnic and religious undertone
- iii. Religious studies should replace Christian Religious Studies and Islamic Studies, the curriculum content should cover both Christian Religious Studies and Islamic studies, where all students may learn about both religions.
- iv. Violence does not make any nation grow, all effort through dialogue should be made to foster peaceful coexistence among all religious adherents
- v. The government should control against their involvement and implementation of religious laws in a secular state like Nigeria.
- vi Education and educational facilities should be located to cover the needs of the various geographic areas in Nigeria based on need and not on political influence
- vii. All the religious crises in Nigeria has been politicized, therefore our leaders should decipher religion, politics from crises situation and be objective in dealing within such problems
- viii. Proper monitoring and evaluation of all programs intended to foster unity and peaceful coexistence among the various religious groups should be done from time to time

ix. School administrators should work round the clock to provide a conducive learning environment for all our school children devoid of violence and aggressions.

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