SWIMMING AGAINST THE TIDE: CHALLENGES OF RELIGIOUS CRISES AND INSECURITY IN NIGERIA'S DEMOCRATIC SPACE

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Abstract: *THE STUDY ADOPTS A SYSTEMATIC, ANALYTICAL AND HISTORICAL APPROACHES TO INVESTIGATE THE FACTORS THAT OFTEN LEAD NATIONS TO INSECURITY, BACKWARDNESS, UNREST, CONFLICT AND MISTRUST ESPECIALLY WITHIN NIGERIA. THE STUDY OBSERVES ALL OVER THE WORLD, NIGERIA INCLUSIVE, THAT THERE IS A CONSCIOUS AND PERSISTENT SEARCH FOR PEACE. THE EVIDENCE IN VARIOUS CRISES CATALOGUE IS DISTURBINGLY INTERMINABLE. THE STUDY POSITS THAT NIGERIA, AS A PLURALISTIC AND A SECULAR NATION, SHOULD TOLERATE, RESPECT AND EXHIBIT THE RIGHT ATTITUDES TOWARDS CITIZENRY AND THEIR FAITHS. IN THIS VIEW, IT WILL NOT SERVE AS AN IMPEDIMENT, BUT, A DEMONSTRATION OF A POLITICAL WILL FOR MANY WITH OPEN-MINDEDNESS, TOLERANCE, HOSPITALITY, ACCOMMODATION AND ULTIMATELY ENGENDERING OF GOOD GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT ASSURANCES. THE STUDY ARGUES THAT THE RELIGIOUS PRACTITIONERS, PARTICIPANTS, LEADERS AND STAKEHOLDERS SHOULD RESPECT ONE ANOTHER'S FAITH AND TENET IN OTHER TO PROMOTE SECURITY OF LIVES, PROPERTY AND DEVELOPMENT ASSURANCES.*

Keywords: *GLOBAL PEACE, SECURITY, RELIGIOUS CRISIS, DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE, ISLAM, CHRISTIANITY*

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INTRODUCTION

In almost all areas of human endeavour, a search for global peace has become a topical, all-involving and perennial issue both in the humanities and other fields of studies. This has been a disturbing phenomenon as a result of many religious crises in the Nigerian nation in particular and all over the world. Truth be told, religion is an embodiment of peace in the very sense of its existence and is, in fact, the life itself. The understanding of every human existence is immersed in religion. Pragmatically therefore, religion may be posited as a unifying factor, as its nomenclature suggests and implies, and also, as well as a socio-cultural mechanism for national growth and development and rebirth. Unequivocally therefore, the religion tenets provide individuals with shared responsibilities, values, roles and altruism. However, in Nigeria as one of the developing countries of the worlds, various literature have asserted that religion has become a militantly anti- modernist organization and a weapon of war (Awolalu and Dopamu, 2005; Ayantayo, 2012; Igboin, 2010; and Ogunseye 2012). The beautiful earth has been seen to be occupied by religious crises that have destroyed human civilization and drenched human blood while it has sent the whole nations to an unprecedented agony. Whereas, religion is, seen as in lieu of something other than what it gives the impression to be. It can expressly be said according to Alamu (2010a) to have become an end product of depression, desperation and a means of survival by the people of faith due to a probably and very ash living conditions of the environment. While, relatively, the central message of virtually all the world's living religions is peace.

However, global peace and security in today's world and age is almost lost, the world is in dire need and search for peace and security for sustainable development. The Nigerian state has faced a myriad of security challenges which has become a major impediment to her democratic governance and development in recent times. Terrorism, kidnapping, senseless killings, nihilism, maiming and burgeoning restlessness, have been unabatedly rampant, among others. Thus, citizenry in the Nigerian state, despite her efforts and apparatus set up by the government to ensure adequate protection of lives and property, citizens are incessantly living in perpetual fear, worry and danger.

In line with this, Boko Haram sect has factually joined the dawn marchers to orchestrate moral evils in Nigeria. However, this bloodletting, senseless killings, assassination and anti-religious actions are inimical to the major religious tenets. Against this backdrop, this paper explores religious crises and the challenges of insecurity in contemporary Nigeria within the confine of her democratic governance and development aspiration among comity of nations.

Religion: An Overview

All round the world and in all ages, human endeavours has come to grips with the existence of religion that have play a pivotal role at all times in shaping the perception, thought, approach, feeling and history of humankind. Almost and if not all aspects of human life embraces religion and represents wholeness of all existence and life itself.

Ostensibly, religion is the cornerstone of people's lives and cultures. Apparently, in the Nigerian context, it is far more than a way of life, where a separation or distinction is not made between the other areas of human existence and religion. It serves the aim of maintaining and building a human society that is relatively peaceful. It is apposite to argue according to Dopamu (2005) that there is no known society without the existence of religion.

In line with the position above, Abe (2004) asserted that religion is the consummation and derivation of all things. He opined that *"in the beginning, it was religion; and in the end it shall be religion."* Perhaps, religion has explicated the world and its understanding by human of its existence.

Many scholars have attempted to define religion, but the explanations seem to defy universality and an acceptance, without equivocation, Kenny, cited in Ayantayo (2002), sees religion "*as any*

system which relates men to ultimate values, whether God or something else and which embodies a creed, a code and a cult." In a similar development, Ayantayo (2002:4) invoke three basic features of religion as feeling, belief and action. The imperative of this is to note that what is pivotal to religion is a belief in the omnipotent being called God or gods, the destiny and nature of the meaning of history and the end. On this basis, the study comes to confirm and appreciate the fact that religion does not only command loyalty but also gives its followers or adherents things they are glad to not only live for but also, and when called for can die for it. Ejiofor (1974:63) equally attests to this view that religion is the complex of beliefs and behaviour of men in the supernatural sphere and realities and in the dynamic linkage of the supernatural with the natural. Religion is one major drive behind human behaviour. Religion has had an important disciplinary effect on the whole social order in any given

Meanwhile, religion is a very deep factor in the lives of men. The point of fact is that, the first instinct for human self-preservation is identified to be religion. "*Men take off from religion, men march along roles with religion and they arrive at religion with a minute-to-minute phenomenon.*"

Again, Ejiofor (1974:63) asserted that the pride of the mind, the strength of the will, the relish of human emotions, coveted object of delicate sentimentality... In short, it is the comprehensive resume of man's spiritual, rational and corporate existence. The above characterisations expose certain essential elements in relating to religion within the Nigeria context vis a vis humanity as a whole. Thus, the God concept, gods, the affiliation of man to ultimate values, belief, a creed, a code, feeling, a cult, action, law, supersensible world and social order, the pride of the mind and the relish of human emotions are crucial to religion in Nigeria.

Also, religion is sensitive as it may be perceived to be worth living for; offering a pride of place for people as they derive satisfaction subsequently from and equally sense of security. In Nigeria, there exist, the pragmatic examples of triadic religions practice of African Religion (Afrel), Christianity and Islam. The history of the indigenous religion or African Religion is as old as the people of Africa themselves. It is orally transmitted from one generation to another and handed down by the forebears from the yore. It does not possess sacred scriptures; yet, it is thus written in memory of the very world we live and transmitted orally as the occasion demands. This is not evangelising religion, nor having a drive for membership, yet remains autochthonous, tolerant and accommodating. Usually born into it is its adherents, live in it and die in it. (Awolalu and Dopamu, 2005).

While, observing on the overview of African Religion, Dopamu (2005:3) asserted that Africans do not know how to live without religion. This is clearly seen in African Religion (Afrel), which encompasses all aspects of life. They celebrate life religiously and they never embark on anything without bringing in religion. Thus, at birth, marriage, death, warfare, healing, the foundation of any project, planting, harvesting, enthronement of chiefs and kings and other areas of human endeavour, Afrel plays important roles Dopamu (2005).

In contrast to African religion otherwise known as Afrel, Islam and Christianity are the proselytising religions, imported into Nigeria by the foreign intruders via colonialism and later on imperialism. The Timbuktu traders who had contact or encounter with the Northerners introduced Islam into entity called Nigeria now by the *11th* century. While, it was in the 16th century that Islam spread to the south-west, and Christianity penetrated Nigeria in the *16th* century. The Christianisation attempt by the British Missioner of Nigeria failed initially due to many factors, but, eventually, Christianity came to be planted permanently in the **19th** century. Paradoxically therefore, Nigeria is a pluralistic and a secular state without any particular religion and belief system adopted as an official religion of state. Also, there may be no gainsaying the fact that Nigeria is a country of sundry and diverse cultures, beliefs, and traditions. But despite this diversity, the most proving sensitive agent of legality in the country and its society is religion. It is this fact about religion that has made it an instrument of unification, legality, binding factor as well as social re-engineering mechanism for socio-

political growth and national development. In the real sense of the foregoing, the religion tenets provide people with shared values, altruism, roles, incumbents and responsibilities. Religion, a way of life, is believed to be aimed at transforming individual life. It is a means of microcosmic or a substructure in the overall superstructure or macrocosmic of the society rest upon. Apart from this, each of the life patterns and practice presupposes a structure of common beliefs. According to Dopamu (2005), when the credibility of central religious beliefs is questioned other aspects of religion are also challenged. Therefore, a recognised channel for human and national development as well as legal instrument is religion.

More so, it becomes apposite when Idowu (1996:4) stated that the keynote of people's lives is religion thus, religion forms the foundation and all-governing principle of life. As far as they are concerned, the full responsibility of all the affairs of life belongs to the Deity; their own part in the matter is to do as they are ordered through the priests and diviners whom they believe to be interpreters of the will of the deity. Through all the circumstances of life, through all its changing scenes, its joys and troubles, it is the Deity who is in control (Idowu 1996:4).

Religion as a matter of facts and unequivocally has all-governing principles and philosophical connotation of life, infuses social order and discipline to the adherents. Thus, a cord that binds people together in order to promote social cohesion and communal well-being is found in religion. Just as the machinery set in place to guide the conduct of the people is the rule of law, likewise, religion performs the functions of social and legal mechanism for harmonious living and peaceful co-existence at most theoretically. In addition, religion is a divine law or instrument that regulates the conduct of humankind and institutionalises social norms in human society as well. Religion has the ability to bring people together where they can be knowledgeable of what it means to live the full human life. It is also postulated as a means or a major instrument of transmuting any human society into a community that acts justly. To this end, the belief system becomes the life's legal system, a pathway to God-realisation, living power, absolute value, truth, justice and morality.

Religious Crises in Nigeria: An Overview

Crisis depicts a period of danger or great difficulty. It is also a state of hostility, uncontrolled riot and fiasco, among others. Crisis is dynamic and often has a long romance with evil. A deliberate choice or individuals act in an entire society. The wave of terrorism by the "Boko Haram" sect and senseless religious killings in Nigeria had their foundations laid in the national landscape by way of layers of fraud, deceit, lies and mischief that, for a while, have demonstrated and instituted by the Nigerian government (Alamu, 2010a). There is no gainsaying according to the literature that Nigeria is a nation of diverse traditions, cultures and faiths. Whereas, of all her diverse elements, only proving to be the most sensitive and the one that has often led to divisions and hatred is the issue of religion.

Dopamu (2001:6) clearly corroborated this, when he posits thus "*it is human factors that have turned religions into a two-edged sword cohesion and division*". The simple truth is that, religion does not engage in crises with humankind; rather, the politics and human factors have mixed up with religion to unleash the numerous terrorist attacks. Undoubtedly, the religious crises root causes are enormous. However, we must mention and discuss some of these factors, which include absolutism and religious superiority, religious particularity, fundamentalism and fanaticism. Apparently, the World all over, each of the leading World religion, Islam or Christianity claims to have absolute superiority and exclusive right for the attainment of God's salvation. In ensuring to this claim to the monopoly of religious salvation and truth, exclusive of each other. Nevertheless, Ayandele (1978:607) rightly noted that "*Christians have been guiltier than Islam and African Religion by being the most articulated in denigrating the others, adopting a negative and, therefore, unrewarding attitude towards the other religious communities, religions they little understand unto this day*". Unreservedly, this

finds expression in the belief that *"extra ecciesiamnullasalus"* meaning "outside the church, no salvation". The Nigerian Muslims and followers cannot be spared also, since associating partnership with Allah and unbelief *-shirk-*with Allah have grievous consequences.

Equally, of several crises in contemporary Nigerian society, religious particularity causes many of the crises. On this basis, Olukunle (1980:79) opine that, the belief that one's religion is the only religion that is ordained by and acceptable to God to the total exclusion of others by virtually all the religion adherent in Nigeria. Corroborating the above, Dopamu (1984:607-608) rightly asserted that the sting of differences and controversy is felt in the two scriptural religions Islam and Christianity. What is known as particularity has often armed itself with sharp, poisonous teeth, biting hard here and there, among the adherents of these two religions. And this has often led to some unpleasant occurrence. It has also led to divisions, hatred, and prejudice. In some quarters, it has gone beyond the sphere of religious antagonism; it has actually spread like an epidemic into social, economic and political realm, to the effect that religion which is expected to be the basis of peace, unity and total well-being is now becoming an arena for grievances, disturbances, public unrest, disunity, hatred and violence. (Dopamu 1984:607-608)

Instead of both Christianity and Islam that had a Semitic origin to see themselves as 'brothers' in Nigeria, they often engaged and attack each other on doctrinal issues as if the belief of one neutralises the other. Dopamu (2010) in Alamu (2013) supported by Surah (2010:99) argue that "*If God has wished the whole world to worship Him in the same way, He should have done so in His infinite Wisdom. But as we have always opined, He has not done so because He hates monotony and loves variety*".

Similar to the above elucidation, Idowu's (1971:85) submission corroborate and appeals to the study by opining that religions themselves have more often than not been disloyal to that which is the basic purpose of their existence. Each advocates peace, but often selfishly. Each religion violates peace by internal divisions over non-essentials; religion quarrels with religion in consequence of perverted particularity often dictated by non-religious motives. Perhaps the conflict of good with good is more disruptive to peace than the conflict of good with evil (Idowu, 1971:85). Meanwhile, in this regard fanaticism cannot be ignored. Adherents of the different faiths practised in Nigeria have absolutely condemned and sought to destroy other religions as a result of their own culture and historical background has become a common knowledge within socio-political landscape. Thus, absolutely hampering economic growth and sustainable development with multiplier effect on good governance and attainments of good life for the citizenry. This attempt is regarded as fanaticism, according to Babs Mala (1985:112) labels as a "naughty child of a difficult mother". That, notwithstanding, religious fundamentalism of Ryerson (2005:85) describes as a "bastard child", as a root causes of religious crises in Nigeria. While, to Igboin (2010:186) it is a bastard child who is always demanding to know his father. Religion creates troubles out of peace, disorder from order, problem out of solution, sadness from happiness and fear from security in search of his father. Therefore, from the Nigerian experience, it is sad to note that fanaticism and fundamentalism have often led to senseless killings, anarchy, hatred, lawlessness and anti-religious activities in the name of religion and the defense of their gods or God. But the truth is that there is lack of parameter or calculus to measure or gauge religion.

Obviously, passion, sheer sentiment and emotion committed to religion make Christianity and Islam to be a prey in the hand of religious fundamentalists, zealots and political anarchists, bearing in mind the fact that the exclusivist, particularistic, superior interests and absolute monopolistic can protect only a bigoted position which results to a senseless killings and wanton destruction of lives and properties. Argues is Alamu (2009) that the religious crises monster, which sparked off in the late 1970s, of which Kano is central and assumed a symbolic norm of religious fundamentalism, with

capability of destroying the nation if not promptly neap in the bud. "Hardly does a year pass by without some zealots unleashing religious mayhem and terror in Kano. Because of this assumed position, Obasanjo comments that Kano has rapidly acquired a reputation for intolerance, murder, violence and political rascality" (Alamu 2009:90).

Furthermore, the Nigeria religious crises catalogue is endless. They have continually reared their ugly heads unabated and from time to time. Usually and more often than not, the upheavals are sometimes and often between Christianity and Islam, most especially the Northern parts of the country. This study catalogued the various religious crises that have greeted the Nigerian state so far according to Alamu (2009:90). A cursory and closer observation of both arson and bestial killings in the name of religion since late 1970 revealed the level of irreligious activities. These include the Maistatsine riot in Kano (1980, 1979 and 1977). Maiduguri 1982, Kano 1982, Kaduna 1982, Zaria 1981, Yola and Gombe 1984, Shaki and Ilorin 1986, Kaduna and Kano 1987, Kaduna 1988, Bauchi 1999. Kaduna 2001, Jos 2001, Kano and Abuja 2003, Sagamu 1996, Lagos 1999, Owerri 1996, Sagamu 2001, Aba 2001, Wase 2002, Yeldam Shendam 2002, Jos 2008 and Bauchi 2009 respectively.

Of the most recent one is the Boko Haram religious crisis of July 2009. The crisis was reported by the media houses to have allegedly started from Bauchi and subsequently extended to Yobe and Borno states. Sooner than later, Muhammed Yusuf, the leader of the sect was arrested and killed. Subsequently, thousands of people have been sent to their untimely and unprecedented graves, about 230 women and children were allegedly kidnapped and rescued in Abuja. Today, it is either Maiduguri, Yobe or Adamawa that has been the hotbed of the Boko Haram's activities that are being noticed almost all the time with explosives and suicide bombings and attacks. Also, Jos, a hitherto one of the peaceful Nigerian state that was known as a state of harmony, literarily sooner than later become a state of cemetery for innocent people (Oyetunbi and Akinrinde, 2021).

Essentially, the indicator of these crises showed the mixture of ethnicity and political grievances to interpret such incongruities as the apparition of religious violence.

Dopamu (1986:117) in Alamu (2013) accurately agreed with the earlier position that the question of politically motivated ambition, personal gain, selfish ends, egocentricity, power of domination, ethnicity and the question of the perversion of an entirely human and reasonable process, may enter into the enthusiasm one throws in one's propaganda activity. This is fatal for religion and intention.

A version of the account of the origin of the religion sect Boko Haram according to one Umar Mamodu; a scholar and a key Boko Haram historian posit that the sect emerged in 2002, resulting from a clash between the moderate Islamic teachings of the prominent Sheikh Jafar Adam at the Mohammadu Ndimi Mosque in Maiduguri and the more militant interpretation of the Qur'an by the Muhammed Yusuf one of his disciple. Yusuf, according to the source, alleged to believe in the general overhauling and wanted to create a new order in Islam in which the wretched shall inherit the earth. This extremist views of Yusuf, led to his expulsion in 2002 from the Ndimi Mosque Committee. Later by the same year, a mosque was built by Yusuf to serve as a magnet for both primary and secondary school pupils who in view of his radical teachings, elected to abandon westernized schools in the belief that western education (Boko) is a sin (Haram) hence the name Boko Haram (Owalade, 2014).

Another version of the origin of the Boko Haram group is said to be founded in 2002 in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state by Mallam Mohammed Yusuf. In 2004 it moved to Kanamma in Yobe state where it set up a camp called "Afghanistan", from where it launched attacks on nearby police outposts killing police officers.

From the aforementioned origins of the Boko Haram, one thing that is conspicuously clear is the fact that the group was founded by the late Mallam Mohammed Yusuf and the official name has remained the same.

The Security and Development Concepts

A security is a complex concept that defies every definitive quest, especially in modern societies; it covers a large number of variables from internal to external according to Dopamu (2007). However, *Encarta Dictionary* (2008) sees security as the state or feeling of being safe and protected; coupled with the assurance that something of value will not be taken away. It is also seen as something that provides a sense of protection against loss, attack, or harm. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (1995) describes security as freedom or protection from danger, worry; a measure taken to guarantee people's safety, a country and something of immense value. For a more clarification, English word "security" equally originates from the Latin word "Se-curus". "Se" meaning "without' and "curus" connotes "uneasiness". This suggests that 'security' originally intended to mean a peaceful situation without any risks or a liberation from uneasiness and threats. The word "security" has a broader and a very wider range of connotation includes but not limited to "feeling safe", and "to be protected", and a situation without risks or worries (Mesjasz, 2004).

The 'security' concept commonly is a multi-dimensional and crosscutting concept which has over the last century becomes the subject of great debate. It has been conceptualized as a situation where a person or thing is exposed not to any form of risk or danger of physical or moral aggression, deterioration, theft or accident. Also, experts argued that the concept of security has always been associated with the safety and survival of the state and its citizens from harm or destruction or from dangerous threats. This conception in line with Zabadi, (2005) commonly holds that the only institution with the primary responsibility and power for the safety of its territory and its people is the state (Zabadi, 2005:3). Ibidapo-obe (2008) posited security as the state of affairs that exists as a result of the establishment of measures for the protection of individuals, information and property against hostile persons, influences and actions.

Furthermore, to Dopamu (2007), security could be described as something which could be seen to protect or makes secure. It is protection against law breaking, violence, enemy acts, external aggression, danger, risk, attack, want, poverty, insufficiency, unemployment, environmental degradation, illiteracy, disease, oppression, suppression, inhumanity, destruction, rebellion, natural disaster and the likes. In a modern society, the government of the day is expected to provide security for all these to ensure a high degree of peace, economic growth and social development Dopamu (2007:7).

Insecurity therefore simply implies the absence of security; the state of being insecure or unsafe from perceived threats and exposed to attacks. Security therefore is an essential need of every society; it is vital for national cohesion, peace and sustainable development. In any society where there is no security, the population tends to be vulnerable to attacks from perceived threats (Awojobi, 2004).

The need for security in a society necessitated the social contract in which individuals willingly surrendered their rights to an organ (Government) who oversees the survival of all. The end of the cold war shifted the conceptualization of security from a state-centric perspective to a broader view that places emphasis on individuals which implies human security that embodies elements of national security, human rights and national development.

Therefore, the imperative for the necessity of the state security cannot be overemphasized. The state in this regard includes the Nigerian people, nation, property, territory and the environment. The security of these men and women as well as of arms is the sole responsibility of the government as a leviathan that holds in thrust such an inalienable right for the citizenry.

Security therefore is essential in any nation as it propels development; no sustainable development can be achieved in the atmosphere of conflicts, crisis and war. The concept Development is multifaceted and has been defined by various scholars. Development is a broad concept that entails social, economic, political and human development.

According to Nnoli (1981), Development is seen as a phenomenon in which the individual and the society interact with their environment transforming them for their own betterment and that of humanity at large and being transformed also in the process. Human development is therefore the cornerstone on which the first three development concepts are based.

Edward (1993) buttresses this point as he opines that development is about the enrichment of the lives of individuals in a society. Todaro and Smith (2006) further agrees with Edward that if development strategy results in strong economic growth and political stability without a significant change in the standard of living of the masses of people, then it can't be seen as development.

Inclusively, Okolie (2009) opines that development in a society alleviates man's potentials and capacities and subsequently reduces poverty, penury, inequality, unemployment and generally improves the condition for human existence and self-reproduction. Development therefore, could be seen as the process of empowering people to maximize their potentials and the ability to exploit nature to provide daily human needs.

Security and development have been increasingly interlinked since the end of the cold war in 1991; as it is noted that no sustainable development can be attained in the midst of war, conflict and crisis and Nigeria is not excluded (Chandler, 2007). Several security crises that has been in existence in Nigeria pose grave consequences to national development, chief of them is ethno-religious, which is a situation in which the relationship between members of one ethnic or religious and another of such group in a multiethnic and multi-religious society is characterized by lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion and fear, and a tendency towards violent confrontation that has claim many lives in Nigeria (Salawu, 2010). Other recent security issues in Nigeria includes the Boko Haram insurgency among many others and the inability of the Nigerian leaders to tackle these development challenges has continued to hinder the attainment of it in the country.

The Nigeria Security Challenges: an exploration

Presently, in Nigeria of the contemporary, insecurity and religious crisis has no doubt allegedly said to have become a way of life. Studies (Alamu 2003, 2010b: 141) have shown that "insecurity brings a concomitant, lugubrious and appalling circumstances that make it difficult for people to live in peace, safety secure and harmony in other to overcome their developmental challenges sustainable development". The upsurge in abduction, crime wave by the men of the underworld can be quiet alarming these days. The launch of the onslaught on the state, such as kidnapping, assassination, religious crises, senseless killings and other vices is quite rampant. These and many other moral vices are on the increase. Most especially is the recent and emerging Boko Haram imbroglio, which is antagonistic to western education, secularism, democracy and democratic governance and development in Nigeria. They clamour for religious freedom and Islamic state with exclusive religion rights.

The amnesty programme granted to the Militia men and subsequent surrender of various armaments in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria point to the fact that insecurity has taken an unprecedented dimension in the Nigeria state that has become nothing but a mess. Nonetheless, Worrey (2009:40) categorically pointed out the implication of the challenges of insecurity in Nigeria as the potential economic opportunities offered a lot of attraction to people not only in Nigeria but across the neighbouring countries. Now the most fundamental elements of governance are security. Indeed, several communities were formed out of common desire for security. Even when you see animals in pairs, it is for security.

The above assertion points to the fact that without security, no foreign investor will be willing to invest in an insecure environment, the implication and multiplier effect on the economy and development; that is, economic opportunities would be thwarted and investors would be totally

schemed out from investing in Nigeria because no one can invest in an unsafe or insecure environment. A monumental waste on the part of the investor because security is a fundamental element of the state. Today, in Nigeria, people can hardly sleep with their two eyes closed. The people with wherewithal or means of wealth have to build a covering or fence that is costlier than the real building itself as a result of insecurity (Omitola, Adedire, Akinrinde, Omodunbi, Sackflame, 2021). Today, it is no longer news that the rich consequently purchase bullet proof cars upon the state of insecurity.

Furthermore, Alamu (2010b: 151) opines that "It is quite correct to say that Nigeria Police and other security apparatuses have abysmally failed in this respect. They cannot even protect themselves, let alone protect the lives and property of the Nigerian citizens. Today, this constitutional responsibility of the nation's security agencies has failed and is challenging the cardinal policy and the common existence of the Nigerian state" (Alamu 2010b:151).

Moreover, Boko Haram and the insurgence menace is an eyesore. Today, Boko Haram has advanced from the North east to almost Kogi State in the North central of Nigeria with their dangerous weapons that can "cow' the fire power of an armed regiment. Equally argued in some quarters is that, there are political anarchists, permanent interest group and trigger-happy politicians within political circle and Military armament and industrial complex who are financing and promoting these Boko Haram sects. This prevailing situation and excruciating pains on the nation appears to lend credence to the fact that these permanent interest groups are training Boko Haram in guerrilla' warfare in their camps that are yet to be identified. Just of recent, the terrorists in their Northeast enclaves plan another game plan, as they plan to replace the improvised Explosive Devices with rocket launchers and rocket-propelled grenades. According to experts, these weapons could be shot from long distances, thereby giving attackers sufficient time to escape just as they could cause havoc on their targets. Even today, security operatives are worried about the state of art of these weapons (Akinrinde, 2020).

The attempt to use rocket weapons by terrorists was the latest challenge to security operatives .We are not in war and one wonders why are these people bringing rocket launchers into this country? Rocket launchers are used in only wars! What do they want to turn Nigeria into? We are still contending with Improvised Explosive Devices and now this *(Sunday Punch,* 2012).

The sect (Boko Haram) is more vicious now than before. Information has it that it has foreign aids. Ogunseye (2012) in Alamun (2013: 120) rightly observes that Boko Haram would continue to ravage Nigeria because of the foreign aids it receives every now and then. To him, the Arab extremist and their cohort countries are supplying the weapon to terrorists in Nigeria. It is no longer news that the Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb of North Africa has penetrated this country and we can easily tell where these rockets are coming from. We don't have to manufacture these war weapons. Iran, Yemen, Syria, Libya and others are suppliers (Alamun, 2013: 120).

Leadership and Nigeria Democratic Governance Failure

While globally it is true that insecurity has been perceived to be a major issue, Nigeria is not an exception as the security situation over the years may seems to have deteriorated owing to bad governance, political instability and inability of the government to deliver the needed democratic governance dividend (Nwanegbo & Odigbo, 2013:286). An indispensable ingredient of peace and security is predicated on good governance and focused leadership. Citizens' expectations from every government is to morally and constitutionally meet the aspirations of its people by providing them such things as quality healthcare, good roads, education, employments, food security, job opportunities and expanded choice. All these ingredients are almost lacking in Nigeria due to bad leadership and followership catastrophe.

George-Genyi (2013) while corroborating this, opines that, when there is bad governance cum leadership catastrophe, the security framework deteriorates has been the Nigeria's experience in recent

time. To ensure effective security system, there must necessarily be some link between the elements of good governance through leadership. These elements include transparency, accountability, openness and rule of law in the management of commonwealth and resources, provision of basic needs and services, political stability, as well as absence of nepotism and corruption.

However, bad governance must be pointed out here to be responsible for and always believed to sowing the seeds of aggression within a polity. This study sees this as a threat to internal security of any nation. Since 1999, when Nigeria return to civil rule, expectations of the citizens from the leadership of successive governments in the country have never been met. As an alternative, what Nigerians see are corruption, political impunity, and wanton looting of the treasury. This pushes Nigerians to unimaginable hardship and hopelessness.

The perceived injustice, lack of cohesion, marginalization and exploitation of the people of the Niger- Delta has led to the formation of militia groups who have resorted to violent means in their agitation and quest to correct misrule (Okumagba, n.d). Unimaginable is the petro-dollars from the Niger-Delta believed by them to have transform Abuja to one of the best cities in the world while the Niger-Delta inhabitant have quietly continued to live in squalor, hunger disease, and agonizing poverty. A fight against injustice is the bedrock of Militancy in the Niger-Delta as simply captures by Emuedo (2013: 5) when he noted that violence and the spate of insecurity in the region is a response of the people to government's total neglect as there has not been any genuine attempt by successive governments to alleviate the huge environmental problems created from exploration and exploitation of crude oil in the region.

Niger-Delta people have lost all their means of livelihoods. Originally, their major occupations are fishing and farming as the region is occupied by fisher men, women and farmers. At present, their waters are contaminated and the aquatic life destroyed. Agricultural yields from their farm can barely feed them talk less of going to the market to earn income. What a pathetic life! Scholars and good governance and development experts have suggested that until the injustice is addressed, every efforts and investment strategy by the policy makers to bring peace and lasting solution to the region may become a mirage.

Possible Solutions

The clarion call for all the peace-loving and peace-seeking Nigerians is to discern properly the sources of the ever-with-us religious crises and insecurity that are spreading like whirlwind, setting so much fear, tension, agitation and anger in the land. Nigeria and Nigerians must rediscover the sense of communal responsibility, corporate personality and human solidarity just like her fore fathers and hero's past. Truthfully, a critical social conscience must be evolved in order to know that injustice suffered by one Nigerian has a destabilizing effect for the entire nation.

The leadership and followership in Nigeria must be fully committed to the process of reconciliation, social reengineering, reconstruction and repentance. Thus, the politics of isolation and exclusion, that is, "Winners-take-all" will not get the country anywhere near sustainability, development and good governance. It can thus be argued that not actually by the greater suppression and repression of perceived political opponents and the enemies of the political class that the Nigeria state will progress geometrically or move forward. A rapt attention must be given by the leaders to provide a platform for listening to and voices for the oppressed poor, deprived minority groups and aggrieved politicians. This study suggests and hopefully sees this as the only way Nigeria can break the backbone of the menace of violence and insecurity. Also, paramount to this is the fundamental and rigorous education by religious leaders and theologians of the various faiths on the essence of inter-faith and religions harmony, the imperative and beauty of togetherness in living to promote cohesion and social camps solidarity in the state. Also, concomitant with the effort at inter-religious co-operation

as people from innumerable religious traditions and orientation. This inter-religious co-operation will enable religious communities to perceive themselves as relations, with a view to providing models for one another, weave bonds and build bridges rather than create conflict and cause bloodshed. Ultimately inimical to the good governance and development aspiration of Nigeria.

The study equally suggests that Muslims and Christians should see each other as living under the sun of the one Merciful God who Created Mankind. God's sovereignty is what humanity claimed and people depend on human's dignity as God's servant. Consequently, upon this, humans must employ dialogue and engagement on issues relating to religious matters. Remarkably, dialogue talks about understanding in relationship and interaction between people of various backgrounds to the common concerns of humankind. Thus, permeates respect for other faiths through dialogue, cooperation, tolerance and understanding of one another's point of view. The study finds out from the literature that the major faiths in Nigeria prohibit senseless killings, stealing, lying, and other moral vices, and these religions encourage such things as helping those in need and treating adherents of others faiths with respect. This would simply be of immense value within the Nigerian nation and her developmental agenda sustainably. Moreover, it is quite inappropriate and unethical for religious stakeholders, whom many adherents are looking up to, to suddenly prohibit them not to embrace or then respect people of other faiths. Worst still, they prevent adherents of other faiths from expressing and acting in accordance with their beliefs.

Most religious stakeholders that are conservative in their approach must carry with them implicit and explicit assumptions that are inappropriate, fundamental and controversial. Religion should not be politicised because of its volatility, sensitive and consciousness of itself. Every stakeholder should get rid of extremist confession, exclusivist persuasion and fanatical trademark. However, for the sake of harmony, co-existence and progress, these stakeholders should stop employing the service of the commoners to promote their selfish ambition at the very slightest opportunity.

Furthermore, it is worth asserting that Nigerian security agencies are not well-equipped. This results in killings and overpowering of the security operatives by the terrorists. For instance, the Nigeria Police still use outdated rifles, while the terrorists frequently use sophisticated weapons and other states of the art gadgets to monitor their victims.

Factually, the Nigerian government, as a matter of urgency, should provide and stockpile the armory with the latest weapons and state of the art gadgets to discover the location of these criminals and terrorists. Again, security agencies should be well trained and equipped. They should likewise be insured against eventualities. These and other measures can help to boost their patriotic value. The security loophole in the country has enabled stakeholders to clamor for community and private policing in order to provide support for operational efficiency. This effort would complement that of the police and other security agencies. They should be empowered by the government and they would also help to secure borders and other illegal routes. Meanwhile, the federal government should complement the effort of the community policing in terms of logistics, funding and aids as motivation and moral boosting (Alamu 2010b). Boko Haram, as a sectarian group in Islam, should be stopped and crushed by all means, since they are not even ready to stop or negotiate with the Nigerian Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) as well as other stakeholders in the nation. Religious sentiments should be put aside since this sectarian group is vomiting hailstone, fire and is ready to crush anyone, whether government or her agencies, any slightest opportunity. Even the group is ready to tear the nation apart if not checked. The group sees Nigeria as a madhouse where the worst is not bad enough, a country where one absurdity succeeds another and anarchy becomes breakfast.

Conclusion

This paper has x-rayed the numerous religious crises and insecurity in contemporary Nigeria. It has discovered that the issues are many and the responses within Nigerian context are varied. It is clear that religious crises and insecurity are a way of life in Nigeria. The study, therefore, postulated that respect, tolerance and right attitudes to other faiths are synonymous with peaceful co-existence. Nevertheless, various stakeholders should get rid of exclusivist, extremist and fanatical persuasion as well as violence in order to embrace genuine dialogue. Likewise, government should come to the aid of security agencies, establish community policing in other to promote security of lives and property, safeguard the various routes and borders and stop the menace of *Boko Haram*.

Recommendation

Military option and national security hegemony are good security strategy and ideology, but they are wrong options for Nigeria. This study finds out from the literature that Nigeria security challenges are not external aggression, but the challenges are internal threats that were incubated and hatched by bad governance, injustice, corruption, poverty, hunger, unemployment, general government insensitivity and leadership failure. We are of the opinion that the best army in the world with the best artillery may not ultimately solve Nigeria's present security challenges. The root causes of security threat in Nigeria must be properly addressed if she wishes to be among the twenty most developed nations among the comity of nation in this Twenty First century.

The puzzle as tough as it seems can also be solved by the Human security paradigm. Human Security emphasized a shift from national security to the security of the human person to ensure freedom from 'want' and freedom from 'fear'. Human security is synonymous with development and good governance. It means food on people's table, quality education and safe drinking water for the people, employment, justice, environmental protection and economic progress. This paradigm shift is imperative if Nigeria must achieve sustainable peace and national development.

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