RELIGIOUS, CULTURAL AND PEACE EDUCATION: PANACEA TO CONFLICT CRISIS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
Nigeria is a multi-cultural society comprising of about two hundred and fifty ethnic groups each with distinct cultural background, major languages include Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa. The socio, political and economic interest of individuals or groups often seem to generate and propagate crises. In the most recent times conflict has become a predominant phenomenon, and efforts to arrive at fruitful solutions remain futile even with the presence of the teachings of the various religious practiced there in. It has been wondered if there religions are impacting on their adherents or converts given the level of crime and conflicts observed in the country. It is against these that the paper recommends the repositioning of religious and cultural education as well as inclusion of peace education at all levels of education (primary, post primary and tertiary ) to ensure inculcation of basic principles or tenets of harmonious living among the Nigeria citizenry.
Global peace is a perennial, topical and all-involving issue in the field of human studies; basically conflict and crisis in Nigeria could be attributed to many religious inclination, different ethnic background as well as political interests of people. Practically speaking, religion is a unifying factor as its name implies as well as social mechanism for national development. Without equivocation, the tenets of religion provide individuals with shared values, roles, altruism and responsibilities. Relatively, peace is the central massage of virtually all the world’s living religions. Religion and culture are the two viable machines for education and molding of character. African society has depended mostly on religion and culture to establish and maintain a peaceful and coexistence society without chaos and violence.

It is also observed that almost all religion serve as an advocacy for love and support good interrelationship among members as well as living in unity with neighbor, irrespective of their religions. It is also observed that religions help to bring people of different ethnic background and race together to achieve one purpose, love and worshipping God. It can therefore, be established that religions can serve as an instrument of peace if properly understood. In this vein, Light and Keeler (1979) defined religion as being associated with the sacred, that which is ideal and transcends everyday existence. It is the extraordinary, powerful, potentially dangerous and awe-inspiring. Idowu (1973) is of the opinion that religion is as old as man’s life, therefore, a necessary evil in the society. To some anthropologists, religion is the reciprocal relationships between man and spiritual forces which he believes in.

From the definitions of religions deduced above, religion is therefore, part of a people’s culture and reflects in their approach to life, world-view and ethos. Its traces are viable in the political, social, educational and economic system. This means that religion affects every member of the society. It is the reflection of what takes place in the society. That is a society without religion is doomed.

Education on the other hand is the systematic training and instruction (especially education of the young in school, colleges, etc). It is also knowledge and abilities, development of character and mental powers resulting from such training (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English, 3rd edition).

According to the national policy on education (2004) “education in Nigeria is an instrument par excellence for effecting national development” therefore, religious education serve as instrument for achieving peace and security. The World Bank sector Review (1995) as quoted in Falade (2002) stated that “education is a major instrument for promoting economic growth and reducing poverty…generally education helps to strengthen the institutions of civil society and helps to build national capacity and good
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Religious Education is therefore, the teaching of the various religions especially the religions practice in Nigeria, such as Christian Religion, Islamic Religion and African Traditional Religion side by side to the students or to the youth to help inculcate moral and ethical values of the youth at an early stage. Against this backdrop, only one of these religions is taught in a section of the country, that is the North teaches Islam while the West and East teaches Christian religion and the traditional religion only taught at the higher institution as a course of its own, hence, not giving room for a proper understanding of the three main religions. It is in this vein, that the paper considers the use of religious, cultural and peace education as an instrument for achieving peace and stability. This is so because without building better citizens through religious, cultural and peace education, the society will be made of irresponsible citizens who cannot effectively actualize whatever agenda considered the best for the nation. Although religion is mistrusted and disregarded as a result of mishaps prevalent in the society, suspected to be carried out by people who belong to one religion or the other. The paper strongly believes that if the tenet and beliefs of religion and doctrine of peace are deeply enshrined and indoctrinated in adherent the issue of insurgence, conflict and terrorism in Nigeria will be brought to the barest minimum.

The Need for Religious, cultural and Peace Education

Nigeria is the world largest concentration of the blacks. It is also one of the nations that have about equal percentage of both Islam and Christians. No doubt, Nigeria is a populous nation of over one hundred and sixty million people (160,000,000) (Ike, 2013). The people are unevenly distributed across the 36 state and the Federal capital Territory Abuja. There is no gain saying that Nigeria is bountifully endowed with abundance of natural and human resources scattered all over the country, this accounts for the free flow of various people through the process of economic inter-dependence (Ike, 2013).

Nigeria as a nation has over 400 ethnic groups unequally distributed between the divide of two major religions Islam and Christianity. This no doubt is a potential breeding ground for religious ethnic conflicts, hence the need for religious, cultural and peace education. Religious education is on the one hand, an indispensible tool in indoctrination of ethic and morality as over time in history, it has been instrument of change, peace, value education and responsibility. This is why education on its own started in the field of religion. Uka (2007), noted that “religion contains in itself some cherished values that promote human rights, human relationship and human virtue. Thus, the religions in Nigeria, (Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion) insist as part of their beliefs, on the preservation of life and good will that is on the direction and devotion of the self to the good of others especially to strangers. It encourages exemplary conduct, social service, and the recognition and performance of...
one’s duty. More so, Iwe (1987) supported Uka’s view when he pointed out some civic obligations of religion as follows. Mutual respect for members of the group, the equitable allocation of whatever is one’s due, scrupulous avoidance of such attitude & Practice which subvert or corrode mutual love and respect such as class spirit, ethnicism, statism and sexism, readiness for service and sacrifice for the welfare of the group, if and where legitimate circumstance so demand, refraining from all acts capable of weakening or tarnishing the image of the group, prayer for the welfare of the country, loyalty and rational obedience to constituted authority.

Peace education on the other hand, is according to Lan Harris (2014) a series of “teaching encounters” that draw from people. It encompasses the desire for peace, non-violent alternatives for managing conflict and skills for critical analysis of structural arrangements that produce and legitimate injustice and inequality. In the same light James (2014), noted that peace education be taught as “encouraging a commitment to peace as settled disposition and enhancing the confidence of the individual as an individual agent of peace, as informing the student on the consequences of war and social injustice, values of peaceful and just social structures and working to uphold or develop such social structures.

Religious Crisis in Nigeria

Conflict is one of the commonest concepts in social domain. Crisis means a period of great difficulty or danger. It also comprises hostility, uncontrolled riot, fiasco among others. Crisis is dynamic and often a long romance with evil. This is a deliberate act or choices of individuals or of entire society. Today’s senseless killings religiously and the wave of terrorism by Boko Haram had their foundations laid in our national landscape by way of fraud, lies, deceits and mischief that for a while have constituted the character of Nigerian government (Alamu 2010). There is no gain saying the fact that Nigeria is a nation of diverse culture, traditions and faith. But of all diverse elements, religion has proved to be the most sensitive and the one that has often led to heated division.

Dopamu (2001) did not mince words when he said that “it is human factors that have turned religions into a two- edged sword-cohesion and division” the fact remains that religion does not engage in crisis with humankind, rather human factors and politics have been mixed up with religions to unleash the various terrorisms. In this vein, the causes of religious crises are enormous. However, efforts are made to mention and discuss some of these factors which include religious superiority and absolution, religious particularity fanaticism and fundamentalism. Apparently, Christianity and Islam clam to have absolute superiority and exclusive right to attaining God’s salvation. In ensuring the claim to the monopoly of religious truth and salvation, the even exclude each other.

Religious particularity which is one of the causes of crises is the belief that one religion is the only religion that is ordained by and acceptable to God to the total
exclusion of others (Olukunle 1980). Corroborating the above, Dopamu (1984) rightly asserts that:

The sting of difference 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 religion 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 basic of peace, unity and total well-being is now becoming an arena for grievances, disturbance, public unrest, disunity, hatred and violence (607-608).

Islam and Christianity, in spite of being or having the same Semitic origin, see themselves as enemies in Nigeria, here they usually attack each other on doctrinal issues as if one neutralizes the other. Dopamu (2010) argues that “if God had wished the whole world to worship Him in the same way, He should have done so in His infinite wisdom. But He has not done so because He hates monotony and loves variety. Fanaticism cannot be ignored in this regard. It is common knowledge that adherents of different faiths practiced in Nigeria have absolutely condemned and sought to destroy other religions as a result of their own culture and historical background. This attempt is regarded as fanaticism which Baba Mala (1985) describe as a “naughty child of a difficult mother”. Religion fundamentalism is a cause of religious crisis and Ryerson (2005) describes it as a “bastard child”. Igboin (2010) also sees it as a bastard child who is always demanding to know his father. He creates trouble out of peace, problem out of solution disorder from order, and sadness from happiness, fear from security in search of his Father.

It is sad to note that from the Nigeria experience, fanaticism and fundamentalism have often led to hatred, anarchy, lawlessness, senseless killing and anti-religious activities in the nature of religion and in the defense of God. The truth there is no parameter or calculus can be use to gauge or measure the best religion. Evidently, sheer sentiment, passion and emotion attached to religion make Islam and Christianity to be a prey in the hands of religious zealots, fundamentalist and political anarchists bearing in mind the fact that the exclusivist, particularistic, absolute, monopolistic and superior interest can promote only bigoted position which result in wanton destruction of lives and properties.

Alamu (2009) argues that the monster called religious crises in Nigeria sparked off in the late 1970 of which Kano has assumed a symbol and horn of religious fundamentalism capable of tearing the nation apart if not curbed. “Hardly does a year pass by without some zealots unleashing religious mayhem and terror in Kano. Because of this assumed position, Alamu (2013) quoting Obasanjo noted that Kano has rapidly acquired a reputation for intolerance, murder, and violence and political rascality.

The Boko Haran religions crisis of July 2009 is the most recent one. This crisis started in Bauchi and subsequently extended to Yobe and Borno states. Although Mohammed Yusuf, the leader of the sect has been arrested and killed, Boko Haran insurgent in Nigeria continues to rear its ugly head. Thousands of people have been sent to their unprecedented grave. It is either Maiduguri or Jos that the Boko Haram activities are being noticed every time with explosive. Recently also, in December 2013, Abuja the federal capital witnessed series of Bombing and explosious, the most alarming was the Bombing of the New Nyaya pack with almost 50 persons killed and many others injured. Again, in April 2014, a female school in Borno (Chibok Government Girl’s School) was attacked and about two hundred and eighty five girls abducted. Some of these girls, Nigeria government claimed to have rescued. However, two hundred and nineteen girls are still in the den of the terrorist group, and the group is requesting the release of their members in exchange of the girls. Recently also the Emir of Kano has been murdered in cold blood while on a convoy with other Emirs. And immediately a New Emir was instaledl, which some political analyst explains that Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria is politically instigated. As at 24 June 2014 Boko Haram set Bomb blast in Kano killing eight poeple and injured 20 (twenty). Boko Haran terrorist attack is ongoing in Nigeria.

The Nigerian state today is faced with a very big challenge of insurgency; the Boko Haram, an Islamic sect in the Northern part of Nigeria. The emergence of this dreaded Islamic group since 2009 and its activities have not only constituted a threat to the security of the nation, but have also made the area the most dangerous place to live in. The activities of this sect are moving towards disintegrating the country (Abimbola & Adesote, 2012). It is imperative to state that an attempt to forcefully impose religions ideology or belief on the Nigerian society since her independence in 1960 especially in the Northern part, since colonial period was led by the leader of the maistatsine sect and group in the 1980s which eventually led to large scale uprisings. Thus, it can therefore be said that the emergence of this dreaded Islamic sect popularly known as Boko Haram had its roots and inspiration from colonial period as well as from “Maistatsine” uprisings in the early 1980s (Abimbola and Adesote 2012). Although Boko Haram
could be compared in terms of philosophy or ideology and objectives to the maitatsine group, its organizational, planning, armed resistance and modus operandi is Taliban (Danjj 2009).

The exact time that this sect emerged is left unknown. There are series of conflicting report on their emergence in the northern part of the country. It was gathered from Sunday tribune, 12th February 2012 that the Boko Haram started around 2003, the group had been in existence since 1995. It was however confirmed that the entry of the slain Mallam Mohammed Yusuf radicalized the group and opened it to foreign collaboration, especially with the Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). It was also gathered that the Jamalaful Ahlus Sunnah Ludda’ Ahrati wal Jihad (Brethren United in pursuit of Holywood, also known as Boko Haram, started off its actions in 2001, under the leadership of Late Yusuf from that time the group had intensified its propagation of an extreme Islamic doctrine which sees western education and democracy as corruption and immoral (Sunday Tribune, 2012). In 1995, the group was said to be operating under the name Shabaab, Muslim Youth organization. It operated from Indimi Mosque located along Danjjo ahead Maiduguri Bornu State and had one Mallam Lawal as a leader and another Mallam Usman as secretary.

In 1999, Lawal was said to have left Nigeria for further studies at the university of medina, Saudi Arabia, thereby allowing the mantle of leadership to fall on a man known as Mustapha Modujon, commonly called Mohammed Yusuf. His leadership according to source opened the group to the political influences and increased popularity. The late Mallam Yusuf is said to be a favorite student of prominent Nigerian Islamic scholar Sheikh Jafar Mohammed Adam and hailed from cringer village in Jakusko Local government of Yobe state, he was born on 29th January 1920, married four wives and had 12 children. In the year 2000, Yusuf had won the respect of some elders and youths at Indimi Mosque activities and along the line out-staged all the teachers to become the leader of them all. Most of the youths who followed him saw the older clerics as secular and anti-Sharia. According to this report, majority of his followers were largely illiterate youths who engaged in petty trading or had dropped out of school (Dangers, 2009).

Yusuf later established his own Mosque in an area called Railway Quarters in Maidugari while also extending his preaching to the Mosques located at kandahar, Unguwa Doki near monday market and millionaire’s Quarters. According to investigators, by early 2004, the sect had gone into state like Borno, Yobe and rotating between states and some of the converted youths had to abandon their studies to join the group. The ready-made army of followers were said to be the Almajiris. It was after 2004 that the sect leaders were said to have established lines with the Algerian Salafist group, now known as Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghred, (APIM) which gave them training on combat and use of Improved Explosive Devices (IEDs) impetus. From training acquired in Aqim, it was gathered that Boko Haram members were able to show
dexterity in handling of weapons and manufacture of what is called “dirty bombs” through IEDs (Danjiba, Zoba, Nigeria mibure, 2012 in Abimbola and Adefose, 2012). Report has it that many Islamists were dissatisfied by the adoption of sharia law in the northern states between 1990 and 2001. the Sharia introduction is said to have been watered down. They felt that imported system of government based on “western values” has resulted in ostensible corruption, poverty, unemployment and confirmed suppression of “true” Islam in northern part of Nigeria (Danjijo, 2009). What then is Boko Haram? The Ideology and philosophy of the sect therefore, needs explanation of the two key words for proper understanding. Boko Haram in Hausa languge means book, western or foreign, while the word Haram is an Islamic derivation meaning forbidden, ungodly or sinful (Dandido, 2009 and Adesoji, 2010.) literally put together, boko haram means book is sinful. But its deeper meaning is that, forbid everything western and western education, western education is sinful, sacrilegious, or ungodly and should therefore be forbidden (Dandido 2009 and Adesoji 2010).

From the foregone therefore, it is deduced that the group out-rightly do not respect anything western. Western education, modern science and western culture enshrined in Islam is strictly prohibited, and strict adherence to Islam by all and Sundry regardless of personal wishes. In line with the above objectives, the movement seeks to impose Sharia across all Nigerian states (Bumah,2009). The former leader, Mohammed Yusuf said “education spoils the belief in God”. The sect’s full name Jama`atu Ahhs Sunna hidda await wal-jihad “people committed to the propagation of the prophet’s teachers and Jihad” seeks to create an Islamic state governed by Sharia law in Nigeria by seemingly, what-ever means it has at its disposal and at what-ever human cost it deems necessary (Bumah, 2009). The movement intends to replace modern state formation with the traditional Islamic state, because western values run contrary to Islamic values. To them Umma Mahammadu-mushin faithful and Dar-ut-Islam community cannot be compromised in the face of western influence in the Nigerian secular society. Therefore, the moral decadence and evil in the society are as a result of the embrace of western civilization and for such evil to be curbed, an Islamic society must be entrenched by destroying modern political institutions and infrastructures. This can be inferred as the reason why police and armed forces formations, government establishments and properties are targets of destructions by the movement. It is also believed that, any member who fights and dies either by suicide bombing in the process or establishing a sharia state by destroying modern state formation and government establishment would automatically go to Aljama-paradise or heaven (Danjiba, 2009 in Abimbola and Adesofe, 2012). It could then be understood, that Almajiris are the reason for the large followership.

Although, Boko Haram is seen as a religious group fighting a religious cause, some feel it is politically motivated to bring down the present government. Ariyomo (2010) is of the opinion that insurgency in Nigeria is not about religions but parties and polities. To him, there was a huge difference between insurgency, especially when it is
terror driven and agitation by aggrieved individuals who might resort to violence as witnessed in the country before now. Comparing Nigerians civil war and the militancy in the Niger Delta, Ariyomo asserted that Boko Haram issue “is different and chiefly about terror where the first thing that gets out of the window is reason and the fact that it is not motivated by any equal opportunity”. Stating further he said “the characteristics that make insurgency distinct is that it is ideology driven. This was the insurgent’s potent weapon and it is not principally and chiefly religious, even if it uses religion as a vehicle. It is primarily about powers. The act of insurgency in Nigeria was to make president Jonathan look incompetent and as if he has lost control of the nation (Odunsi 2014).

The current inclusion of females, mostly young girls in their terror activities portrays the fact that the Boko Haram Insurgency is all about politics, since, in Islam “Jihad” is not obligatory for women. Even in the extreme cases found in the history of Islam when Jihad was evoked to be obligatory, there are seven conditions that have to be satisfied. These are: being a Muslim, being an adult, being of sound mind, being free, being male, being physically sound and being able to afford it financially (quotation please).

With regard to children taking part in Jihad, Hadith tells us that a companion of prophet Mohammed (PBUH), Iri Unar, said: I presented my self to the messenger of Allah (PUBH) on the day of Uhud when I was fourteen years old, and he did not let me down the fighting “Also regarding women taking part in jihad, in the Hadith of Alla (may Allah be pleased with us), she asked prophet Mohammed (PBUH)this: “O messenger of Allah, do women have to engage in Jihad?” His response was:” Jihad in which there is no fighting Haji and Umrah” (Timothy, 2014). Thus, knowing that children and females generally are viewed as the most unsuspecting to carry out such terrorist acts, the Insurgents have decided to recruit and use them as foot soldiers and vessels in propagating their misguided war to cause maximum destruction. This according to Muslim is un-Islamic and not acceptable as being religious.

The activities of the sect so far has been bombing of churches, government establishments, market places and parks, shopping malls and filling stations. Kidnapping and adduction of children and women, the most prominent being the abduction of 200 chibok secondary school girls in Borno state, attack of moslim clerics and Christian leaders. Boko Haram has in resent weeks shifted tactics from heat and run attacks to attempting to seize and hold territories, proclaiming one captured town, Gwoza as part of Islamic caliphate (lanzewagu, 2014)

The issue of the techniques and strategy used by this dreaded Islamic sect also needs considerations. Their strategy has taken series of dimensions since inception which has made some schools of thought and stake holders in the country as well as international community to conclude the sect has link with other terrorist nations in the world. For instance, their modis operandi which has been fashioned after the Taliban in Afghanistan, has made some to conclude that the sect must have sent their members to
Afghanistan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Iraq, Mauritania and Algeria for training. The operation saw dust carried out by the military and police covering North East geopolitical zones of Borno, Bauchi and Yobe that led to the arrest of Yusuf Mohamed the leader of the group attest to the fact, that a link exist between the group and other terrorist nations. These arrests provided the first clues about the links between Boko Haram and the Al-Qaeda terrorist group as those arrested with Yusuf Mohammed revealed they had been trained in the act of terrorism at Afghanistan, Lebanon, Pakistan and Iraq. Items recovered during the operation included maps and diagrams of government establishments and some directions to specific government buildings in Abuja (Danjibo, 2009, in Abimbola and Adesofe 2012).

Other reports in Nigeria and foreign press about the activities of such groups as Salafist group and combat (SGPC) in Algeria, Tablighi clerics from Pakistan and Wahabist Missionaries from Saudi Arabia in Northern Nigeria, as well as the reports of the training of some fundamentalists in Al-Qaeda camps in some foreign countries, offer proof of Boko Haram’s links with fundamentalist groups around the world (Adesoji 2010 in Abinbola and Adesole 2012). It is clear though from available evidence that the sect is against anything western in general and in the Northern part particularly, the reason for unleashing attacks on the Nigeria state with a view to achieving their objectives, why then the attack on fellow Muslims, if it is a so called Jihad against “infidels” or the “kafirs”? It will therefore not be out of place to take a glimpse at all their activities and attacks from inception till date. To go in to that dept will be a serious task which requires an indept study and elongated thesis, thus the researchers suggest a further research by other scholars. However, recently the federal government of Nigeria had claimed to have a cease fire agreement with the Boko Haram group. This attempt has not yielded any results as the deathly group continues to bomb places and kidnap people, mainly young women and men from the villages in Borno and Gombe states. Also, the group have release a latest statement maintaining they have not entered into any agreement with the federal government rather that, someone else has been imposing as the group’s leader (Naijabam, 2014).

According to the statement by the latest Boko Haram sect mercurial leader, Imam Abubakar Shekau in a new video released on Friday 31st October, 2014 night has finally put to rest all the doubt regarding a man Danladi Ahmadu that has been parading himself as secretary General of the sect. Danladi Ahmadu has been presented in Nigeria’s media mostly on the VOA Hausa service as the man negotiating with President Goodluck Jonathan, Mr Hassan Tukur and Chadian President, Idris Derby promising to release the over 200 chibok girls in purported ceasefire talks. But the Boko Haram leader Shekau, in the new video said, we don’t know that liar and fake Danladi Ahmadu, we never met this liar with his character as he is claiming. We have nothing to do with him, and our war is not ending, expect more, what you are seeing is just little. There is no retreat in this jihad, Allah is with us, and we are succeeding (Naijabam, 2014).
However, Sahara reporters had quoted a senior Nigeria military officer who said the military are in possession of intelligence report detailing plans by the sect to launch deadly attacks in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. Few days later, many villages were captured by the sect in both Borno and Adamawa state including Mubi, the second most populated town in Adamawa state. Also, earlier Friday 31st October, 2014 members of the sect detonated a bomb at a busy bus station in Gombe killing at least 30 people (Naijabam, 2014).

Consequently, one may be forced to assert that the indices of the severe crises show the mixture of ethnicity and political grievance to interpret such disagreement as the genie of religious violence is a wrong representation. In this vein, Dopamu (1986) noted thus: “the question of personal gain, political ambition, selfish ends, egocentricity, power of domination, ethnicity and the question of the perversion of an entirely humans and reasonable process, may enter into the enthusiasm one throws in one’s propaganda activity.

Religion, Cultural and Peace Education: Panacea to Conflict Crisis Experience in Nigeria

Nigeria as a country is indisputably heterogeneous in its geopolitics. In other words, the nation has many linguistic cultures and ethnocentric pluralism as well as divergent religions majorly considered, Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religious. According to Agi (1999) “the issue of ethnic pluralism in Nigeria is the outstanding problem facing nation building and integration in Nigeria. In the same view, Agbor in Ozumba (1999) noted “ethnic groups constitution, social formations which are identifiable by their communal factors include mainly language, culture and religions”.

Religion in Nigeria on the other hand has gained extreme pluralism, different ethnic background gleaned to a particular religious group which constitutes some of the religious indifference which often occurs in the society. The observation above shows that ethnic groups themselves are social formation and are based on communal languages and culture identity. Also, religious understanding can best be achieved from the root and should cut across all boundaries irrespective of culture and ethnic background. Because cultural and religious identify distinguish one group from the other people’s culture and religion. It is therefore, suggested that a proper religious understanding should be granted at the primary and post primary level to enhance the inculcation of the basic tenet of beliefs and practices of the different religious in Nigeria.

Further more, the benefit derivable from three major religious practiced in Nigeria, it will enhance religious tolerance, it will diminish the idea of religious fanaticism and extinguish religious violence often caused by misunderstanding of other religious teaching and doctrine. It will further enhance harmony, co – relationship among members of different religious groups. It will stamp out tribalism and ethnicity.
It will bring about unity, brotherliness, equal right as each member of a religion will recognize that all religious are from one God irrespective of the names of their gods. It will further enhance proper inter religious dialogue as well as give the understanding of other religions world view.

It will also give a new meaning and understanding to religious pluralism as Knitter (1986) puts it “the new perception of religious pluralism is pushing our cultural consciousness toward the simple but profound insight that is “no one and only ways”’. The force of this realization applies not only to religions but culture, philosophies and economic systems”. In the midst of all these beneficiary factors derivable from religious and peace education, it can be submitted that religious and peace education with its characteristic unity in diversity, moral value orientation, homogeneity and great strength in motivation of its culture are well deserved example that will enhance the achievement of peace and security. Hence when there is no peace among people of different religious background there will be chaos and conflict in the society.

Conclusion

In summary, it is clear from the above exposition that there is no one eternally-divined way of resolving a conflict. Each conflict is unique in its own sense and calls for a peculiar solution after careful review of its cause(s), actors involved and their willingness to work for an amicable solution of the contentious issues. The unending conflict and crises in Nigeria is a major test on our nascent democratic experiment as all efforts to restore peace in the area have proved abortive. For some, it would appear that our brand of democracy has imbued in the people the culture of impunity while for others; it is political differences and intolerance that has fueled some of the violence that has erupted in Nigeria. It is the position of this paper that politicians in addition to adopting any or all of the modern procedures for resolving conflicts outlined above should mend their ways and move away from the current tendency of working for themselves, to serving the people.

Recommendations

It is worrisome to note that the Nigerian security system is more reactive than proactive, waiting for crises to break out before rushing to put off the fire. The strategy may have worked in the past but we cannot use the solutions of yesterday to solve today’s challenges. The practice of sending Special Military Task Forces for internal security duties, even if they work in the most professional and saintly manner, is only meant to put off the fire. It should only be a short term intervention measure because by their training and operational system, the military is not in a position to find solutions to the civil crises. It is therefore, illogical and to an extent ridiculous that people are relying on them to solve the crises. Several analysts have criticized the present system where all the intelligence gathering and crises response mechanisms are concentrated in
a few locations, usually very far away from the well-known flash points of crises. This plan naturally leads to extremely slow response to early warning signals, and in fact, is so slow that it has become counter-productive (Gomos, 2011).

Modern Conflict management is concerned with interventionist efforts towards preventing the escalation and negative effects of ongoing conflicts, especially violent ones. Rarely are conflicts completely resolved. More often, they are reduced, downgraded, or contained. Such developments can be followed by a reorientation of the issue, reconstitution of the divisions among conflicting parties, or even by a re-emergence of past issues or grievances. Conflict management when actively conducted is, therefore, a constant process. Conflict management should not be viewed as a simple, linear or structured process. Those assuming or charged with such a task must usually overcome an intensely chaotic situation. Conflicts are frequently managed directly by the society in which they occur. When not possible or when conflicts become national in scope, government normally assumes the task, provided it is not a party to the conflict. In cases where a government is unable or unwilling to intervene, international organizations increasingly assume the role of a conflict manager (Lijphart, 1977).

The major challenge of this mechanism is that sometime the ‘third parties’ who are charged with the settlement of dispute or conflict may become partisan. Also, most disputes especially in fragile states involve the state as an actor. This becomes very problematic as the state is also often charged with the selection and appointment of the arbiters. In many cases, the state itself flouts the terms, conditions and sometimes the resolution of the dispute settlers. The paper recommends the Western and modern Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanism, which if properly administered will engender adequate conflict resolution.

(a) Grass-root community based activities: This include village festivals like the new yam festival among the Igbos, initiation rites and puberty festival for young people, marriage ceremonies, the sharing of village community land. When unity/solidarity is lost to violent conflict, as was the case in the conflict between Ife and Modakeke communities of Osun State, the Chamber/Jukun and Kuteb of Taraba State, and the Umuleri/Aguleri of Anambra State all in Nigeria for instance, the importance of such community virtue cannot be over-emphasized (Suberu 2006; Suberu 2008).

(b) Good Governance: This may be defined as the running of the affairs of government in positive and progressive manner beneficial to the governed and which delivers the public goods. Its attributes include: due process, transparency, responsiveness on the part of government, power sharing, rule of law, competence, separation and devolution of powers, a free press and a free virile civil society. There are several dictatorial democracies in Africa. Such regimes do not promote and practice good governance. These are the conflict generators of the African continent.
(c) **Communication:** This is the process of sharing and exchanging information between individual, groups and potential parties in a conflict situation. It is also the process of interacting and relating with others, meaning that parties to a conflict situation still talk.

(d) **Collaboration:** The collaboration process is one in which parties work together on their own to resolve problems through constructive dialogue or other activities like joint projects, sharing of community schools and health centres, markets, bridges and culverts, as well as other utilities (Aghedo and Osumah, 2009).

(e) **Negotiation:** This is the process whereby the parties within the conflict seek to settle or resolve their conflicts. Also negotiation is a direct process of dialogue and discussions taking place between at least two parties who are faced with a conflict situation or a dispute. The benefits of compromised solution, it is believed, out-weigh the losses arising from refusal to negotiate. The goal of negotiation, is to reach agreement through joint decisions between parties. Negotiation is a key approach to peaceful resolution of dispute and conflicts that may arise among parties. It is also within the reach and control of parties.

(f) **Conciliation:** Conciliation is close to mediation. It is a third party activity, which covers intermediary efforts aimed at persuading the parties to a conflict to work towards a peaceful solution. Conciliation involves facilitation.

(g) **Mediation:** Mediation has been presented by the United Nations University for Peace as the voluntary, informal, non-binding process undertaken by an external party that fosters the settlement of differences or demands between directly invested parties.

(h) **Arbitration:** This is another type of third party intervention that is a step higher than mediation in the conflict management spectrum or process. The parties to a conflict, who select to use arbitration, even though they choose a non-violent method of settling their disputes, lose more control over their situation than those who select mediation and other lower levels of intervention.

(i) **Adjudication:** Adjudication is another non-violent method of conflict management. This involves the use of the courts and litigation processes. Parties to a dispute may choose not to use any of the methods we have so far discussed. They may opt instead to take their case to a court of law, before a judge of competent jurisdiction. Legal counsel may represent them.

(j) **Crisis Management:** This is an extreme situation of conflict, which has reached a turning point, where critical decisions have to be taken or else the conflict may escalate.
to a point of extreme violence. Sometimes, a crisis is a degenerated state of conflict, where threats to human security, intensifies violence characterized by fighting, death, injury, large-scale displacement of populations occurs. Once a crisis occurs, it is the responsibility of the government of a state to de-escalate the situation and bring a cessation to violence. This may be done through various means, including the use of the coercive state apparatus, where necessary (Fred-Mensah, 2000).

(k) Seriousness in the ceasefire agreement: Recently federal government of Nigeria claimed to have a ceasefire agreement with the dangerous sect, yet Nigerians are not seeing the effect of the ceasefire. It rather seems as if government is playing politics with the phase of insurgence, the paper therefore, advices government to be more serious with the ceasefire process.

References


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