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Terrorism The Consequence of Religious Bogotry in Nigeria: A Perception of Boko Haram Insurgency in Borno State

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Abstract

General level of safety is required to guarantee any successful human endeavor. Terrorism is the most fundamental source of insecurity in Nigeria and its main source is religious fanaticism and intolerance. The African Traditional Religion was brutally wiped away by Islam or Christianity. The rigid Islamic sharia advocates over the years created fanatical groups, who orchestrated trouble to de-secularize and rule Nigeria on principles of Islam. Bigot is a person who is intolerantly devoted to be self-centered and holds own prejudiced opinion and treat members of other groups with hatred. Boko Haram is an internationally sponsored religious insurgent group that declared to establish sharia that must inevitably undermine any other form of administration once established. The instrument of administration must be the Quran as law with all opinions and established laws like the Nigerian constitution is made dysfunctional. This is the reason why it is an act of rebellious secessionism that must be punished by death. For example, violent clashes between Yoruba traditional worshippers and Hausa groups in Sagamu, Ondo state on July 1, 1999, brought a reprisal crisis of Kano on 22nd July, 1999. In Kwara State, Muslim fundamentalists attacked and destroyed over 14 churches in Ilorin on December 20, 1999 where properties worth millions of naira were destroyed. In February 2000, there was riot in Kaduna over the introduction of Sharia where about 3000 people lost their lives, with reprisal at Aba, Abia State where over 450 people were killed. To address the problems of bigotry, this paper considers the relevance of the application of two pragmatic approaches. Thus, the implementation of the 1999 Federal republic of Nigeria's anti-bigotry constitutional provisions, and the adoption of sociological approach dwelling on social works operational ethics, bearing in mind Marxian egalitarianism. Thus, every person is entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including the freedom to change his religion or belief. Culture is basically created by a population in a process of their interaction with the social and other physical environment. There is no spirituality beyond the people themselves that created the religions and their principles. Religion therefore must be a social mistake made in trying to understand the social and physical realities. One of the major prevailing mistakes in religions is the character of bigotry shamelessly reported to have been sourced spiritually from the spiritual force that claimed to have created the religions. There is no doubt the lasting solution to religious bigotry is with educating the people in Marxian perspective that explains religion as illusive. Religion is used against the masses and has never controlled members of the ruling class. To control bigotry and associated bloodsheds, religion must be abolished. Public preaching must be stopped in general and bigot preachers must be punished according to extent laws. Terrorism must be punished with death world-wide.

Keywords: Terrorism, Religion, Bigotry, Perception, Boko Haram, Insurgency.

Introduction

There is no doubt that security is the bedrock for any population's peaceful survival. General level of safety is required individually and collectively to guarantee any successful human endeavor. Nigeria since its inception at colonialism from 1861 to date have been experiencing one form of insecurity or the other. The journey has never been smooth and perfectly as expected. There were tribal wars in the processes of consolidating generational empire as major occurrences where major and dominant tribal groups conquer to dominate minor ones with consequence of geopolitical expansions. Such process created larger global nationalities in history, like the Kanem Borno Empire, the Sokoto caliphate and so on.

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Certainly, there were terrorism as there are terrorism today. When Nigeria was consequently created by the colonial powers in 1914 at the amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorates, it succeeded in ending tribal wars by establishing one geopolitical entity called Nigeria. Consequently, a new mindset was established to sustain a united network of over 300 tribes to live as one indivisible democratic republic of Nigeria, where all human population comprised in, have equal right to govern and be governed at different levels. The new reconstructed direction of struggles has been on how do you achieve to govern any aspect of the new entity? Contrary to the historical struggle for how do a particular group conquer new population to expand geographically and politically?

The new web of insecurity was created where ethnic and religious identities became more important than the tribal struggles and wars. At the tribal struggle the dominant and successful family rules and powers were structured as ascribed entity, where only the ruling family continue to rule through the arrangement of succeeding offices by heredity. A very rigid monarchical socio-economic and political structure that was only possible for colonialism to successfully abolish it.

With the democracy as a new philosophy, the elites who were exposed by the colonial authorities to succeed them could not innovate new concepts to convince for a vote or formulation of political parties except application and manipulation of concepts like ethnicity and religious identity. For example, the Northern People's Congress, the National Council for Nigeria and Cameroon, and Action Group etc. were formed as parties promoting ideology of particular sections or entities, the Hausas, Igbos and Yorubas. It was upon this background that regional based parliamentary governments were established that consequently produced the leadership at independence. The concepts that could easily be understood were those identities; "I am one of you by ethnicity or religion, please give me your support to represent you". This resulted in the minority ethnic/religious groups being apparently marginalized and necessarily manifested in reactions including formulation of new political parties traced to those minority groups. For instance, Northern Element Progressive Union, Borno Youth Movement etc.

More tensions with associated crises characterized the polity that in most situations resulted in general insecurity and terrorism. Killings for power instigated by elites at the expense of the masses who were just manipulated. Every associated incapability of an authority was wrongly perceived and explained based on the bases of identity of the person. If you are a Muslim the Christian around you will sabotage you. If you are of any other religion, members of other religion will sabotage you. If you are member of particular ethnic group, others will sabotage you. This endless struggle culminated in establishment of profound religious bigotry and ethnocentrism that resulted in profound terrorism such as the Maitatsine, Boko Haram, Izala/Wahhabis, Tareeqa etc. in the case of northern Nigeria and Borno state in particular. This paper is therefore an attempt to focus on the relationship between religious bigotry or ethnocentrism and terrorism in Nigeria, with particular reference to Boko Haram insurgency in Borno state. Hence the following questions are answered: What is terrorism? What is religion? What is bigotry? What is Boko Haram? What is the relationship between

emergence of Boko Haram sect and religious bigotry? To what extent religious bigotry and ethnocentrism fueled insurgency in Borno state? And what solution?

Terrorism

Sampson and Onuoha (2011)[1] argued that terrorism is an organized use of violence to cause general fear, destruction and death against unarmed targets, property or infrastructure. It is intended to threaten those in authority of a state to respond to specific demands and expectations of the individuals or group behind such violent acts. Such actors always claim to have advanced legitimate political, social and economic grievances of a population. Otaiku (2018)[2] also describe terrorism as the most fundamental source of insecurity in Nigeria and its main source is located in religious fanaticism and intolerance particularly in Muslim dominated states of Nigeria. Oluokun (2014)[3] says Nigeria lost about 1500 in the northeast between 2009 and 2014 alone as a result of Boko Haram terrorism. Similarly, Country Report on Terrorism (2016)[4] opened that terrorism in Nigeria accounted for displacement of about 2 million persons in the northeast. Otto (2008)[5] says between 1999 and 2008 Nigeria was producing only 10% of its potential capacity of 3.4 million barrels of crude oil per day of the 2007, as a result of terrorist induced pipeline vandalism. Multinational companies like Michelin, Dunlop etc. also left the Niger Delta region under the threat of terrorism and insecurity. The Niger Delta agitations is also traceable to economic reasons such as resources. Religious extremism is one of the stimuli as Muslims and Christians try to overthrow secular governments to replace with theocracy. The Boko Haram in Nigeria is example of violent Islamic militant organization that strongly opposes what they called man-made laws and modern science, seek to establish Islamic Sharia system of government in Nigeria.

While religion and its bigotry practices are strong facilitating factors for existence and operation of terrorism, the real issues of concern are poverty, ignorance, joblessness, frustration, and hopelessness, anger against arrogance by official corruption, insensitivity, impunity and generally bad governance. It is gingered by internal and external sponsor by wealthy individuals at all levels. Terrorists are also facilitated by contemporary globalized communication technologies that connects like-minded persons at all levels against common enemies (Bappah, 2009)[6]. The current coordinated succession advocating split republic of Ambazonia from the French speaking Cameroon is an example. This coordinated civil war is sponsored by wealthy Ambazonians in diaspora that set up a cabinet of networking structure with president down to local government council chairman. The field militant agitators fight with the supplied weapons by the sponsors whose headquarters is in Washington DC.

Mu'azu (2010)[7] ex-rayed that a large percentage of Nigerians dissatisfaction against the state resulting from injustices and corrupt practices heavily contributed for the marginalized to resort to violence. Many of such conditions predates the advent of Boko Haram. The Boko Haram as a group just took advantage of the existing public grievances to reap on, by recruiting the jobless angry talented youths. Efforts to curb the situation by military was viewed by the northerners with contempt.

For the purpose of this paper, terrorism is operated as the

deliberate inflicting of pain on others by an individual or group who wish to promote a particular interest as legitimate course for the group, perpetuated on the population until it is satisfied that full scale unhindered implementation of the objectives is established. As in case of Boko Haram, it is application of force to succeed in the establishment of Islamic system of government called sharia. This is categorically the bigotry stand which is ethnocentric in all ramifications.

Religion

Durkheim (1965)[8] also described religion as a unified system of believe and practices and relative to sacred things. Things set apart and forbidden. The beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a church or mosque and all those who adhere to them. Sutherland (1917)[9] also sees religion as the self-validation of a society by means of myth and ritual. In the argument of Greetz (1909)[10] religion is a system of symbols that subsequently establish powerful, persuasive, and lasting moods with motivations. This formulates concepts of a general order of existence, clothed with aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem as uniquely realistic. O'Dea (1882)[11] sees religion as culture and symbolic transformation of experience.

In the assessment of Chukwuma (1985)[12] religion is the ontological and metaphysical phenomenon related to the innermost consciousness of life and continue to remain a fact of history. He further diagnosed the universality of religion in history by reporting that Africa had it religion before the advent of Islam and Christianity that dominated Africa today. An African was born into a society with its own religion. Accordingly the African Traditional Religion influence the practice of the traditional values of communitarianism, socialism, hospitality, respect for human dignity etc. He observed that religion played a role in the socio-political set up of community and its governance. The leaders ensured that basic African Traditional Religion and cultural values were safeguarded and properly enforced.

The African Traditional Religion was brutally wiped away by Islam or Christianity and the population of Africa was forced to have a new general mindset illusion to criminalize their locally evolved religion and perspectives. Particularly Islam identified politics with religion parallel to popular democracy that promotes exceptional human dignity and fundamental human rights. The Islamic theocratic notion of governance contradict the adherence to secularism introduced from the west into Africa and Nigeria in particular. It is practically impossible to blend the Islamic rigid position of sharia as divine authority and political system with the western philosophy of democratic ideals based on scientific approach.

This contributed to constant conflicts and crises. The rigid Islamic sharia advocates over the years created prevalent religious fanatical groups, who orchestrated trouble to de-secularize and rule Nigeria on principles of Islam (Chukwuma, 1985)[13].

This is a bigotry and apparent ethnocentrism. According to Johnstone (2014)[14] a bigot is someone who is intolerant and prejudiced against others usually on the basis of ethnicity, race, religion, sexuality, age etc. and who is prejudiced to treat others with fear, hatred and contempt. Disregarding all norms of social decency and fairness,

bigots behave in ways that are not just hurtful to their targets but established a social structure of “we-they” divide resulting condition of segment base dehumanization, a complete contradiction to the philosophy of fundamental human rights. Kirk-Greene (1971)[15] said the situation leading to civil war was bedeviled by a set of oppositions, including the unending north verses south, and Islam verses Christianity mindsets.

It is also on record that the transition to democratic rule in 1979 was almost disrupted on the issue of which code was to be supreme (the sharia or the Nigerian constitution) (Kirk-Greene, 1979)[16]. The negation continues with the advent of the Maitatsine riots of 1980-1982 that led to the loss of multiple lives and properties in the northeastern Nigeria.

No wonder many critical minded intellectuals opined that religion is fundamentally irrational set of beliefs and practices. It is a kind of mind-virus against human progress that predominantly inspires violence against non-adherents and non-compliant adherents alike. It fuels consequential maladaptation like the use of suicide attacks (Hitchens, 2007[17]).

Deductive from all above is that religion is a social attitude to a socially conceived power attributed to an object or illusion force. It is a unified system of belief that consequently created single moral community of adhered members. It is characterized by myth and ritual that create a general order of existence streamlining social structures with innermost conscious of life. It is historically a universal social fact that established ideological procedures for fundamental transformation that imposes manners of social control in social interaction. Religion is a product of social interaction and man-made, with founders identified or not as time goes. One dominant aspect of religion is the extension of its principles from the identified founders to a mythical projection of spiritual entity exert with the supernatural or superhuman powers of creativity of the universe and the forces of influence therein. The dilemma is this extension from social, natural to supernatural and its unscientific justification.

The Universal Declaration for Human Rights considered the limits of unscientific propagation and established articles protecting fundamental freedom and fundamental human rights including a disbelieve in anything unscientific and practice accordingly. It remains fundamentally difficult to obtain a universal basic education to put an end to the outrageous mythical exhibition that poses unnecessary conflict on the natural and social worlds. And this is the basis for fighting terrorism at the United Nations level.

Bigotry

Bigot is a person who is intolerantly devoted to be self-centered and holds only his or her own prejudiced opinion, especially those who treat members of other groups than theirs with hatred resulting from dominant view and heavy value to racial, ethnic or religious identity. Fraser (1996)[18] says “A *bigot* is a hater. A bigot hates Catholics. A bigot hates Jews. ... It's no sin to be poor. It is a sin to be a bigot. Don't ever be one of them” (Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster)[19]. **Bigotry** is a situation where a bigot displays the habit of being an active bigot, who with no any hesitation harass any other person that he or she is prejudiced to hate predominantly on identical grounds, such as race, language, ethnicity,

religion, ideology or locations. Bigots are so selfish to carelessly exhibit ethnocentrism with impunity criminally supported by dogmatic, cultic, illusive and polemic propaganda. There is no wonder saying bigots are belligerents and could consolidate to be dangerous militants.

Boko Haram

Islam is the religion that accommodates the population that is today called Boko Haram. Islam is the religion founded to the holy prophet of Islam Muhammad (SAW) who born in Mecca 570 AD and died 632 AD in the city of Medina. According to Islamic historians, experience of Muhammad throughout history was that of bitter experience, ranging from orphanage life before birth by losing his father before he was born to that of public persecution for calling a generation from their upheld religious perspective of polytheism to that of monotheism propagated by Islam. It is therefore not a news that the prophet himself have been terrorized brutally ranging from sleepless experience at Mecca for fear of being killed to that of expelling him from Mecca as refugee to the land of Medina. While at Medina the prophet did not see peace as he struggled on recapturing Mecca to sanitize the Ka'aba that contained about 360 idols worshipped as gods by the Quraish. Many battles were launched to recapture Mecca and to liberate the supporters of Muhammad and adherents to his religion called the Islam. In one of the battles, he was almost killed, that one of the tooth was reportedly removed by hits of weapons. Many of his supporters have been killed throughout the persecution.

No wonder the religion of Islam hardly be separated with fight or what otherwise called jihad. The fight did not end at the death of the prophet at Medina after the last battle that ended in recapturing of the city of Mecca and almost everyone accepting Islam. The population of Muslims encountered more challenges of authoritative reorganization in the absence of the prophet whose actions and statements were considered and implemented as spiritual orders and divine legal directives. Who should represent the prophet in authority ended up in battles where some of the caliphs were killed, like the killing of Usman Ibn Affan the third caliph and the killing of Hussain Ibn Ali to be replaced by Hassan Ibn Ali Abu Talib etc. History also revealed fight on people who decided to denounce Islam after the death of the prophet (the hurubal ridda), that somehow justify forceful or unconditional sustenance of the Muslim Umma, which today contradict the principle of freedom of worship advocated by articles of the United Nations Declarations for Human Rights.

Factions evolved as there was no agreed and believed individual that was supernaturally imposed for regulation as the prophet himself, whose conducts were 100% believed by the umma as divined. At the beginning was the sunni shiah divide, and later to multiple divides on diverse conception and interpretations of the Quran and legacies of the prophet (his recommendations and actions). Today there are hundreds of Islamic sects and sub-sects, each one exclusively portraying the other as misguided or sometimes complete errands or disbelievers. Those conflict in perception contributed to the inter-religious and intra-religious tension, insurgency and subsequently unwarranted terrorism.

The Boko Haram as a group is just an example of one of

the Islamic sect conflicts battling on the populations of the world. In 2002, a group of Islamic advocates not yet known as Boko Haram declared, embarked on Hijra from the city of Maiduguri to Kanama a village in Yobe state. This journey was considered equivalent to the prophetic Hijra of the prophet of Islam from Mecca to Medina, where he was able to profound the religion of Islam. Kanama is reportedly a place near the border with Niger republic used by the group to establish a separatist community run on hardline Islamic principles. The group's leader Mohammed Ali, espoused anti state ideology and called on other Muslims to join the group and return to a life under "true" Islamic law, with the aim of making a more perfect society away from the corrupt establishments (Walker, 2012)[20].

At a clash with the police and other security agencies the founding group in Kanama was crushed with few resurfaced survivors. The survivors returned to Maiduguri where they settled back with others from the youth group that had originated at the Indimi mosque. The leader of the Maiduguri group Muhammad Yussuf then embarked on the process of establishing the group's own mosque in Maiduguri. This mosque was named "The Ibn Taimiyyah Masjid", was built on the land to the north of the center town of Maiduguri, near a railway station owned by Yusuf's father-in-law, Baba Fugu Muhammad. The group was left alone by the authorities to expand into other states such as Bauchi, Yobe, and Niger state. It was the group's neighbor in Maiduguri that dubbed it as "Boko Haram" in Hausa. Operationally, Boko Haram created a "state within a state", with a cabinet, its own religious police, and a large farm. It attracted more and more people under its roof by offering welfare handouts food and shelter mostly to refugees from the wars bordering Chad, and jobless Nigerian youths, Yusuf received funds from salafist contacts in Saudi Arabia following two Hajj trips. There were also donations from wealthy northern Nigerians. For instance, a wealthy businessman was arrested by the State Services for criminally donating to a security risk group in 2006. The group sent children to an al Qa'eda training camp in Mauritania. The arrested businessman confessed that his donations to the group were on innocent attempt to contribute zakat, an obligation of wealthy Muslims to give charity. Similarly, the group robbed banks, cash transits convoys in Maiduguri and other northern cities. The group emphasized that it is permitted to do so by the Qur'an as the money it takes is considered to be as booties. The group made approximately five hundred million naira (N500 Million) which is about three million dollars (\$3 million) from such robberies (Walker, 2012)[21].

John Campbell, the former US Ambassador to Nigeria said, Boko Haram is several things at once. It is a movement of grassroots anger among northern people at the continuing deprivation and poverty in the north. It is also the core group of Muhammad Yusuf's followers who have reconvened around Abubakar Shekau and revenge against the state for killing of their leader Yusuf. It has been a personal cult of Islamic millennial sect inspired by a teaching from charismatic preacher the Muhammad Yusuf (Walker, 2012)[22].

Andrew Straehlein (2012) of the International Crisis Group, Boko Haram is a fundamentalist revival in northern Nigeria. It rejects modern narrative and apply traditional religious answers to all social questions. Unfortunately, the term "Boko Haram" does not adequately capture the

group's thought on western education, because they are not against western technology and technical learning but laments on the perceived deterioration of morals unleashed by western influence. Yusuf declared before he was killed that the purpose of the organization was to withdraw from a corrupt and beyond help society to set up a new society that would be closed to Allah, where prosperity will naturally flow and his righteous group will eventually take over mainstream society. Where western society had gone wrong according to them was the deviating from the principles of sharia. This vision was drowned from the perspective of the 13th century scholar's interpretation of Ibn Taimiyyah. Ibn Taimiyyah advocated by Muslims who did not behave in benevolent way but used their authorities to oppress, it was acceptable to Allah for individuals to withdraw from that corrupt system and fight it with violence (Walker, 2012)[23].

While the principle to standup and fight against unjust authorities is based on the Boko Haram's Ibn Taimiyyah ideology Nigeria is apparently a ripped population of prevalent corruption that produced established gap of poverty population at the midst of public wealth diverted by few with impunity. Generally Boko Haram destroyed schools, hospitals, communication masts and markets. Traders, farmers, livestock breeders were traumatized through threatening text messages seeking for force payment of amounts from victims or risk being killed. At points Boko Haram erected road blocks to collect taxes from motorists along high ways. A member of a family who is Boko Haram is assigned to kill a family member that is a threat to Boko Haramism. This forced many parents to desert their homes or conspired to hide their weapons against discovery by Joint Task Force.

From 2010 when Boko Haram resumed its operation, there was reduction in Foreign Direct Investment into Nigeria. The world Investment Report shows that FDI into Nigeria was reduced by 21.3% (from \$8.9 billion). Banks were closed down due to a decrease of economic activities and general insecurity leading to financial and psychological pressures on victims (Akande, 2012)[24]. Many shops were taken by soldiers as their base in Borno and Yobe state forcing business owners to relocate or abandon it totally. Small business operations in the night have been stopped on the security grounds by the military. Generally the insecurity cost N1.3 trillion (\$6 billion) the Nigerian economy as a result of the attack (Dauda, 2014)[25].

Unuoha (2012)[26] found that the insurgency has forced business owners to hide their money in their shops or at home. Agricultural production decreased and prices increased. Goods stockpiled to waste in the hands of farmers as traders from the south were scared to travel to the north after the killing of some of them. The trader's association in Ibadan for Foodstuff placed an indefinite ban on travelling to the north. The National Emergency Management Agency distributed 1120 bags of rice, 2240 bags of maize, 2120 bags of millet, 280 bags of cement, roofing sheets, ceiling, mosquito nets, mattresses, tissues, detergents. Over N800 million has been reportedly spent by Yobe state government on the welfare of Pompomari camp Damaturu in November 2015. Millions of children are out of school as a result of schools closures. Thousands of teachers killed. Schools were closed for 18 months. Boko Haram warned residents not to participate in the 2015 general election, many then forced to stay at home. Number

of people were killed in Mafa, Gwoza and so on during the election as a result of launched attack by Boko Haram (Johnstone, 2018)[27].

It is deductive to report that Boko Haram is an internationally sponsored Islamic based religious insurgent group that declared to establish sharia, the Islamic system of political administration that must inevitably undermine any other form of administration once established. The instrument of symbolic administration must be the Quran as law and all opinions and establish laws like the Nigerian constitution will be pulled out or made dysfunctional. This is the reason why it is not just insurgency and terrorism but an act of rebellious secessionism that must be punished by death under the laws of the constitution federal republic of Nigeria. Its operation between 2002 to date resulted in killing of thousands, injured thousands, destroyed billions of naira worth of properties, traumatized peace-loving population, displaced millions from homes and sources of livelihood.

Relationship Between Boko Haram Sect and Religious Bigotry

Unfortunately, history of most religious practices have been characterized by bigotry. Some of the religions are not only consolidating a collective practice for its members but compete for domination through obvious manipulation including use of force which is claimed and believe to be divine directive and a condition of being a fulfilled member. Religion itself came as a way of answering questions about the mysterious universe. However, certain character of religion has degenerated into intolerance.

According to Obasi (2009)[28], religion as confined narrow-mindedness, misunderstanding, fundamentalism, or fanaticism blocks social progress and breakdown the social order. Izuegbu (2012)[29] observed that religion integrates and controls its members, gives them sense of belonging and identity with consequence of isolating members from other members thereby creating a kind of disparity in the society. The creation of multi-denominations or multi-religions subjected mutual suspicion, distrust, intolerance, hostility, aggression and destruction of life and property which are counterproductive to any society. Religion can easily separate a people in such a way that humans become enemies against humans because of religion. This is bigotry in action. The rigidity in belief system in most cases does not call for societal progress. For instance, the rigid idea that Western education should be abhorred by some sects in Nigeria goes to engineer division, rivalry, disruption and aggression.

Different surveys have confirmed to these very facts. For instance, about 88% of 192 respondents agreed that Boko Haram is the Islamic sect that teaches violence against other Muslims with different ideology and non-Muslims. About 94% of same respondents agreed that the sect's teaching is rooted on the ideology of religious extremism. Some 80% agreed that the sect is conclusively ethnocentric. More than 80% observed that the sect expands its group membership by deathly threats against other Muslims. Some 80% said it recruits forcefully by evading villages. About 80% agreed that they indiscriminately destroy government infrastructures. More than 74% also said the group destroy schools to end formal education. Some 73% opined that generally religions are responsible for violence extremism in Borno state in particular and West Africa in

general (Musa, 2023)[30]. Similarly, about 90% of 200 respondents agreed that Boko Haram insurgency caused the scarcity of supply of food items to Maiduguri. About 85% of the respondents agreed that many businesses have been closed down as a result of the insurgency. More than 95% of the respondents agreed that the insurgency caused rise in prices of goods and services. Some 85% observed that the insurgency succeeded in the abduction of innocent citizens especially girls and women in Maiduguri (Abdullahi, 2022)[31]. All the devastative occurrences are resultant of apparent bigotry of the sect of Boko Haram in particular and of the religion of Islam in context, and the dogmatic imposition of all religions in general.

Isidore (2012)[32] revealed how religious dichotomy could ruin world peace and harmony. Judaism and Christianity experienced a terrible movement of conflict that nearly destroyed the history of Israel and Palestine. The wars and jihad variously rendered the medieval period almost inhabitable for mankind. Such claimed religious obligation blind humans in their expected interpersonal relationship.

Accordingly Izuegbu (2012)[33] mentions that from families, clans, villages, towns, to the national levels, one can see traces of negative attitudes in the name of religion. Instead of unity there is rivalry in place of harmony. More so, Ebeh (2015)[34] included religion as one of fundamental roots of national insecurity. That a lot of crises experienced in Nigeria have religious undertones resulting from bigotry.

Sampson (2012)[35] observed violent clashes between Yoruba traditional worshippers and Hausa groups in Sagamu, Ondo state on July 1, 1999, brought a reprisal crisis of Kano on 22nd July, 1999. In Kwara State, Muslim fundamentalists attacked and destroyed over 14 churches in Ilorin on December 20, 1999 where properties worth millions of naira were destroyed. In February 2000, there was riot in Kaduna over the introduction of Sharia where about 3000 people lost their lives, with reprisal at Aba, Abia State where over 450 people were killed. There was Kaltungo religious crisis in Gombe in September 2000 over implementation of Sharia in the state. Furthermore, in October, 2001, crises rocked Kano as a protest to US invasion of Afghanistan over Osama bin Laden, over 150 lives were lost. Jos witnessed religious crisis in September, 2001 where mosques, churches and several properties destroyed. The 2002 article authored by Isioma Daniel in This Day Newspaper led to crisis in Kaduna where the Muslims attacked Christians and churches. This was because of 'Miss World' beauty contest. Over 250 people lost their lives. Numan town in Adamawa in 2004 witnessed religious conflict between Christians and Muslims which was caused by the location of the town's central mosque close to Bachama paramount palace. The Danish cartoon of Prophet Mohammed in JyllandsPosten Newspaper caused religious conflict between Christians and Muslims in Maiduguri of Borno State in 2006. Over 50 people were killed, churches destroyed, shops, houses, vehicles were destroyed. In 2009, Nigeria witnessed the rise of Boko Haram sect that unleashed violence on Christians in Bauchi, Borno, Kano and Yobe States. Over 700 persons were reportedly killed, many were internally displaced with many children made orphans. In 2010, Plateau State witnessed several religious crises. The bombing of a Christian church at Madala, Niger State in December, 2011 is evidence of the unabated religious

bigotry in Nigeria. In 2012, gunmen stormed Deeper Life Church in Gombe and Boko Haram claimed responsibility of the killing. Further still, Boko Haram which according to Idowu (2015)[36] started as a fundamentalist Islamic sect with the purpose of helping the Northern Region government achieve the intention of implementing the shariah law throughout the region has been a serious threat to the security of the nation. The abduction and killing of the chairman of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Rev Lawan Andimi in January, 2020 as reported by Guardian Newspaper of 22nd January 2020 after the sect rejected N50m ransom is still evidence of religious bigotry. Again, the case of Leah Shuaibu who was abducted along with other girls by the Boko Haram sect and has not been granted freedom even when other girls were released is a height of religious bigotry. She remained in the custody because of refusal to renounce her Christian faith. The attack on the people of Nimbo, Enugu State where about 40 people were reportedly killed according to Vanguard Newspaper on April 26, 2016 and in Agatu, Benue State where between 300 and 500 persons were killed and at least 7000 displaced is a clear challenge to the security of Nigeria. In 2018, 19 Christians including two priests were killed in Benue State in the church by herdsmen as reported by Vanguard Newspaper of April 25, 2018. Bassa equally witnessed the same attack where 19 persons lost their lives. In Southern Kaduna (which is predominantly Christians) in the same 2018, there was report of the killing of 15 persons and over 20 injured. In Ebonyi State, 17 persons including a Methodist priest were killed on Monday, March 29, 2021 as recorded in Vanguard Newspaper of March 31, 2021. Most of these attacks are on Christians which justifies a state of bigotry. The politics of refusal to swear in the Deputy Governor of Kaduna State in 2010 who is a Christian when the then President Goodluck Jonathan adopted the Governor Namadi Sambo as the vice president is testified as religious bigotry.

Sampson (2012)[37] recorded over 6914 deaths to the crises between 1999 and 2012. Jegede (2019)[38] states that wanton destruction of lives and properties is an implication of religious crises in Nigeria. Religious bigotry affects both human and material resources of the nation negatively thereby affecting the security and development. The Muslims, in the northern parts, with a damn claim to numerical advantage have severally attempted to nationalize the Islamic faith to the highest level of the nation's governance through various means like the Shariah Debate, OIC saga, and the introduction of Shariah in some northern states by the northern governors. It is therefore bigotry trying to establish one religious' faith above others in the nation. Clearly, any attempt at opposing the move had led to violent crises thereby affecting the security and development of Nigeria.

Solutions

To address the problems of bigotry that generates its associated challenges, this paper considers the relevance of the application of two pragmatic approaches. Thus, the implementation of the 1999 Federal republic of Nigeria's anti-bigotry provisions, and the adoption of sociological approach dwelling on social works operational ethics, bearing in mind Marxian egalitarianism.

The Nigerian constitution provides for freedom of religion. According to the Constitution of the Federal Republic of

Nigeria (1999) [Section 38(1)][39], Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including the freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom (either alone or in community with others, and in public or in private) to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance. It is paradoxical to have a constitution that allows freedom of religion and yet, people are bombed during worship, killed during morning cry (preaching) and some people are openly called infidels that deserve to die. Certainly, this important aspect of the constitution not implemented as required. Religious bigotry brings with it division in such a way that the project of building the nation is not taken seriously rather, people are so much divided and mutually suspicious to each other.

According to (Singh, 2017)[40] social work involves holding a high regard for the whole person. It is duty bound to treat all beliefs in equality, failure of which represents a form of bigotry and may result in lateral violence. The public ideas and their religious beliefs and practices have immeasurably contributed to dysfunctional behaviors and some lifestyle choices amongst social work clients. This in no way should discount the client's religious and spiritual beliefs, if a successful treatment is desired. These beliefs often inform core values and may lead to anxiety and depression due to tensions and conflicts of self and identity. The therapist (Social worker) is essentially bound to deal with these things in order to promote healing. It is an act of negligence to discount such facts. Even if a social worker agrees with someone's beliefs, conversely, the profession and ethics of social works requires a commitment to learn as much as possible, in order to be effective. Deprecating behavior towards the faith and traditions of other people does not make one more educated. Openly invalidating the religious beliefs of others may reflect underlying prejudice and bigotry against a certain group of people. No one has the right to act in a bigoted manner against the cultures of others. This behavior brings the helper's character and professionalism into disrepute. Social worker involves engaging with people from different faiths. It is never acceptable to poke fun at the religious beliefs, convictions, and customs of others. Such anti-religious sentiment represents a disregard for diversity. This attitude represents a very fundamental form of bigotry.

Paradoxically there seem to be clinical justification to be anti-religious or anti-faith, it is important to note that this may reflect a worldview, a humanist one, premised on empiricism and does not validate the subjective experiences of others. There are also exceptional circumstances where a client's well-being may conflict with religious belief, and where immediate safety becomes paramount. This designates an extension from social works pragmatic duty to heal individual's psycho-social illnesses to sociological systematic diagnosing to realize systematic and almost permanent solution to a social problem. It is sociological and encouraging to be anti-religious in order to avoid discrimination. Religion certainly is out of step with modern realities and conclusively pathological. Sociology is the scientific study of culture. Culture is basically created by a population in a process of their interaction with the social and other physical environment. There is no spirituality beyond the people themselves that created the religions and their principles. Religion therefore must be a social mistake made in trying to understand social and

physical realities that over time discovered as errors and grievous falsehood. One of the major prevailing mistakes in religions is the character of bigotry shamelessly reported to have been sourced spiritually from the spiritual force that claimed to have created the religions. Bigotry is rooted in fear of recrimination based on one's own religious affiliations, past and present. We have also seen this in the politics of religion in the states with anti-Muslim rhetoric. There is no doubt the lasting solution to religious bigotry and associated challenges could be possible only with educating the people in Marxian perspective that religion is illusive or opium of the masses. Religion is used against the masses and has never controlled members of the ruling class except in actions of mockery. For the masses to be realistic and attain control of their destinies in controlling its bigotry and associated bloodsheds, religion must be abolished. Marx said thus:

...Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people. The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is required for their real happiness. The demand to give up the illusion about its condition is the demand to give up a condition which needs illusions (Marx, 2017:222)[41].

Recommendation

1. Boko Haram is just one of almost all bigot based religious practices in the world. Bigotry is attributable to almost all religions of the world as bigot-based terrorism were found on several religious practices that have millions death globally. There must be clear agenda to bring an end to religion.
2. Constitutional obligations of freedom of worship and right NOT to worship must be enforced indiscriminately. Religion is a private life and people can freely choose to be non-religious.
3. Terrorism must be punished with death world-wide.
4. Religious teachings must be stopped generally and where it is necessarily taught or subjected to free academic criticisms with critical actors fully protected of their academic freedom.
5. Public preaching must be stopped in general and bigot preachers must be punished according to extent laws.

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