ETHNO-RELIGION VIOLENCE IN ZARLAND ECONOMY

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Abstract

The paper examines the effects of ethno-religious violence in Zarland. It also focuses attention on the economic aspect, which has experienced a considerate lack of development in recent time. The paper addressed the identified areas of interest such as: business transactions between neighbouring towns and villages, transportation, production and making of crops and farm animals. It becomes necessary to preface possible solutions to such problems and make recommendations that will help to bring back to cordial relations enjoyed between Christians and Muslims in the distance past and restore the lost glory of Zarland because of the persistent violence. The paper emphasized the need for peaceful co-existence in the area and nationwide so that the development programmes will be achieved.

KEYWORDS: *Ethno-religious, violence, effects, Zarland, economy.*

INTRODUCTION

The paper examines in brief the various concepts involved in this research work such as the biography of Zar and the Zarland, brief ethno-religious violence experienced in the area as well as the negative effects on the economy of the area.

Wadam (1998) lamented that the Zar people were dominantly traditional religionists, until the coming of Christianity and Islamic religion to their

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soil as other African nation alike belief in traditional religious practices, basically going together hand in hand with their culture and traditions. Ethno-religious violence is most of the commonest problem in Nigeria and the world at large. It has been in the world an un-ending problem, continually as a wild fire. Gwamna (2010), said today religion has become a major defining factor of identity, particularly related to political identity in Nigeria.

Almost in the entire gamut of social, political and economic relations revolves around these two identity formation. Ethnic and religious violence are the extreme manifestation of conflict rooted in the crisis of identity. The strategic conflict assessment report in Nigeria according to him notes that religious factors become dangerous when they are linked to politics but more so when linked to ethnicity and North-South divisions. Nigeria has witnessed more than its own fair share of internal conflicts cannot be exaggerated. In most the crisis, factors such as religion and ethnicity have been the major underlying recurrence. Its best conviction that Nigeria is a country with appropriate credentials for dysfunctional conflicts situates these conflicts to Nigeria's diversity in language, religion, culture, history, geography and mentality.

One of the emerging characteristics of modern society resources and politics and psychological needs is based on value and beliefs. Violence often leads to break in relationship, law and order among individuals.

The Zarland violence experience were in (1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 2000-2003), all these ethno-religious violence experience in the area has caused a lot of damage to lives and properties worth millions of naira. However, is difficult to recover from such an ugly condition. The areas were up economically and socially, but the story had changed now. (Iliya interview 2019).

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology designed for this study is phenomenological anthological approaches which are because they give information from the perspectives of the believer avoiding any value judgments and historical analytical methods which are common in religious and other related studies. Sources such as library documents (both published and

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unpublished) books, articles, and journals, field research through personal interviews with natives of Zarland both men and women.

SOURCES OF ZARLAND ECONOMY

The people are basically identified with some major occupational activities which include:

i.   Farming
ii.   Business
iii.   Studying
iv.   Civil servants

Agriculture dominates the larger part of their occupational operations. They produce crops as well as animal production. The major produce in the area include; guinea corn, beans, rice, maize, millet, groundnut, accha, and many more. While livestock produce include; cow, goats, pigs, hens, or chickens.

The produce were meant for their economic and consumption purposes such crops as groundnuts and beans pepper are produce for commercial transactions. The livestock raised were also for commercial and consumption purposes (Dakuna interview 2019).

At times animals are used to provide meat to the community. Zar people are very resourceful because both men and women are involved in business together for lifting up the economy of each family.

The men usually convey the domestic livestock produce to neighbouring and distant areas such as Onitsha, Plateau states and other parts of the country Nigeria, up to the level that they have moved in across the country.

While women normally do their own business locally sometimes with neighbouring local government outside the state for example, Mangu, Kanke, Pankshin local government areas of Plateau state by transporting substantive crops such as grains and sometimes vegetables and potatoes (sweet and Irish) are sold by private individuals within the locality.

THE TRADITIONAL RELIGION OF ZAR PEOPLE

Wadam (2015) said African traditional religion (ATR) as in Zar tradition has a space to exist within the religious philosophy of the world today

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which includes the Christian faith, yet approaches to worship in rites and rituals differs. ZTR as a religious tenet existed with Zar people from the beginning of time and still exists outside any religion and faith today.

The Zars believed that God is Chong the supreme being, creator of all things and controller of the affairs of men with deities such as wa;ar datsu-wagung, wa'ar-durr, wa'ar-loot and wa'ar-guss-tivulli. Sacred worship of Chong through rites, rituals and ceremonies to these deities are been offered in order to glorify Chong the Supreme Being.

Reference worship is made to these deities for their socio-economic and political emancipation of the Zar people while on earth and for a well and meaningful life when translated with the ancestral world beyond. The Zar's traditions believe that life goes beyond the grave demise of an individual. He or she exists thereafter as a living being in the ancestral world. A cardinal position of ZTR believes also by most religion and faith in the world. A continuous review of position of ZTR within the context of ATR in relation to other religion of the world and faith as it affects the conduct, well-being, peace and tranquillity of the Zars and the rest of the world are essential.

African traditional religion ATR is a religion that was practices throughout Africa before the advent of any other religion. The core premise of the ATR is maintenance of African culture and its main features is loyalty to the ancestors and the accompanying rituals that express this loyalty.

(Mbiti 1969) the basic religious foundations (BARFS) such as the belief in impersonal (mystical powers), spirit beings, divinities, deities or gods and supreme being have been discussed by Turaki (1999). This impersonal being controls all the religious realm of African religion system because their doctrines, rites, sacred text, typical group structures and the like are as cultural system and are described, contrasted and compared.

Religion the can be as system of beliefs and practices by means of which a group of people struggles with these ultimate problems of human life. Zar world views have been described as the complex of their beliefs and attitudes concerning the origin, nature, structural organization and interaction of beings in the universe with particular reference to Zar

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world-view seeks to answer fundamental questions about relationship with others in their environment.

THE ADVENT OF CHRISTIANITY AN DISLAMIC RELIGION IN ZARLAND

Before the arrival of Christianity in Zarland, there were two dominant religious groups. Thus; traditional religions worshipped and Islam. The missionaries who brought Christian religion to Zarland came along with the gospel mission in1926. Among them was Mr Charles Westwood, the pioneer who came from the Anglican denomination and stationed in Mwari in 1926. Before his migration to Mwari, Mr Charles was staying in Kabwir in the then Bauchi province, now in Plateau state. The then (Gury Mwari) welcome him even though there was communication barrier between the two parties but interpreters from Kabwir who came along with Charles helped in this regards. The major language of interaction among the Zarland was vigh Zar and Hausa language only. Mr Charles was known as and called by the inhabitants Mallam Madubi Charles which translates to the fact that he wears glasses always.

Those in turn who came after Mr Charles were Mr Adamu and ethnic group from Kabwir and that was the time that Zar people came under abstract was taken over by 1931, the abstract was taken over by missionaries of Sudan United Mission (S.U.M). Mr R.S. Perfect of Sudan United Missionaries and his wife arrived and started for six years at Mwari which pastor Gonapou and Mr Adamu helped to interpret her message in Hausa language. Unlike Charles, the coming of Mr Perfect saw some development in the spread of the gospel in Mwari and its environs.

Having learned Hausa, but also introduced reading classes in the light of the new religion since the missionaries were not cultural practices they encountered a lot of problems. In (1935), there was a growing opposition towards the spread of the gospel all side, children and adults were been warned and forbidding by their parents talk less of attending classes.

The chiefs of Mwan were treated badly because they were responsible for allowing the missionaries to come into their land to influence the native with their self-styled of religious ways of life converts to Christianity were persuaded both young and the aged by the government.

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ETHNO-RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE IN ZARLAND IN BRIEF

Wadam (2015) ethnic and religious violence is the extreme manifestation of conflicts rooted in crisis of identity. Although it involves grievances directed against state incapacity and failure or the existing asymmetry in distribution of social and economic power with realistic effect it can hardly be endowed as with revolutionary violence.

Individual and groups throughout history have form or another resorted to violence has pursued in defence of order by the privileged in the defence of justice by the oppressed and fear of displacement by the threatened. For many decades, however, the study of political violence was given negative scant treatment in the social science literature.

Ekwunife (1992) lamented that religion can be both an integrative factor in any society when the properly handled and brought under strict control they create tension and unrest in a society, often manifest themselves in terms into religious intolerance.

Wadam (2015) said the question of religion in Nigeria could only effectively be resolved if the government in particular decides to be totally neutral as far as religious practices are concerned. Of course, that does not mean that the government should not be interested in religion. However, the government should only be interested in protecting the rights of the individuals to practice whatever religion he/she wants freely and shown from promoting one religion over another.

Dauda (1996) lamented about the ethno-religious conflict that erupted in Tafawa Balewa 1991, could partly be linked to democratization process of Baban Gida administration. By 1991, the implementation of the then transaction programme in 1991 had gone far with the election of local government chairman and governors on party basis. For the first time in Tafawa Balewa Local Government area a democratically elected Chairman under party basis had emerged. Habila Lumana Bako, a Zar man was elected chairman under the platform of the defunct Social Democratic Party (SDP), won the election.

It was observed that his election was not easily accepted by some groups in the area. Every effort was made to sabotage and undermined his administration by the group that was opposed to it. This motivated the other groups to penetrate and destroy the administration through ethno-religious violence.

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During that period many lives were lost and properties damaged the ethno-religious that always takes place in the middle belt of Nigeria it's always directed to ethnic minorities who have been considered to be the predominantly Christian and the Hausa and Fulani who were predominantly Muslims, these groups had been in conflicts with one another because of political and socio-economic gains.

INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

During this period of violence a lot of internal displacement of the people to another place takes place.

Gwamna (2010) said most conflicts that end up being classified in the media as religious when investigated are fundamentally linked to causes other than religion. We cannot rule out the role of religious fundamentalism and politization of religion in increasing the intensity and magnitudes of the violence recorded in these types of conflict.

The assessment indicated that religious differences often reinforce ethnic divisions and fuel conflict particularly in the North-Central religion of Nigeria. Where most of these crises have occurred, there have been demographic shafts with many attendant consequences for thousands of victims were affected.

Religious induced crisis have produced more IDPs than any known conflict in Nigeria, whether politically motivated or even economically driven.

In a country where statistical data is hard to verify, sometimes such numbers are easily politic used.

Thus, what the government officially states as figures of casualties in a particular crisis are usually under estimations of the actual realities, possibly to reduce the effect, such numbers could generate.

Religious crisis have contributed immensely in creating IDPs in Nigeria to resolve the problem calls for the end of religious crisis in Nigeria. The case studies are drawn from the Tafawa Balewa crisis, (1991, 1995, and 2000) and the Zango-Kataf (1992), the Shariah crisis in Kaduna (2000), the Jos crisis (2001 and beyond) and the Yelwa-Shendam crisis in Plateau (2003/2008). These locations fall within the middle belt that has witnessed more religious crisis in Nigeria. With Plateau state having the

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highest number of displaced people, as a result of clashes between Christians and Muslim communities.

During the Tafawa Balewa crisis of 1991, 1995, 2000,2001, also several IDPs on both side while thousands of Christians took refuge in neighbouring states, especially Plateau, Muslims were easily integrated in other parts of Bauchi state today IDP settlement areas from Dass to Liman Katagum roads.

We discovered that Tafawa Balewa in 2002 that the pattern of conflict had assumed a dangerous dimension where houses were placed down to their foundations, indicating that victims of the crisis were not expected to return or this was to make it difficult for victims to contemplate any return. This pattern was replicated in Jos and Yelwa-Shendam crises.

ECONOMIC DISPLACEMENT

Okwudibo (2003) economic displacement is an essential component of the process of population displacement; it encompasses the disconnection of individuals, families and groups from their economic activities and means of livelihood.

The degree of loss suffered by people in cause of Tafawa Balewa violence as known to as is suggestive of the extent of economic displacements. All that can be done here is to give a general indication rather than the details of economic loss suffered by people. The sheer difficulty in quantifying the magnitude of economic displacement is provided by remarks of the women victims of Tafawa Balewa.

COCLUSION

Religion has caused many problems especially when linked with ethnicity. Some of which deal with creation of internally displace persons IDPs. In most cases where such crisis has occurred, the level of killings and destruction of properties heightened with addition of other extraneous factors such ethnicity, political and economic interests. Today, IDPs have been exposed to all forms of negative experiences, such as, homeless, hunger, stress, fear, insecurity, sexual harassment in parts of females and so on. Religion has been moats of separation rather than bridges the understanding between people. From one experience

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of ethno-religious violence in the area we can say that religion can be distractive and negative force in religious and ethnic relations. Religion is a powerful force that lets people apart into antagonistic brackets or campus. Religion induced conflicts can so be complex and difficult to manage. Religion can positively be positive in the sense that provides value for tolerance, peaceful co-existence and respect for human life. Religion also seeks for food of humanity.

RECOMMENDATION

The paper made the following recommendations:

i.   Inter-religious dialogue should be done every time so as to create awareness and forms understanding amongst the religious groups.

ii.   Religious scholars both Christians and Muslims should join hands together to organize seminars and workshops on religion issues.

iii.   People should be given their bread and butter to avoid future ethno-religious crises.

iv.   There are needs to call for unity between Christians and Muslims in the area.

v.   Religious and community leaders should come together in unity to resolve their problem.

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