

INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the project titled: “**Influence of Religion on Governance in Nigeria**” was carried out by **ENOFE Happy** with matriculation number as **ART1802027** in the Department of Religions, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, Benin City Nigeria.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project work in loving memory of my late dad Enofe Wilson. I love you.

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With a heart of joy and one filled with appreciation, my sincere and special thanks goes to God almighty whose grace and mercy saw me through the duration of this work and my stay in this institution.

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ABSTRACT

This study titled, *Influence of Religion on Governance in Nigeria* aims at examining the role religion Play in Politics or in governance of the nation Nigeria. Historical and analytical methods of research were used in this study and it was revealed that religion has a very crucial role to play in the effective governance of any nation in general, particularly Nigeria. One of the recommendations arising from this study is that religions should be carried along when government make policies in order to include moral Principles, justice and truth.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

This study explores the influence of religion on governance in Nigeria. To undertake this task, we shall in this section (background of the study) establish some of the salient areas which pertain to this topic of discussions. This will guide and broaden our understanding of the research topic. Having said, it is imperative to begin by saying that Nigeria was amalgamated by the British in 1914, granted political independence on 1 October 1960 and given republican status on 1 October 1963. The country as at today has celebrated her 62th year of independence first under parliamentary democracy broken by military rule and then followed by a Presidential capitalist system of democracy since 1999.

Nigeria is a highly populated nation whose political attempts aimed at effective governance, have led to frequent re-drafting of her written Constitution - which cannot be said to be a perfect document even after five amended Constitutions (1960, 1963, 1979, 1989, 1999), each one making Nigeria more of a secular State. It is self-evident that these constitutional drafting processes have given Nigerians some experience in the constitution-making process. In all these drafted Nigerian Constitutions, the position of law is that religious belief is not to influence any public or government decisions. However, according to Kukah (1993:43) “interaction within

religious groups of Islamic faith and Christian faith did indeed show evidence of one religion trying to outdo the faith of the other through aggressive conversion into political association and religion practice.”

It is necessary to state that the phenomenon of religious politics in Nigerian system and governance is an obvious one. In political aspects such as style of governance, policy formulations and the electoral process in Nigeria, religion has been a strong determining factor. However, the influence of religion on politics in Nigeria could be both positive and negative. Agreeing with the above assertion, Ikenna L. Umeanolue (2020:13) establishes that; In other words, as religion enhances national development, so also it could be counterproductive. This paper critically discusses the influence of religion on Nigerian politics especially in the post-independence Nigeria, with emphasis on the implications for national development. Similarly, Kastfelt (1994) hinted that religion has been a dominant factor in Nigerian politics especially in this post-independence era. In whichever way one sees religion, the fact cannot be denied of its interaction with politics in Nigeria. The obvious interplay between religion and politics has attracted the reactions of scholars and what seems the consensus of such reactions is the ambivalent role of religion in the growth, development, and survival of the Nigerian nation.

Nolte, Nathaniel and Abubakar (2000) in their work also established that Religion has always played an important part in Nigerian politics, although many disagreements were suppressed during decades of centralized military rule. Since the

return to civilian rule in 1999, religion has become increasingly important in both public debate and political mobilization. Nigeria has successfully managed to contain religious violence in central (Federal) politics, through accommodative arrangements that provide for the equitable representation of the country's largest groups, Christians and Muslims. However, such strategies have either not been instituted or have been unsuccessful at lower tiers of governance and in many Nigerian States, diverse Muslim, Christian and other groups see each other mainly as competitors.

Religion has become increasingly important in Nigerian politics because of the political liberalization associated with the return to civilian rule in 1999 and the degree of autonomy accorded to State governments in a federal system. At the central level, the rise of religion associated with the introduction of *shari'a* law in twelve northern Nigerian states since 1999, has led to a broad debate about the country's constitution, which guarantees religious freedom and prohibits the adoption of a state religion. Attempts to give Muslims and Christians equal symbolic representation in the state include the equitable treatment of Christians and Muslims in most federal appointments, as well as the creation in 2000 of the Nigerian Inter-Religious Council (NIREC), comprised of 25 prominent representatives of both major religious communities, as a space for inter-religious dialogue and state-religion interaction.

Religion has been an indispensable phenomenon in Nigeria. There is no debate that as at today, religion has become an important factor in political discourse. The influence of religion is not only limited to politics but its power influences virtually

on all other facets of life. There are three dominant religions in Nigeria: African Traditional Religion, Islam and Christianity. All these religions and their ideologies allow for interaction between religion and politics. Therefore, politics (governance) and religious practices in Nigeria, no doubt, are intertwined and have direct influence on each other. These influences, however, at some points are negative, at the other hand, positive. It is in this regard that the present study was birthed to carry out an appraisal of the influence of religion on governance in Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In the background of the study above, it has been shown that there is an incontrovertible connection between religion and politics. While the actual role that religion plays in politics has remained debatable, the nexus between the two concepts has been established for long. While it is believed that all religions supposed to teach people the way of righteousness, moral behavior and holiness in all that we do; whether in private or public sectors, it is however, regrettable that in Nigeria, religion has often negatively influence governance and the political space of the country. This calls for sober reflections. It is unfortunate that in most cases today, religion is being used as an instrument of oppression and deceit in Nigerian politics. It appears that Nigerians have resigned themselves to fate and this is possibly further compounded by poverty, illiteracy, and lack of political education on the part of majority.

This position is further aggravated by the general perception that politics is a dirty game and that only people who can deceive, manipulate, and greedily

accumulate wealth are meant to participate in governance. The number of religious people in Nigeria run into million, yet the level of insecurity, destruction of lives and properties and crimes committed in God's name is overwhelming. The need for political stability in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. A major variable in the Nigerian polity is the relationship between religion and politics which some consider as inseparable, while some support the notion of the separation of religion from politics, so that the former will not imbibe the corruption inherent in the latter. Generally speaking, there is a common fallacy that religion and politics are two different fields of social activity. This leads observers sometimes to speak of the politicization of religion, and aver that it is against the original intent of the founder of religion, or God himself.

On the other hand, there is no doubt that religion plays important role in the daily lives of her citizens; the way we interact with one other, our choice of dressing, food, and politics are mostly affected by our religious practices. In other words, religion and politics are interwoven and it empowers man to function in his society by contesting for a political position so as to contribute his ideology. Nigeria's population of over 140 million is divided nearly equally between Christians and Muslims. The importance of this division is well illustrated by the fact that religion, not nationality, is the way in which most Nigerians choose to identify themselves; though not in all cases. Thus, the domains of religion, secularism and politics are becoming increasingly intermingled in both overt and covert ways. Invariably,

sectarian politics is inherently problematic. Thus, there is a need to look at the problems of religious crisis in Nigerian politics, the problem of lack of moral conscience by politicians who claimed to be representing the various religious groups in Nigeria. It also intends to look at the problems as well as the negative effects of religion on the quest for sustainable development to our politics. Lastly the study will also look into the problems of religious intolerance in facing the governance within the Nigerian politics.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to carry out an appraisal of the influence of religion on governance in Nigeria. Other objectives of the study include:

- i. To trace the historical development of the influence of religion on governance in Nigeria from pre-colonial era to post-colonial period;
- ii. To identify reasons for religious participations, interventions and influences in Nigerian politics and governance;
- iii. To highlight and to show both the negative as well as the positive influences of religion on governance in Nigeria;
- iv. To make suggestions as possible solutions to resolving the problems facing governance in Nigeria through the application and endorsement of religion as a panacea.

1.4 Scope of the Study

In a given scholarly research, such as this project, the need to present the scope of the study in its proper scope cannot be neglected. The scope of a study, intellectually speaking, helps the researcher to be guided within the spheres and limit of his or her operations. However, it is imperative to state, fundamentally, the scope of any given study depends largely on the research topic. Based on the topic of this study, the scope is confined within the religion and politics, but it is purely conducted within the domain of religious studies.

1.5 Research Methodology

In order to successfully carry out this project, two major methods were employed. These include the appraisal and critical expository methodology. These methods were chosen with the hope to ascertain whether the debates surrounding the issues of the influence of religion on governance in Nigeria. In addition, to achieve this target, and in compliance to the recommendation of research writings as approved by the Board of the Department, this project adopts the American Psychological Association (APA) style of documentation.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This present study is expected to be significant in many ways. One of such significance is that this study will educate politicians and other secular leaders on the need to uphold morality and righteousness in their leadership dispositions. Secondly, the study will serve as a resource base to other scholars and researchers interested in carrying out further research on this particular or similar topic. Thirdly, this study will

help the researcher to realize his/her long awaiting vision of the need for good moral disciplinary in public affairs. The study will also add to the reference materials in the Department of Religion and other sister disciplines in Humanities (Arts) and Social Sciences.

1.7 Definition of Terms

This section attempts a definition of key concepts as contained in the research topic. Thus, in view of the aforesaid, the two basic concepts to be given contextual clarification include the concept of religion and governance or politics per se. A conceptual clarification of these basic terms will help us understand the research topic within its contextual framework. To begin with this task therefore, what then is the term “religion”?

i. The Concept of Religion Explained

Scholars of religion like Imo (1986) do not agree on a single definition of the word ‘religion’. According him, this is because religion is a combination of two things: the profane and the supernatural. Therefore, a good definition has to take the two into consideration. Some approach its definition with prejudice while some scholars of religion do not practice one so they lack the experience. A good definition, Imo emphasizes “should feature specificity and inclusiveness. He advances that religion is the varied, symbolic expression of, and appropriate response to that, which people deliberately affirm as being of unrestricted value for them. McGee (1980) similarly posits that “the religious communities of human beings are often

distinguished by reference to their central object of worship. Around this sacred object, person or concept, belief patterns, ritual practices, ethical system and social organization take form. He defines religion as a set of activities organized around the sacred- that non-empirical source of power, transcendence, mystery and awe.

The basic dimensions of religion include the belief patterns which accommodate the sacred reality people experience through revelation, reflection or divine illumination; ritual practices which are prescribed for believers as appropriate human responses in the relationship to the ultimate source of being or value; ethical codes which are behaviour directed towards other person; and cultic organization. As we proceed to Chapter three, more of its definitions and as well as conceptual clarifications shall be seen in the review of literature.

ii. Clarifying the Concept Phrase ‘Good Governance’

In contemporary discourse, a discourse on good governance is convivial, given her current economic, political, and social dimensions especially with regard to issues of state and governance. Development scholars have pointed out that good governance is a prerequisite for successful development which every country craves for. However, the meaning of the concept has been changing overtime. This is why a discourse on “Good Governance” has to be in cognizance of the paradigm shift in good governance discourse. In the 1980s for instance, the concept of good governance was taken up from a more normative perspective, with emphasis on development criteria which sought to guide the repair of the failures of the

decreasingly legitimate top down governance structures, by focusing on alternative modes of actor constellations helping to resolve common issues from different perspectives.

Furthermore, by the 1990s it was used from a more analytical perspective in the social sciences as a mean of assessing public policy arrangements. This perspective drives this discourse hence in the exact words of Hank (2003), good governance as a concept has been in existence since the end of the cold war and its meaning has been changing in response to issues of dire importance. In keeping with the paradigm shift consequent upon the evolving nature of the concept of good governance, the World Bank responded to that finding and formulated a more positive and proactive strategy for good governance that addressed four areas: the management of the public administration, responsibility and accountability in the public sector, legal framework conditions, and the transparency of public activities. Within this period, good governance was extendedly conceptualized to be applied to the political system, the exercise of governmental authority, and the ability of a government to formulate and implement political designs. But in 2002, the World Bank Institute developed governance indicators that included corruption control as its rider. The concept was expatiated by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the United Nation, and the European Union.

Consequent upon the changes in the meaning of the concept of good governance, it becomes necessary, not just to examine the definitions of good

governance as are awash in the literature but to be more critical in evaluating their contexts. Hence, Schaefer, and Lamm, Schaefer and Lamm, (1997:50) observed that “good governance’ is a value-laden concept that is characteristically nebulous; enabling it to connote different things to different people, depending on the context in which it is used bearing in mind that while concepts are ‘tools of thinking’ contexts are ‘the environments or frameworks in which the concepts operate.” Good governance therefore, connotes that the conviviality of the concept of good governance, notwithstanding, its meaning is lucid and lucidity in the meanings of a concept is fundamentally important for shaping debate and enriching discourses. This is because the concept of good governance has become popular in recent decades, in response to the notion that ‘more effective governance regimes or systems need to be created to overcome government failure, market failure and system failure or a combination of the three. From the above, it is evident that the concept of governance or the phrase good governance has received various definitions and interpretations. More of these shall be continued in the next chapters of this project.

1.8 Division of Work Plan and Synopsis

In order to put this study in its proper perspective, it is expedient to establish the structural organization of the study, as this on the one hand, will guide the researcher by putting him/her in a clear direction to carry out the study successfully. On the other hand, the structural arrangement of the entire work also immensely

provides the readers to be able to have a glimpse of what he or she looks forward to see in the work. This project therefore is organized into Five Chapters for easy comprehension and elucidation. Chapter one focuses on the introduction of the study; otherwise known as the methodological considerations. Here we consider the following; the background of the study, statement of the problem, aim and objectives of the study, scope of the study, method of the study, significance of the study, definition of term and the ongoing structural organization of the study.

Chapter Two centres on review of relevant literature. The literature review however is divided into two major parts; It begins with an Introduction. This is followed by the review on religion as a concept and generally. The next major phase of the literature review focuses on review of governance in Nigeria. The aim of these reviews are to enable the researcher identify the gaps in previous knowledge, as well as to fill those gaps in subsequent chapters. The second aim is to enable us to have a wider and a more comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the subject matter in view. This is however accompanied with summary of review. In continuation, Chapter three specifically carries the theme; Political Developments and the History of Governance in Nigeria. Other sub-themes to be discussed in this chapter include Nigeria in the Pre-colonial Era, Nigeria in the Colonial Period, Nigeria and its Post-Colonial Political History and Nigeria in the Fourth Republic.

The Chapter Four undertakes a more comprehensive study into the issues of the influences of religion on governance in Nigeria. Its main theme is carefully

chosen as the Influence of Religion on Governance in Nigeria. To achieve or let's say in pursuant of the above goal, its other areas to be analyzed include the quest to look at the History of Religion in Nigeria. Others are The Challenges of Religious Practices in Nigeria, Governance in Nigeria: An Overview, Religion and Politics in Nigeria: The Interplay, and lastly, The Role of Religion on Governance in Nigeria. Finally, chapter five covers the evaluation, conclusion and its recommendation. Here, the entire salient points as contained in the work are to be holistically summarized It touches on the salient points of the hallmark of the study. This will be followed by its conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter attempts a review of two major concepts. The first is a review of the term religion and the second is an exposition of the concept of governance. The central thrust of these reviews is to provide the researcher with a wider understanding of the subject matter. It will also enable the researcher to identify the gap(s) in previous studies with the hope of filling the gap(s).

2.1. Literature Review on Religions

The question of nature, origin and usefulness of religion is a topic that has witnessed a long period of debate, particularly in the modern time. While the rationalists like Ludwig Feuerback (2008) in his study sees religion as outdated and only useful in the primitive past, the non-rationalists like Rudolph Otto as quoted in Gooch and Sodiq (2009) on the other hand, see it as continually relevant to both the past and present. For Robert, Robert, Nyemutu and Odumosu, etal (2009:43) religion is seen as “one that came to give answer to emotional tension created by puzzling and mystifying environment”. If one analyses this statement further, it means that religion came into existence to give answer to the fear environment created during inchoate stage of man’s development. This then means that religion is a thing of the past, and not of present when man is almost in his apogee in his development through the interplay of intellect and will. But Ugwu (2002:19) in his view maintains that, “....

Religion is – and seems likely to remain-an inevitable part of human life”. According to him religion is a means of tackling the problems of suffering, evil and hostility in all ages. It is when religion is seen as useful to man that it can then make meaning when it is applied to nation since it is a group of people that make a nation. According to Adewumi, F. (2006:22):

Religion is a system of social unity commonly understood as a group of beliefs or attitudes concerning an object, person, unseen or imaginary being, or system of thought considered to be supernatural, sacred, divine or highest truth, and the moral codes, practices, values, institutions, and rituals associated with such belief or system of thought. It is a structure within which specific theological doctrines and practices are advocated and pursued; usually among a community of like-minded believers.

For Ayo, (2000), Religion can be found in all known human societies. Looking at the record of earliest societies on record, they show strong suggestions of religious signs and observances. During the course of history, religion has continued to be a significant part of societies and human experience, shaping how individuals react to the environments in which they live. Apenda (2003:8) also noted that; “Religion is a sacred engagement which is believed to be a spiritual reality and a worldwide phenomenon that has continued to play a part in all human cultures. An adequate understanding of religion must take into account its distinctive qualities and patterns as a form of human experience across human cultures.”

It is to be said that by defining religion as a sacred engagement with what is taken to be a spiritual reality, it is possible to consider the importance of religion in human life without making claims about what it really is or ought to be. Religion is not an object with a single, fixed meaning, or even a zone with clear boundaries. It is an aspect of human experience that may intersect, incorporate, or transcend other aspects of life and society. Such a definition avoids the drawbacks of limiting the investigative value of religion to biblical categories such as monotheism (belief in one god only) or to church structure or African rituals which are not universal. For example, in African societies, religion, unlike the Christian church usually is not a separate institution but pervades the whole of public and private life. In Buddhism, gods are not as central as the idea of a “Buddha” (fully enlightened human being). In many traditional cultures, the idea of a sacred cosmic order is the most prominent religious belief. Because of this variety, some scholars prefer to use a general term such as “the sacred” to designate the common foundation of religious life.

Apenda (2018) also noted that Religion in this understanding includes a complex of activities that cannot be reduced to any single aspect of human experience. It is not only a part of individual life but also of group dynamics. Anifowose, (1999) argues that Religion does not only include patterns of behavior but also patterns of language and thought. It is sometimes a highly organized institution that sets itself apart from a culture, and it is sometimes an integral part of a culture.” Religious experience may be expressed in visual symbols, dance and performance, elaborate

philosophical systems, legendary and imaginative stories, formal ceremonies, meditative techniques, and detailed rules of ethical conduct and law. Each of these elements assumes innumerable cultural forms. In some ways there are as many forms of religious expression as there are human cultural environments.

Religion is said to be a reality in human experience which pervades through life. It describes the way man relates with the Supernatural world or the Divine Being. This relationship finds expression in beliefs, worships, creeds and symbols. Religion certainly is a difficult word to define. To attempt to define it is to embark on an almost impossible task. This is because there are no two persons or authors with exactly the same concept of God and religion. In other words, as Nwahaghi puts it that a simple comprehensive definition of religion cannot be attained because of the complex nature of religion. He reiterates that the objects that religion deals with are not subjected to empirical observation. These Religious objects are believed to be conceived in different ways by different people.

Some scholars have identified that scholars face difficulties in trying to establish a universal definition of the term religion. This difficulty apart, Metuh sustains that “The study of religion attracts people with various interests as theologians, anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, economists, historians etc, each of them sees it from different perspective.”¹¹ Added to this is the fact that, the expression of religion always varies from religion to religion as a result of different beliefs and practices. All these put together compounds the problem to achieving a

single universally acceptable definition of religion. However, different opinions hold that religion is an organized system of beliefs, ceremonies, practices and worship that centre on one Supreme Being called God, or the Deity. Interestingly, according to Kitause and Achunike (2019:66);

It is equally discovered that almost all people who follow some form of religion believe that a divine power created the world and influences their lives. In summary, religion seems to be understood briefly as an expression of faith and belief. It is said to be the conscious and sub-conscious response to the ultimate source of existence referred to as God in whichever name or language Religion can also be seen as an institutionalised system of symbols, beliefs, values, and practices focused on the relationship between God and man, and between men living in society.

Expatriating on these expressions other notable scholars had maintained that 'Religion' deals with questions of human existence that is deep and serious such as: why do men suffer? Why does anything exist at all? What lies beyond death? 'A Religion' has to do with what a particular religious group does or believes. For example why do Muslims go on pilgrimage to Mecca? Why do Christians celebrate the Holy Communion? In Uka (2011:23)'s words; "What we call religion today refers to religions such as Islam, Christianity, African Traditional Religion, Judaism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Shintoism and the like. These religions are a people's belief system through which they interpret and relate to the visible and invisible world around them."

Religious studies emerged as a discipline in the 1960s to create space for the ‘secular study of religion’. It sought to distinguish itself from theology, traditionally regarded as an insider discourse. Flood, through adopting a ‘non-confessional approach’ which tried to treat religions as key dimensions of human culture which can be understood in ways akin to other discipline’s understandings of their objects” Whereas theology was confined to the Christian tradition³, was carried out by ‘insiders’ and rested upon an acceptance of the truth claims of the tradition, religious studies had as its object all religious traditions, and was proclaimed to be founded upon the value-free exploration of religious meaning and institutions. The intellectual basis for this ‘scientific’ study of religion (as opposed to theology) is a legacy of scholarly developments since the eighteenth century, particularly within anthropology, sociology, psychology and philosophy. Scholars provided both functional (what religion *does*) and substantive/ essentialist (what religion *is*) definitions of religion⁵; they sought to explain the nature of religious phenomena (often reducing their causes to social or psychological rather than ‘supernatural’); and they contributed to a body of literature which generated new knowledge about religious belief and practice across the globe. The writings of early anthropologists such as Tyler, Malinowski and Evans Pritchard, as well as the more recent work of Clifford Geertz and Mary Douglas, have influenced the way in which religion is studied across cultures today. Alongside this anthropological interest in so-called ‘primitive’ religions we also find the emergence of ‘orientalist’ scholarship, drawing upon philology, classics and

history, which sought to document and understand the ‘high’ religious traditions that were encountered in the colonies.

While some scholars of religion may choose to engage in this purely reconstructive and descriptive work (and perhaps, as McCutcheon and Fitzgerald suggest, they *are* really theologians), other scholars of religion do engage in analysis and contextualisation. Oberoi, (2020) for instance, argues that researchers should not just view the accounts of insiders as in need of description and scholarly systematization and simply reproduce them. Instead, they must be aware of how religious views may be powerful social, political and ideological tools. For instance, a recent edited volume. Several studies are critical of an ‘unreconstructed’ phenomenological method, they are sympathetic to retaining, as one methodological tool, the attentive and detailed *description* of the phenomena packaged as ‘religion’ and paying close attention to the ‘believer’s own account’ as part of the explanatory process. However, Sutcliffe emphasises that the subjective accounts of believers also “require social, cultural and historical contextualization if adequate analysis is to be achieved. This extra ‘hermeneutical step’ is now common within religious studies, which routinely draws upon critical methodologies developed outside the discipline of religious studies, including gender analysis, postcolonial critiques and, increasingly, postmodern thought. The volume edited by Sutcliffe gives a good insight into the way in which contemporary scholars of religion place an emphasis upon description *and* interpretive analysis.

While religious studies scholars increasingly defend themselves against the charge that they consider religion to be *sui generis* that is they reject naturalistic explanations for religious phenomena and consider religion to be immune to socio-political analysis, they still find themselves vulnerable to this critique in seeking out ‘religious’ phenomena in the first place. There continues to be a strong defence of the idea that, even if we can ultimately reduce religious phenomena to naturalistic and social causes, they nonetheless warrant classification as a distinct realm of human experience, which justifies the existence of a separate discipline: ‘religious studies’. In contrast, the work of Fitzgerald challenges the intellectual basis for the existence of a separate discipline called religious studies, since he argues that the very notion of religion has been constructed, reflecting theological categories about what a religion should be. Sutcliffe suggests that “the more the researcher distances himself or herself from the explicit or implicit theological domination of ‘religion’, adopting instead sociological or anthropological critical perspectives, the more irrelevant the concept of religion will become.”¹⁷

For Fitzgerald (2001) then, the phenomenological method in religious studies is itself already guilty of imposing alien categories onto so-called ‘religious’ phenomena in calling them ‘religious’ in the first place. Fitzgerald presents a detailed account of the emergence of religious studies as founded upon the fallacy of the category ‘religion’ as a legitimate cross-cultural tool of analysis. He argues that “religion cannot reasonably be taken to be a valid analytical category since it does not

pick out any distinctive cross-cultural aspect of human life”. He suggests that ‘religious’ phenomena have such different meanings in different cultures that when we attempt to understand them in their locality, the category ‘religious’ becomes meaningless and we are instead faced with phenomena which are better understood as political, social or anthropological. Thus, the category of religion distorts the very phenomena it seeks to understand. He writes that “the construction of ‘religion’ and ‘religions’ as global, cross-cultural objects of study has been part of a wider historical process of western imperialism, colonialism, and neo-colonialism. Part of this process has been to establish an ideologically loaded distinction between the realm of religion and the realm of the non-religious or the secular.” He continues: “I am particularly concerned with the use of the word ‘religion’ in studies of non-western value systems and cultures. I believe that it is in these contexts that we can most easily see how a western concept...is continually being foisted on nonwestern societies even though its application is so obviously problematic. Some scholars also proposed religious studies should be rethought and re-represented as cultural studies, understood as the study of the institutions and the institutionalized values of specific societies, and the relation between those institutionalized values and the legitimation of power. Having reviewed some of the literature dealing with the concept of religion and its issues in this study of religion, it is important to state that none of these literature reviews actually focuses on the Nigerian situation. This is one gap which the present research

will set a departure. However, to continue with the review of relevant literature, let us avail ourselves the concept and discourses on governance.

2.3. Review of Governance in Nigeria

Different scholars have written commentaries on the issues of governance. While many have called for effective delivery in governance, others identified and highlighted some of the basic things that a good government should do for its people. Others, on their own parts, talked about fundamental constraints which militate against achieving good governance. According to Bolatito and Ibrahim (2000); The efficient and effective service delivery for the people is key factors to the existence of any government. The provisions of essential services are vital to poverty alleviation and the key to realizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) both directly and indirectly.” Service delivery is commonly used to describe public goods, basic services, amenities and infrastructures provided by the government such as hospital, road, electricity, water supply, sanitary services, physical infrastructure, town planning, housing among others. According to Kayode (2015:45) “They are tangible and intangible goods provided by the government in order to improve the well-being of the citizenry. The desire to promote excellence and improve citizen satisfaction led to the launch of the Nigerian Service Delivery Initiative in 2004.”

The cardinal place of service delivery in a democracy is essential to the growth of any country’s economy. The Improvement Act, as argue by Uhunmwuango and Ekpu (2016) “sees infrastructure or service as normality and

facilities such as water supply and distribution system, waste water collection and treatment facilities, surface transportation facilities, mass-transit facilities, airports and airway facilities, resources recovery facilities, waterways, levees and related flood-control facilities, docks or ports, school buildings and solid waste disposal facilities” Adequate provisions of these services will not only promote socio-economic wellbeing of the citizens but will also engender the overall development of a country. The public service of any country is saddled with the responsibility of delivering, distributing and maintaining social services. They formulate and implement the decisions and policies of the government The successes of any government in carrying out its statutory and constitutional responsibilities depend to a large extent on the type of civil service which a country has.

In an ideal democratic system, the justification for the existence of any government is based on its ability to meet the basic needs of its citizens in a more prompt, effective and affordable way. Doing so, according to Gafar (2019:9) “would automatically boost the chances of democratic sustainability. For a particular government or opposing party to remain relevant in society, lots of strategic and innovative politics or politickings come to play. In the context of this research, politics is defined as the general process of carrying out the business of government.” It deals extensively with the consequences and outcomes of human actions in the quest and struggles for survival, prominence, and relevance. Marx Weber defines politics as the struggle for power. It is an instrument deployed to gain power for the

sole aim of providing essential services for the citizens. Politics captures the essence of peoples' wants, needs, sufferings, aspirations, expectations within a given human community. In an ideal society, the contestation for power should be for the overall benefit of the people as succinctly captured by David Easton. Ayo also agrees that "One way of measuring the success and or failure of governments in modern societies is to assess how successful such governments are in developing conditions necessary for satisfying the basic needs of the people they govern."

For example, Arowolo and Aluko posit that "most people in Nigeria desire economic development and the physical improvement of their infrastructure and environments. The hallmark of politics is governance and the hallmark of governance is service delivery. When politics is evolved to meet the needs of the citizens timely and sustainably across space without discrimination and when the citizens are involved or carried along in the decision-making process, participatory governance is said to be entrenched." Governance refers to how the politics of a nation is carried out. Okpaga, (2018) sees governance as "the exercise of authority in the name of the people. In an ideal society, governance should guarantee civil and human rights, efficiency and accountability." Judging from the above, Arowolo and Aluko posits that "government and its institutions must, as a matter of welfare policy, be pro-poor and should promote human development of all citizens."²⁴ Since the return to civil rule in the year 1999, the successive government in Nigeria (federal, state and local) rode to power on the premises that they will provide the basic services necessary for

healthy and sustainable living for the citizens. Despite several class struggles for power and gaining of power, plans and a massive injection of international and domestic resources to improve service delivery system, public service delivery is still failing in Nigeria and many other developing countries.

It is important to reaffirm that a lot of political intrigues come to play in governance, especially in a democracy. This is said because it is believed that good governance is an instrument for achieving better policymaking and improved economic outcomes. Politics anchored on the principles of good governance will bring about effective service delivery and the people will enjoy the dividends of democracy. . The politicians who are able to influence the party in power end up bringing development projects to their constituencies. Where there are no strong and influential politicians, therefore, the constituencies are neglected and starved of development projects. This implies that development projects are therefore not necessarily located on the basis of need and that accounts for why some areas are crowded with government projects at the expense of other areas in Nigeria. For Nigeria to attain its desired level of development and better the lives of its teeming population service delivery system must be a rethink and redirected towards fairness, equitability, rule of law, responsiveness, accountability, wealth redistribution, and profit maximization must be regulated and justifiable.

Suffice to say that access to safe drinking water is an indispensable human right as much as clean air, but, the majority of the world's population lacks access to.

In Nigeria, to be specific, Ojo (2010:11) tells us that it is regrettable that “despite several billions of dollars in export revenues since the discovery of oil in the late 1950s, at least half of Nigerians still live in abject poverty without access to clean water.” This lack of access to clean water and sanitation infrastructure has been linked with poor health outcomes and, by extension, loss of productivity Sustainable infrastructure in water and sanitation can help connect nearly a billion people who currently lack access to water supply around the world. Beside these, several factors have been identified as constraint to good governance. Igbuzo and several authors highlight constraints to effective governance in Nigeria to include: Cost of governance, ineffective budgeting, poor planning, poor civil service reform etc. Okeke and Eme (2013) explained that the cost of governance in Nigeria is disproportionately high relative to productivity. There is a long list of ministers, commissioners, special advisers, special assistants, a retinue of aides and several other political appointments with high remuneration. Costs associated with the running of the government have increased dramatically over the years such that an increasingly reduced proportion of public revenue is available to support and implement the primary functions of government (CBN, 2005). Consequently, the major purposes of government have been hindered. Cost of governance in Nigeria is not a direct effect of positive policies of government for the enhancement of the living standard of the people, but basically as a result of inflated contracts and other

vices by government officials for their personal enrichment. On poor budgeting, Ejuvbekpokpo (2017:10) argues thus:

In very corrupt countries, the budget is done in secret. Releases are done without the knowledge of citizens. Procurement information is not made available to citizens and corruption is guarded and protected. Effective budgeting requires an open budget system. A budget is regarded as open if citizens have access to the key budget documents; have a high level of involvement in the budgetary process and have access to procurement information.

Narrating further, Ejuvbekpokpo further buttressed that the Open Budget Index 2012 scores Nigeria 16 out of 100 which is a poor rating of the quality of budgeting in Nigeria. More often than not, the successive government in Nigeria failed to implements budget proposal 100% at the end of every financial or calendar year. Also, some sectors of the economy lack transparency and accountability. Most of their activities were shrouded in secrecy. For example, there is still a lack of transparency in the oil and gas sector. There are also issues of late releases of funds to ministries, departments, and agencies. There is improper project design, costing, monitoring, and audit. The end result is low capital budget implementation and unsatisfactory public expenditure outcomes

Studies have shown that corruption is no doubt a global phenomenon that has threatened and still continues to threaten the developmental efforts in many nations. Corruption is widespread and endemic in Nigeria. It is arguably one of the greatest

challenges leading to underdevelopment and lack of good governance in Nigeria.

According to Omotoso and Abe (2013:4):

Despite the plethora of legislation and agencies fighting corruption in the country, corruption has remained widespread and pervasive because of failure to utilize universally accepted and tested strategies; disconnect between posturing of leaders and their conduct; lack of concrete sustainable anti-corruption programming and failure to locate the anti-corruption struggle within a broader struggle to transform society. Most people are vying for political offices this day to feather their own nest.

That is they are clamoring for power for their primordial and self-interest over and above the common good and general will of the Nigerian people. The obvious outcome has been a corrupt, undemocratic and self-seeking leadership and style of governance by this elite class that is more interested with the sharing of the country's resources than with the ideals of good or effective governance – equity, fairness, justice, and transparency. The attendant effect of corruption in the public service is the lack or inadequate provision of services that would enhance the standard of living of Nigerians. Ichima (1998) posits that corruption has become endemic and eaten into the fabrics of the nation. It is primarily an outcome of the desire by elected politicians to recover monies spent during their electioneering campaigns. All contract awards are therefore shrouded in fake papers, ten percent „kick-back syndrome, payments for jobs not done, etc. The deteriorating standard of living of the majority of Nigerians is an evidence of the lack of basic necessities of life i.e. food,

shelter and clothing and low access to essential services like health, education, power, water, transportation.

To conclude the review of relevant literature, leadership failure has also been identified as another factor bedeviling good governance in Nigeria. The level of good governance in any system is a function of good leadership while good management depends on good governance Otegbulu, (2012:3) shared this thought when he stated that “Since Nigeria’s political independence in 1960, the country has not had the opportunity of being governed by a willing and ready leader but those that can at best be described as “accidental leaders.” These are leaders whom the mantle of leadership fell on by default not minding their capacity, experience and in most cases; they were neither prepared nor expectant of such huge responsibility. Sizeable proportions of the leaders were elected base on patronage as they lack the intellectual and mental capacity to lead and evolve policies that will enhance the socio-economic development of the nation. Chimee (2012) noted that the three major strands that account for leadership failure in Nigeria are lack of ideology; ethnicity; and corruption. It can be said in view of the above literature review that the concept of religion and the phrase good governance have been widely discussed. However, we observed that most of these discussions were discussed separately. In other words, there no little researches in the library that attempts to show the influence of religion on good governance. It is this particular regard, that the present study was propelled

to add to the few literal works conducted in this regard. These and many more becomes the focus of our next chapters.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND THE HISTORY OF GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

3.1. Nigeria in the Pre-colonial Era

Historical evidences have shown that before the British amalgamation of 1914, there was no common name called 'Nigeria'. This however, does not imply that there were no groups of people living before or prior to the advent of the colonial masters. In this sense, it is to be stated that during the pre-colonial era, the settlers who lived in the said geographical location called Nigeria today, only lived in fragmentations. Fragmentations, is used here to buttress the fact that during the period in view, the various groups were culturally different and administratively differing. In same vein, there were also religious differences in mode of practice and worship. The pre-colonial era, however, was grouped into two major parts; the Northern protectorate and the Southern protectorate. Describing the experience in the pre-colonial period, Mayowa (2014:77) goes on to write inter alia; "The history of the country (Nigeria) has featured many waves of human travels from across the Sahara, which has never been a complete hurdle between the lands to the north and south of the desert. Archaeological evidences from various parts of Nigeria suggest that parts of the country have been settled by man since the Paleolithic or Stone Age period."

There are also indications that there were more than 200 distinct ethnic groups in Nigeria (now there are over 450), most of who have distinct customs, traditions and

languages. The large and dominant groups include the Yoruba (at the time of census was 10 million), the Igbo (7 million), the Hausa (16 million), and the Fulani (5 million). Other prominent but less numerous groups include the Ogoni, Ijaw, bonny in Rivers State, Edo, the Ibibio of the Cross River State, the Tiv of the Benue valley, the Nupe of the middle Niger valley, and the Kanuri of the Lake Chad basin. The large concentration of the smallest ethnic groups in the Middle Belt where there are more than 180 different groups is a significant feature of the distribution of ethnic groups in Nigeria. Udo (1980) noted that for the people of the forest belt the largest known peoples are the Yoruba and the Edo who live in the southwest or western states of Nigeria and the Igbo, Ibibio and Ekoi peoples of the southeast or eastern states of Nigeria. It is important to note that the Yoruba were never united under a common government, rather consisted of several powerful states such as Ife, Oyo, and Egba etc. As with most Nigerian peoples, the extended family is the basic social unit of the Yoruba. More than the Yoruba, the Edo have a stronger sense of political unity that was under the central authority of the Oba. East of the lower Niger valley, the two major ethnic groups inhabiting the forest belt are Igbo and the Ibibio each of whom is divided into several sub-groups. Neither of these groups was ever organized into a large state or kingdom similar to those of the Yoruba and Edo. Rather the largest political unit was the village group.

On the political encounters of the pre-colonial Nigeria Atanda (1985) submitted that no one can say exactly how and when socio-political organizations

began in Nigeria. According to him the family was the primary unit of socio-political organization. Atanda further traced the genesis of political systems in Nigeria from the emergence of the nuclear family as the primary sociopolitical unit with members bound together by strong kinship tie, to the extension and aggregation of family units into lineages, to the extension of lineages into clans and the aggregation of lineages into villages while villages expand into an overall authority of a state. He went on to divide the concept of ruler ship into two: centralized and non-centralized. He augured that the different states and kingdoms in Nigeria operated at one time or the other either of the two concepts of ruler ship. Worthy of note, Atanda (2006:6) clearly narrated thus:

Non-centralized states existed virtually in most parts of the Nigerian region from early times, but many of these transformed to centralized states before 1900. A basic feature of the political system of the non-centralized state was that authority was dispersed, no single individual served as the symbol or personification of authority. Emphasis was placed more on collective leadership. The areas where non-centralized states most endured were central Igbo, the Tiv, the Idoma and many people's inhabiting the plateau region in the central part of Nigeria and the western and Eastern Niger Delta as well. Centralized states existed in many parts of Nigeria up to 1900; typical examples were in Kanem-Bornu, Hausa land, Jukun land, Nupe land, Yoruba land and Edo land.

A basic feature was that authority was centralized, unlike in the non-centralized states, each centralized state had an individual who was the symbol of authority. Indeed he was the personification of the state. As Atanda puts it, though these kingdoms were

centralized, the people however prevented tyranny, through the use of an advisory council and the use of taboos. As revealed above, we observed that there were individual functionaries who dared to use the established systems to become absolute, but their attempts only led to instability, as in the case of the Obas' of Benin and Basorun Gaha of the Oyo Empire. The major attempt at destabilizing the order that succeeded was the Jihad carried out by Uthman Dan Fodio, which influenced many kingdoms of the north and a few of the South.

Another remarkable common feature was that both the centralized and the non-centralized systems as practiced in pre-nineteenth century Nigeria afforded the entire citizenry active participation in politics through their lineages, age-sets and titled societies. They indirectly influenced policies and directly helped in implementing such policies. More so, their views and feelings directly and indirectly mattered very much in the processes by which the acknowledged rulers- monarchs or elders- were designated, maintained or removed if necessary. Scholars like Akinjogbin and Ayandele mentioned the roles of the Imole, Osugbo or Ogboni society's in the Oyo Empire, who were not organizations for titled men but mere men of wealth who through their organizations had great influence in the Empire.

Finally to sum up, this section which focuses on the political situation in pre-colonial Nigeria, it can also be said that both systems (Centralized and Non-centralized system of government) prevented institutionalized absolutism by the accredited rulers; they also made it difficult if not impossible for a parvenu to acquire

power, much less absolute power, outside the established institutions of government. All the ingredients of power- military, economic and religious- were difficult to maneuver by an individual outside the institutionalized channels. In most kingdoms there was usually no standing army, similarly, economic and religious weapons of powers could not be used to the advantages of a parvenu. Land for agriculture, as well as trade and industry, were usually under the ultimate control of the institutionalized rulers who held it in trust for the community. Also, religious organizations and functionaries could also be expected to cooperate with the institutionalized rulers for the good of the Community.

3.2. Nigeria in the Colonial Period

Long before Britain took over the administration of the area which is now called Nigeria, certain types of governments were flourishing in the Northern Emirates, and in the Eastern and Western Kingdoms. In the North, the Hausas adopted a feuda system of government which was also inherited by the Fulanis, their conquerors. The important feature of the feudal system of government was that at first, the power was centralized and later on was delegated. The emirs were vassals of the Sultan of Sokoto, who was the chief of the emirs. However, Islamic laws did give specific powers to the emirs. Traditions and conventions also stated the boundaries of their power and thus made the feudal system of government workable. Utuk (2010:17) opines that; “Between 1849 and 1906, West African territories were occupied by several European powers who subjected the peoples to a new type of administration.

In Nigeria, Britain was the Colonial master.” The British unquestionably benefited economically from their control of Nigeria, but, to their credit, they also endeavored to create a colony in which the subject peoples would ultimately be able to take over the country's administration. Side by side with the British Government / commercial and religious groups with economic and religious motives, moved into Nigeria and introduced new concepts and practices of the western world.

It is however, important to note that barriers to effective administration and rapid advancement of native authority during the initial stages of British control were due, not to the shortcomings of the British Administrators, but, rather, in large measure to the traditions and social structures of the various peoples. Moreover, sufficient revenue was not available due to the underdeveloped economic resources and because local taxation was not introduced in the early days of the British administration. Assistance in the form of revenue came from the British Government and commercial groups. By the end of the Second World War administrative progress was encouraging, and radical approaches to democratic self-government reached a high peak. The process of transition to full-scale democracy on the British model proceeded rapidly. The British Government assisted the establishment of popularly elected majorities. The executive councils were taken over by politicians drawn from and responsible to the majorities. The system of one man, one vote was initiated. In general, Britain was remarkably successful in training Nigerians to assume control of their country, and the British efforts cannot be erased from the history books or from

the minds of many Nigerians. The result was a united, viable, and independent Nigeria. Stating without equivocation on the birthed of the colonial rule in Nigeria, Etuk (2010:18) airs thus:

On the first of October 1960, the British Union Jack was lowered and the green and white flag of Nigeria was hoisted in its place. Shortly after these two historical events the late Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, on behalf of all Nigerians, declared: "We are grateful to the British officers whom we have known, first as masters and then as leaders and finally as partners but always as friends.

Commenting also, Arnold (1997) emphasizes that "The inauguration in 1900 of three geo-political administrations for the Nigerian area marked the formal commencement of British colonial rule in the region. The geo-political entities, as already mentioned, were the Colony and Protectorate of Lagos, the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, and the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria." Their respective administrations found themselves confronted with broadly similar problems concerning the governance of the populations under their jurisdiction. And instinctively all three administrations adopted identical methods in resolving the issue, distinguished only by the territorial peculiarity of the respective areas. Problem with which they had to contend related to climatic, communication, personnel, and financial factors. While the first two, for example, created logistic difficulties, the other two compounded such difficulties by their insufficient amounts. In the circumstances, all the three administrations sought to establish a cheap and manageable means of government by utilizing indigenous

socio-political structures and systems as basis of local government.⁸ Indirect rule, as this concept of government has come to be understood, involved the relatively few Europeans available in supervisory capacities over the various indigenous authorities applying indigenous administrative concepts to the extent to which these were permissible to the British. The nature and application of indirect rule during the early part of the colonial period are examined in the following discussion. It need be stated at this juncture, however, that the variant of indirect rule conceived by Sir Frederick (later Lord) Lugard in Northern Nigeria subsequently formed the basis of British official policy in Nigeria in particular and in their other non-settler dependencies in Africa in general.

According to a widely held view, Britain's Colonial rule in Nigeria did not make sufficient allowance for the growth in experience and influence of the Western-educated elites who were to play the chief part in creating the nationalist movement destined to take over the reins of government from Britain. Nigeria was the home of the classic system of Indirect Rule which Sir Fredrick (later Lord) Lugard, the father of that system, stamped upon a society widely different in kind, size and culture. The system was the only immediate means through which these different groups of peoples were saved from dictatorial systems of government. In addition, it was the channel for nationalization in bringing about the Western style of government. Nigeria did not achieve administrative unity until the North and the South were linked together .in 1914. After the amalgamation, Britain, through the British administrators,

initiated for elective assemblies. Through these assemblies different political parties sent their representatives and thus an administrative system on the Western model was created. The recruitment of Civil Service on the basis of merit, the separation of the public purse and business from the ruler and the assumption that all the people were entitled to equal treatment under the rule of law worked in different areas and established conditions essential for democracy. It was due to all these developments that Nigeria finally gained its independence in 1960. Thus, in the next phase, attempt is made towards analysis the political development in Nigeria after independence, otherwise known as post-colonial period.

3.3. Nigeria and its Post-Colonial Political History

When Nigeria attained independence in 1960, it became an officially secular State. At the same time, both Christianity and Islam were closely, though never exclusively, associated with very different social and geographic groups, and this was reflected to some degree in postcolonial politics. Although the independence movement had split along ethnic lines, southern Nigerians, who, apart from those in the south-west, tended to be Christians, generally envisioned national integration and development in line with Western models of modernization, democratization and meritocracy. Meanwhile, many northern Nigerian leaders, most of them Muslims, were cautious about political independence. One of the reasons was that they were worried that low levels of literacy in the north could mean that, instead of being ruled

by British officials, after independence northern Nigeria would be ruled by southern Nigerians. According to Nolte, Nathaniel and Abubaka (2010) As a result, education became an important concern of the Muslim communities in both the north and the south of the country. The resulting engagement of Nigerian Muslims with wider political, intellectual and religious debates has significantly contributed to the transformation and internal differentiation of the Muslim community since independence, giving rise both to a trend towards secularization⁶ and to more fundamentalist movements critical of the local Sufi traditions, some of which are discussed below. However, while religion and education played an important role in structuring political competition in the early postcolonial years, and even in the clashes eventually leading to the first military coup (1966) and the Civil War (1967-70), the political impact of religion was widely perceived as less problematic for Nigeria than that of ethnicity and regionalism.

In response to the Civil War, Nigeria's military rulers broke up the regions into which the country had been divided and instead created a federation of twelve States (subsequently increased to thirty six). To reduce administrative differences within the country, the military also centralized and standardized Nigeria's administration and finances so that the majority of the country's export revenues were collected centrally and then (re-)distributed to the State and local governments. While this degree of fiscal centralization means that the central government has a final degree of control over State politics, meaning that secession would be economically

disadvantageous to most States outside of the Niger Delta, this form of federalism also provides State governments with a regular income that is independent of local productivity.

Furthermore, John Paden in his biography of the Late Ahmadu Bello, the first Premier of the Northern region narrated a conversation between the late Ahmadu Bello and Nnamdi Azikwe, Nigeria's first president, sometime after independence. Paden narrated how Azikwe approached Bello and said to him "let us forget our differences so that we can make Nigeria great". To this, Okeke (2017) responded by saying "No, let us understand our differences: you are a Southerner and a Christian, and I am a Northerner and a Muslim. By understanding our differences, we can make Nigeria great." This exchange between the leaders of the two dominant political parties in the country after independence was instructive in two ways. First, it revealed the level of anxiety among the political class for the unity, progress, and development of the country. Secondly, it revealed in the strongest sense possible the challenges of diversity which the country contended with since its infancy, and which were crucial then, as they are today, towards forging the required tolerance and understanding necessary for nation-building, progress and development.

Aliyu (2019:4) offers a more comprehensive historical exploration into this discussion. According to him, "The first days of independence were in this regard crucial. The newly independent country faced quite a number of important challenges. At the domestic front, the challenges were mainly political and economic." There

were the challenges of consolidating the gains of independence and launching the country on the pedestal of political stability and economic development. To achieve these, there was the need to address issues that were left unresolved by the departing colonial masters. Badmus (2009) explains that the most important of these issues concerned finding a pragmatic and agreeable solution to the simmering minority problem in the Delta region. This problem that first came to the public attention in the 1950s was not effectively addressed before independence. Another important issue was designing a mechanism that would ensure equitable representation of the regions in all federal appointments. The third, and probably the most important issue was how to bridge the wide educational gap between the predominantly Christian south and the predominantly Muslim north of the country (Mustapha, 2006). Lagging behind in terms of educational development, the northern region appeared in the colonial days not particularly keen on independence out of fear of domination by the educationally more developed southern region. There were also issues related to the vast size and large population of the northern region that put it ahead of the two other regions in terms of federal constituencies. This gave it an edge in control of political power at the federal level.

Attempts were made at various times especially in the early days of the first republic to address some of these challenges. A fourth region, Mid-West, was later created out of the Eastern and Western regions by the federal government in a move to allay the fears of the Delta minorities. Again, in its early days, there was an

indication that federal character system was adopted as the guiding principle in all appointments into the federal service to ensure that none of the regions had more placements than the others. This was meant to ensure equitable distribution of administrative and other career appointments in the federal public service. Problems that could not however readily be addressed through formal institutional mechanisms especially fierce elite competition and rivalry were in effect responsible for most of the failure to build enduring institutions that would promote and sustain national integration.

Another dominant feature of all heterogeneous States in the post-colonial period was that politics were not issue-driven. Probably, this was because they were as yet to develop the necessary counter-balancing forces and institutions to ethnic and sectional politics. In any case, these societies pursued what could be described as ethnically and sectionally-driven politics in which resort was always made to primordial sentiments to garner cheap political support. In this kind of political space, politics is not defined in terms of what people could get out of their leaders, but rather is seen as a vast field that is sharply divided and fitted neatly into ethnic dichotomy of “us” against “them” .Nigeria, from its early days, was dodged by this kind of sectarian-view of politics where the political elites defined it as a struggle for dominance and hegemony between “us” and the “others”. According to Mustapha (2006:55) “Because of this dangerous competition for power among the political elites, politics soon went out of control and political interaction became characterized

by friction and ethnic antagonism between the various ethnic groups in the federation.”

3.4. Nigeria in the Fourth Republic

The Nigerian political history as evident above has taken through several epochs; these ranges from the period known as the Pre-colonial to Colonial, Post-colonial and the Fourth Republic periods. The last of these epochs is the Fourth Republic, which is the ongoing section of our discussion. This last period brought in a new watershed in the history of the country’s political history. This is because it was a new turning point and a departure from the era of the military seizure of power, to a return of elected democratically leaders. This era was ushered in in 1999 and has continue till without military intervention again in our polity. Okeke (2009) tells us that the return to presidential system in 1999 produced Olusegun Obasanjo of the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) as the president and commander-in-chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces. After the end of two tenures of 8 years, Obasanjo handed over to the late President Musa Yar'Adua on May 29, 2007.

At the end of the tenure of President Yar‘Adua, President Goodluck Jonathan took over the helm of affairs on May 29, 2011. Both President Olusengun Obasanjo, Umaru Musa Yar‘Adua and Goodluck Ebele Jonathan were elected on the political platform of the People’s Democratic Party (PDP). Goodluck Ebele Jonathan served for a single tenure from 2011 to 2015, and was subsequently defeated by President Muhammadu Buhari in the general election. At the end of President Goodluck

Jonathan's tenure, he handed over to President Muhammadu Buhari of the All Progressive Congress (APC) on May 29, 2015. President Muhammadu Buhari has been in power from 2015 and was re-elected in 2019 on the same platform of the All Progressives Congress. Another succeeding democratically elected President in person of Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu took over from President Buhari after defeating Atiku Abubakar of the PDP who came second and Peter Obi of the Labour Party who came out third position at the February, 28th polls. On May 29th, 2023, Bola Tinubu was sworn in and till date has been ruling as sixth democratically elected President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria since the return to democracy IN 1999. It is expected that his second terms will be completed on May 29th, 2023.

As Nigeria returned to democracy in 1999, one of the growing concerns of the people has always been a quest for power shift from one geo-political zone to another. This has become a great deal and debate to Nigerians. However, it is important to clear the air that the Nigerian Constitution remains silent at the moment on the legality or constitutionalism of this important call. Today, there are growing calls and concerns from other regions like the East and South for powers rotation. It is worrisome and pathetic that the direct silence of the Constitution on such issue of great importance has no doubt, deliberately allowed for political marginalisation. For instance, historical studies into the Nigerian political development have shown and revealed that from independence in 1960 to 1999, the rationale behind the domination of leadership either at the Local, State or National levels by one ethnic

group has over the years been questioned and critically subjected to scrutiny. For example, there have been heated debates that the annulment of the June 12 1993 presidential election was solely aimed at denying the Southern part of the country of becoming a president. The annulment was carried out by the then northern military head of State. That development created the impression that the North did not want a shift of power to another zone.

In Ibeanu (1999:66)'s words, "the leadership question in Nigeria has lingered unresolved for the last fifty three years. This is as a result of four factors: the ascendancy and continued dominance of ethnicity as an aggregating tool, the retreat of Nigerian federalism, the perception of an exclusive right to leadership by the northern political elite, and the backlash of opposition from other ethnic groups." This problem continues to be one of the controversial topics of curiosity in the Nigerian politics. The northern region has continued to see the seat of power as their sole birthright. On October 1st, 2021, Nigeria marked its 61 years of Independence. It is however a national embarrassment that such issue of great importance remains unresolved even after about 61 years today of Nigerian independence. This same problem frankly played out in the built-up to the 2011 presidential election. Agaptus Nwozor (2014:33) speaks against this sad development in the following excerpt thus:

In the run-up to the 2011 general elections, debates and controversy between residents of Nigeria's geopolitical zones about the trajectory of the presidential baton brought to the fore the centrifugal tendencies of elite interests. Popular interpretations of zoning and rotation

by contending elite were not only flawed but also grossly misleading. While the elite dichotomization of the Nigerian state, either in terms of North and South or geopolitical zones, can be analytically useful, its relation to the 1999 Nigerian Constitution is arbitrary and, therefore, lacks legitimacy. These categorizations and differentiations were introduced into Nigeria's political discourse to anchor the principle of rotation. The intent of this principle is to ensure that all factions within the Nigerian state occupy the presidency in turn.

Almost all the political leaders Nigeria has produced are men who bear in their minds how to turn the country into a regional or ethnic interest. These leaders have therefore remained unwilling to put the country on the right course; to give a country that all Nigerians, irrespective of tribe, ethnic group or region will be proud to be called their own. It is against this ill fate that strongly led Chinua Achebe to decry that "the Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership." Agaptus (201433-34) also lamented thus:

The leadership question in Nigeria revolves around the possibility of every indigenous ethnic group ascending to the presidency. Structural manoeuvres over the years, such as the distortion of the federalist principles by successive military regimes, the conferment of superordinate powers on the federal government, its control of the country's enormous resources, and the ascendancy of a culture of parasitism, have contracted the federal space and made Northern Nigeria a hegemonic power centre. The exclusive dominance of the presidency by northerners since Nigeria's independence underpins ethno-national agitations that

threaten the polity. Nigeria's leadership question is directly linked to the country's inability to satisfactorily resolve the contradictions of its statehood.

If Nigerians truly want to come out of this quagmire, the law makers must make bold to enact laws that will clearly make provision for power rotation and sharing amongst the various ethnic groups or geo-political zones. This will in a sense bring about national unity. Recall that one of the major reasons for the eastern recent agitations is akin to their claim that they have been politically marginalized and excluded from occupying the position of the president since after the time of Anamdi Azikiwe in 1960.

CHAPTER FOUR

INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

4.1. History of Religion in Nigeria

The history of religion in Nigeria dates back to the period before independence. Historically, prior to the introduction of Christianity, like the case of the Southern part of Nigeria and Islam as was mainly introduced in the Northern part of Nigeria, African Traditional Religion was known to be the oldest practice religion in Nigeria, and West Africa at large. Kastfelt, (2003) tells us that Nigerian Christianity dates back to the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the early nineteenth century, which was followed by the emergence of a literate African elite, consisting of liberated and returned slaves as well as local converts, in coastal cities such as Lagos. Because Christianity is much younger than Islam in the local context, it is not associated with pre-colonial relations of power. And because its growth in Nigeria was accompanied by the spread of mission education, Nigeria's professional elite was, for a long time, dominated by Christians. Like Islam, Nigerian Christianity is heterogeneous. Roman Catholicism has long been the religion of the Igbo-speaking south-east, although Nigerian-founded Pentecostal churches have made strong inroads into this area over the twenty years prior to this study. In other parts of the country's south, Protestant denominations – including Pentecostal groups – are

dominant in the Christian community, but the Yoruba-speaking south-west is almost equally divided between Christianity and Islam.

Moreover, there are important Christian groups in the north, which include both Hausa converts and smaller local groups determined to assert their difference from the Hausa-speaking majority or from relations of power associated with the Caliphate. Moreover, just as there are Muslim migrants from northern Nigeria in many southern cities, there are Christian communities of migrants, or descendants of migrants, from the south in almost all northern Nigerian cities. Apart from Christianity and Islam, Nigerians also belong to a range of other religious groups. The largest of these is comprised of followers of traditional religious practice, here referred to as African Traditional Religion (ATR), with the proviso that local belief systems and practices differ widely, and that their subsumption under one term mainly reflects the fact that these practices do not (yet) hold the status of world religions.

Premise on the above, Amherd and Nolte, (2005) stressed that many African Traditional Religious Groups, however, share the conviction that the worldly and the sacred are closely interwoven, and that all human relations – including those involving the state and its representatives – reflect both secular and spiritual forces. It is believed that insight into these forces can be gained through divination and revelation, and that they can be influenced through sacrifice, prayer and incantation. Because traditional practices have influenced Christians and Muslims and vice versa,

debates about their validity form an important and ongoing part of inter- and intra-religious struggles in Nigeria. Beyond the engagement with local traditions, Christianity and Islam have expressed a high degree of political competitiveness with each other at least since the 1970s.

Nigeria as a nation is religiously pluralistic. Apart from the three major religions, Christianity, Islam and Traditional Religion, there are several others competing for relevance and recognition. In spite of this reality, in theory, Nigeria is a secular state. This has been indicated in the constitution since independence. For the purpose of emphasis, the word, secular, is derived from the Latin word '*Secularis*', which means temporal. It is taken to mean 'of or relating to worldly, as opposed to sacred things or having no particular religious affinities'. Secularism, as a doctrine, rejects religion. It maintains that religion should have no place in civil affairs and civil rules should have no interest in religion. Thus, a secular state is a state where religious communities have no recognized role in politics and no formal relation to the state. This is different from a theocratic or a religious state where religion determines what happen in the state.

As stated in section 10 of the 1999 Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria, "the government of the federation shall not adopt any religion as State Religion". Therefore, in policy formulation, governance, and other governmental activities, religion should not be an issue. By implication, every citizen has a right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. Section 38 is categorical, that:

Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, including 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. No person attending any place of education shall be required to receive religious instruction or take part in or attend any religious ceremony or observance if such instruction, ceremony, or observance relates to a religion, other than his own or a religion not approved by his parents or guardian, and no religious community or denomination shall be prevented from providing religious instruction for pupils of that community or denomination in any place of education maintained wholly by that community or denomination.

The constitution further emphasizes that national integration shall actively be encouraged. Accordingly, discrimination on the grounds of place of origin, sex, religion, status, ethnic, or linguistic association or ties shall be prohibited, while national ethics shall be Discipline, Integrity, Dignity of Labour, Social Justice, Religious Tolerance, Self-reliance, and Patriotism. Also, membership of political parties is opened to every citizen irrespective of his place of origin, circumstances of birth, sex, religion, or ethnic group. From the foregoing, the religious policy in Nigerian constitution can be understood, theoretically. The legal provisions are made in order to ensure that citizens enjoy religious freedom and that the state or government does not affiliate itself or show preference for one religion. The principle 'live and let live' is held and the contribution that religion can make to the life of citizens are recognized, hence the belief in religious tolerance. However, it is a fact

that religions are potent brotherhoods; displaying rather efficacious acquired family relationships on earth. Having discussed the above, to further our study, let us proceed with a specific study into the challenges of religious practices in Nigeria.

4.2. The Challenges of Religious Practices in Nigeria

It has been established earlier in this work that prior to the advent of the colonial masters, the African Traditional Religion was the first and oldest religion practiced in West Africa, Nigeria inclusive. We went further to established that Islam and Christianity as two newly introduced religion as practice today in Nigeria were brought during the era of colonial rule. Thus, before the official creation of Nigeria in 1960, both Christianity and Islam were already flourishing in Nigeria. Just the same way Islam eventually dominated the Northern part of Nigeria, so Christianity enjoyed dominance in the Southern part of the country. During these periods, religions faced several challenges, as discussed. In this section, however, an highlight of some of the challenges faced by religious organization in the modern days Nigeria are unravels. Narrated this experience with particular reference from 1992, Oluwaseun Olawale Afolabi (2015:12) had this to say; “Since May 1992, over 10,000 people have died from communal-religious conflicts. Plateau, Benue, Taraba and Borno States constituted the highest figure of causalities.” Today, one of the challenges facing religions in Nigeria are said to be politically motivated. Most often, we kept seen continue conflict or crisis between the Muslem and Christian faithful. This usually lead to killing of one another.

According to some accounts, more than 10,000 people have been killed in sectarian conflicts, primarily in Kaduna and Plateau States in the last seven years. Subsequently from 2001, incidents of Christian- Muslim violence have become more frequent and bloodier. Violence between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria has claimed thousands of lives in the past decade. It flared again in February 2006 when Muslim were outraged at the caricatures of the prophet Muhammad which led to a massacre of dozens of Christians in the north, followed by reprisal killings of Muslims by Christians in the south. More than 150 people were killed and numerous churches and mosques destroyed. Also, the effect of religion on politics has brought about people voting according to their faith regardless of the capacity of the candidate to lead the country. This was evident in the southeast. For instance, Catholic Priests in Anambra State openly enjoined their members to vote for Peter Obi (former governor) because of his religious inclination. According to him “he always clutched his chaplet tightly in his hands to demonstrate to the Catholic faithful that he was certainly one of them.” And they accepted him (Okafor, 2011).

Empirical evidence is the case of that of the former Peoples’ Democratic Party’s (PDP) Senator for Jigawa Northwest Senatorial District, Dr Danladi Sankara, who was said at some point to have decried an alleged religious undertone in the 2011 presidential election. Sankara, who was also the Jonathan/Sambo returning agent for Jigawa State in the election, indicated that there was connivance among the opposition parties in Jigawa, whereby they indoctrinated the people to vote for

Muslims. The defunct Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) candidate, Gen. Muhammodu Buhari (Rtd), scored the highest vote in the 2011 presidential election in Jigawa State, polling 665,994 votes to beat his closest rival, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) candidate, President Goodluck Ebelle Jonathan, who polled 419,252 votes. During the announcement of the result at the INEC headquarters in Dutse, the presidential election Collation Officer for the state, Prof. Jibrila D. Amin, the Vice Chancellor of the Federal University of Dutse, indicated that the total votes cast were 1,214,774, adding that the total valid votes were 1,140,766. According to him, Nigeria is governed by the constitution, not by any of the holy books, because party politics goes beyond religion and tribal consideration (Furtune News, 2011).

Although, Islam and Christianity have taken a clear position in the political life of Nigerians, it does not mean that African Traditional Religion is relegated to the background. Even Muslim and Christian politicians, privately and secretly consult the priests of the ATR, especially when it comes to political agreements and business contracts. However, ATR is not a strong factor in the fashioning of state policies and political programs. The manipulation of religion by some powerful individuals who hide under the guise of religion to pursue selfish interests, and greediness of some religious leaders who patronize corrupt rulers remains part of the negative effects of religion on the polity. Greed has crept into the religious terrain to the extent that some religious leaders now patronize corrupt rulers to meet their lust for money and other material gains. Efforts by Nigerian politicians to gain ascendancy and power have led

to situation in which politics have swept away sacred precepts of religion, and in the process, contaminated the hearts of people with bitterness and enmity for the religion of others. In lieu of the above, Falana (2010) therefore quotes Bala Usman who says that: “

The real basis of the manipulation of religion in Nigeria today is the need to obscure from the people of Nigeria, a fundamental aspect of our reality; that is the domination of our political economy by a class of intermediaries who are being increasingly exposed. And this is to enable this class to cover themselves with religious and ethnic disguises in order to further entrench division among our people, slow down their awakening at any cost; even the unity of our country for which so much has been sacrificed.

On the other hand, the positive effect of religion on politics has brought about the reinvigoration of Christian reawakening to politics. In the 1999 elections, Pentecostal Christians openly supported Obasanjo’s candidature under the banner of the People’s Democratic Party (PDP), viewing him as a symbol of the restoration of Christian control over the government of Nigeria and of the “ending of Muslim political dominance” (Ojo, 2004). After Obasanjo was elected president, Pentecostal leaders conducted an all-night prayer meeting for him. This gesture was politically endorsed and rewarded with the construction of a chapel in the Presidential Villa, the seat of national politics. Obasanjo’s victory at the polls and his eventual swearing-in as president on 29th May, 1999 was heavily steeped in Christian Pentecostal symbolism.

4.3. Religion and Politics in Nigeria: The Interplay

The phenomenon of religious politics in Nigerian is an obvious one. In political aspects such as style of governance, policy formulations and the electoral process in Nigeria, religion has been a strong determining factor. However, the influence of religion on governance in Nigeria could be both positive and negative. In other words, as religion enhances national development, so also it could be counterproductive. Suffice to assert that in practising governance in Nigeria, adherence to religious moral values and observance of Nigerian constitution which makes provision for freedom of religion are necessary for achieving national development. It is expedient to say that for decades, religion has been a dominant factor in Nigerian political space, especially, in the area of governance. In whichever way one sees religion, the fact cannot be denied of its interaction with politics in Nigeria. Falola, (1998) opines that the obvious interplay between religion and politics has attracted the reactions of scholars and what seems the consensus of such reactions is the ambivalent role of religion in the growth, development, and survival of the Nigerian nation. Accordingly, it is not a small question to ask in which way religion involves itself in political realm for on this depends to some measure how much value Nigerians attach to their faith. This is to say that the impacts of religion on Nigerian politics could be both positive and negative. We shall in the succeeding discussions, look at its positive as well negative impact on governance in Nigeria. In his submission, Mazrui notes the following:

In those African countries, where Islam is in serious competition with Christianity and both are politicised, the two creeds become divisive rather than unifying, destabilising rather than legitimising. Where religion reinforces ethnic differences on regional variation, governments become less stable rather than more... On the whole, the two Semitic religions in Nigeria Christianity and Islam reinforce regional and ethnic differences, and make stability more difficult. (Mazrui, 1996:198)

An entity now known as Nigeria came into being in 1914 through the amalgamation of the then Southern and Northern protectorates of the British Empire imperialist power. Before the British incursion into the country, Islam had taken a firm presence from the then Sokoto Caliphate, the Borno empire, to the Yoruba land and down to the Atlantic coast of Lagos. Christianity on the other hand came with the colonialists who were imperialist agents. Independent missionary workers took over the Southern Nigeria and penetrated through the Northern minorities and thus, gradual overthrowing of the African traditional religion became imminent. Both Islam and Christianity took over as Nigerians embraced them. Before this period, all political activities were surrounded by the then African traditional religions. Chief priests were prominent chiefs and they wielded enormous power. This implies that right from time immemorial politics has always been influenced by religion. The period which followed the era of colonialism –witnessed rapid growth of Christianity and enjoyed tremendous government patronage.

It is historical evidence as some scholars had postulated that the emergence of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe and Sir Ahmadu Bello as premiers of the Western, the Eastern and the Northern regions, maintained the status quo in the manipulation of religion in Nigerian politics. Christianity continued to wield greater influence in the South while Islam was in control of the North. This issue of politicization of religion was more glaring in the North, majority of who were from royal families, was in full control of Northern politics and those were highly influenced by Islam. The hegemonic position of the Northern ruling class was threatened with the emerging liberal democracy because they lacked the instrumentalities needed which were more or less political bankruptcy. They therefore resorted to the defence of Islam for the purpose of protecting and defending their interest. This took a new twist in the second republic when the political intrigue became the protection of 'Northern interest' which was seen as mere ploy to win the support of both Muslims and non- Muslim minorities in the region. The Northern political actors who were hitherto separated by politics were brought together by 'Northern interest'. Kukah (1993:5) describes this political calculation as politics of 'conscriptio'.

Unequivocally put, the picture in the present day Nigeria is however not different from what it used to be. Nigerians have demonstrated stronger link or alliance to their religious organization than the political body. This perhaps, accounts for why Nigerians have been adjudged the most religious people on earth. The fact

remains that this tendency, rather than stabilising the polity reinforces differences and ethnic variations. The ferocious gyration of Nigerians about religious matters which will not be replicated when it comes to national interest has weakened the Nigerian state. A survey of ethno-religious crisis in Nigeria reveals that blood of innocent Nigerians are shed and properties destroyed on account of this passion, fervour, emotional and emotive reactions, moral certitude and religiosity. (Ojo, 2006:368-378). Unfortunately, the Northern Nigeria has always been the spot for unwarranted destruction of lives and properties. In his opinion, Takaya, (1992) avers that:

At times, religious organisations and people of faith may be affected in specific ways by the political climate of the society that surrounds them. For instance, governments may pass laws that affect or threaten to affect the ways in which the traditions of a given faith may be offensive to the adherents of a particular belief system. Such is the case in Nigeria. The recognition of state secularism by the constitution has generated heated debates.

Kukah. (1999:102), similarly agrees that “The debate over the religious status of the Nigerian state remains one of the most passionate and acrimonious. The debate has often been beclouded by bellicosity, zealotry, arrogance and prejudices. In the end, there has always been more heat than light.” There is another group made up of largely Marxist-oriented secularists. These people see the entire debate not only as a flagrant distortion of the secular status of the Nigerian state, but also part of the game in the struggle for the control of the Nigerian state across the religious and ethnic boundaries. Their arguments are anchored on the fact that while this selfish elite has

really no love for the Nigerian state beyond their personal interests. They and majority of poor Nigerians have no other place to call home.

Today, with so much religious turmoil in Nigeria, the government has always taken the blame. Both Muslims and Christians argue that they are both the government's sin of omission and commission. This accusation notwithstanding, according to Usman (1987:12-13) 'the only instrument we can rely on is the constitution and what it says about religion. The provision on state secularism in the constitution is the rock behind which government and people stake their claims for neutrality. However, secular state is needed to redress the imbalance caused by what is considered to be the manipulation of politics. Manipulation is therefore the process of essentially controlling the action of a person or group without that person or group knowing the goals, methods and purpose of that control and without even being aware that a form of control is being exercised upon them at all.' This campaign of systematic manipulation of religious sentiments is being conducted for the sinister and reactionary purpose for diverting attention. The point to be argued here is that since after the independence of Nigeria in 1960 till date, there has been interplay between religion and governance or politics. The nexus is so tie that many believed that politics and religion are inseparable in Nigeria.

4.4. The Role of Religion on Governance in Nigeria

This section is devoted to the consideration of the roles of religion on governance in Nigeria. Indeed, religion and religious associations perform a number of democratic roles but the extent to which these roles have been performed is another issue. Because religion is a complex phenomenon, the social functions it performs are quite diverse. Some religious functions are manifest-immediately observable- and some are latent; that is, not immediately discernible. It should be recognized that if an activity helps the integrative performance of an organisation, then we call it functional. Roles like support for tolerance, peaceful cooperation and loves are promoted through ministerial and lay practise. Schaefer and Lamn (1997:273-275) identify some democratic utilities of religion which include the integration of human societies composed of individuals and social groups with diverse interests and aspirations. In their view, religious bond transcend these personal and divisive force. Another important function identified by the two authors is the ability of religion to legitimise the existing social order.

Borrowing heavily from the essay of Rotimi, Mala and Aiyegboyin (1999:33-41) “religion performs six interrelated functions, namely, restraining or criticising the conduct of government, encouraging political participation, promoting democratic values and norm, articulating and aggregating distinctive societal interests, generating cross-cutting identities and providing avenues for the development of leadership skills.” Ayorinde (2007), maintains that with reference to the first function of

restraining and containing government conduct, religious associations in Nigeria have repeatedly and stridently denounced bad governmental policies or actions that infringe on the interests of the religious community in particular, and/or the welfare of the citizenry in general. Thus, religious associations have joined independence groups in civil society in criticising the dubious and circuitous nature of the military's democratization project and government's management of the religious disturbances that have convulsed several Northern states. On the stimulation of political participation and civic identification, Nigeria's religious organisations have played an important role in encouraging and mobilising their members towards active participation in, and identification with public affairs and politics. This is done by stimulating a sense of civic identification and participation in their members by urging such members to 'pray and fast' for peace, stability, justice and progress of the nation

Thirdly, religion promotes democratic values and norms. This is done through the promotion and propagation of such democratic norms and values as tolerance, moderation, willingness to compromise, and respect for truth, justice and freedom. Religious leaders in Nigeria have at different times demonstrated this commitment to democracy by urging Nigerians not to waver in their support for democratic institutions (Tukur, 1999). More so, religion provides avenues for interest representation. Religious organisations articulate, aggregate and represent distinctive societal interests. The Christian representation and mobilisation against Nigeria's

membership of the country in the OIC represented only one of the many instances of interest representation by the Christian community since 1986. According to Familusi,(2010):

Religion equally generates cross-cutting interest. The existence of cross-cutting interests implies that competing affiliations could operate to secure social peace and democratic stability, and prevent destructive or protracted social conflict, by inducing individuals and groups to divide their emotions in a single explosive line of affiliation. Finally, religious organisations, like many other ordered shares of associational activity or social intercourse, provide an appropriate environment of the development of leadership skills. This is done by displaying an impressive capacity to manage people and resources in their respective organisations by speaking out courageously and consistently against the excesses solutions to nation's problems. Through this, religious leaders have gained some reputation and legitimacy as effective national leaders of thorough and potential statement.

It would however be misleading to conclude that religious organisations have been uniformly or consistently supportive of democratic processes and values in Nigeria. On the contrary, they have periodically exhibited disturbing anti-democratic proclivities that have found expression in religious violence and intolerance, in the corruption and manipulation of religious leaders. From the foregoing, some religious activities can be described as dysfunctional because their consequences frustrate the stated goals of the groups. In general religion is functional or dysfunctional, depending on the extent to which it contributes to the achievement of societal goals.

CHAPTER FIVE

EVALUATION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Evaluation

Nigeria, in every ramification, is a pluralistic society. To be specific, there is religious pluralism in the country as there are adherents of Islam, Christianity, African Traditional Religion and several others. There is also ethnic pluralism, there are Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, and several other minority groups, like the Ogoni, Ijaw, Ibibio etc. All of these different groups belong to a common nationality known as Nigeria, today. Apart from this, each of these tribes has its own culture. All these differences make life interesting and challenging to the various religious groups. With regards to the issue of religious influence on governance in Nigeria, it is expedient to recapture that while there diversity, in terms of religion, ethnic and cultural, people tend to bury their cultural differences and work together as a team in order to develop the country regardless of cultural and religious differences.

The recognition of social justice implies the recognition of God in the scheme of things and this is tantamount to progress and development. After all, God is the maker of man and sole source of all that is good; prosperity, peace, justice etc. The recognition of God also presupposes social justice. And we know that, true religion teaches man that he is a creature of all powerful Father on whom he depends for his life and well-being and to whom he must render an account of life. Man learns from

religion that he has specific obligations to himself, to his fellow human being and to the society to which he belongs and above all, to his maker. This is social justice in action. Also the three religious groups agree that man is dependent and contingent and need to be guided by the ultimate - God, Supreme or Allah and gods (Aremu 2003).

As the central motive of this paper is national development, the religious teachings on morality comes in, since man cannot develop without it. According to Ezeanya (1980) "to attempt to build a nation without God is to hope to construct a massive structure upon the foundation of sand, such building will collapse at the slightest gust of wind and the fall will be great". So it is apt to add that one of the universal functions of religion is to help to promote the society. The role of religion in national development is to tell the people that, social justice, egalitarianism and building of a country is not merely man - conceived, but it is ordained by God. Peace is the absence of war. But Okwueze (2003:55) said that:

...it is not merely the absence of war nor can it be reduced solely to be maintenance of a balance of power between enemies nor is it brought about by dictatorship. Instead, it is rightly and appropriately called, an enterprise of justice, peace results from that harmony built into human society by its divine founder and actualized by man as they thirst after ever - greater justice. One of the ways Religion can help in national development is by securing the peace of the nation. And this is done by appealing to the conscience of the people through ethical teachings.

According to Agha (2003) conscience is defined as a faculty of the human mind responsible for different capabilities or abilities which the human being attempt to exhibit. It is the inner sense of right or wrong in moral choices that a person makes. Also, it is seen as a practical judgment concerning the morality of a concluded action where there is an appeal to one's conscience when he does right or wrong. Religion plays pivotal role in governance as well as the development of Nigeria. Its roles range from spiritual, social to material dimensions. For instance, economically speaking, one of the cardinal aims of religious bodies is to contribute to the development of the society. It helps members of their organization to realize economic self-reliance which are accomplished through intensive rural farming and the articulation of other productive forces to place the nation in sound economic footing.

As a result, religious groups have been working in collaboration with the directorate for rural development, road and infrastructural facilities to meet the target of the Religious groups to make this a reality. For instance, some states have begun to give back schools to churches. This shows that government still recognizes the importance of religion in this country. According to Sam (2009) different religious groups also engage in economic ventures like owning a farm -settlement in different rural areas, even in some urban areas too. Religious groups have built health care centers, and maternity homes. Many religious groups now are involved in controlling the environment that is, protection of animals and fishes, care of water supply and Afforestation-tree planting to avoid erosion, educational programs on the effects of

deforestation and constant bush burning. Arguing further, religious groups in Nigeria are known for their continuous engagement in small scale enterprises such as soap making, cream, shoe making, tailoring, carpentry, fish pond factory. They also encourage charitable organization to help in alleviating poverty (Agha 2003). When this is done, it then means that efforts of the religious groups have added greatly to national development. Also, Ejim (2010) observed the peculiar character of Christian and Islamic economic principles of interest-free loan help greatly in developing our nation. By this, the rural dwellers can easily borrow from their religion, and feel reassured that the burden will not be too much for them. This encourages increase in food production and business venture. Religion also contributed in the areas of Health care system and in Agricultural sector.

Another role religion has played and still playing in Nigeria today, is on the educational sector. Religious groups have been involved in the educational sector of this country through the provision of Nursery, Primary, Secondary, Adult Education, Sabbath and Sunday School Classes, *Almajiri* School, Clubs for Boys and Girls, Mass illiteracy, program planning and training courses. Religion in this country has been working hard to make sure that Nigeria has quality education in this country. This was made clear when some state Governments returned many schools to their original owners. Not only the above, but today, it is evidently verifiable that most of the known private Universities Nigeria, today, are owe by Religious leaders or organizations. For instance Landmark and Covenant Universities are typical examples

of known Universities owned by religious figures. Before now, our educational sector in this country' has experienced incessant strikes because of non-implementation of their agreement or nonpayment of salary. Agha (2003) opined that strike is like a cankerworm to national development. Religious groups took it as a challenge to invest on educational sector by providing schools even up to University level. Consequently today, the state government and the religious bodies pay regular salaries to their teachers.

Generally speaking, and above all, one of the banes of the nation is lack of political education among the leaders shown by rabid display of power. As Achebe (1983) rightly observed in his work; “The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with Nigerian or climate or water, air or any other thing else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example, which is the hallmark of the true leadership. It is not only the rulers; the people too contribute in no small measure to the ruin of the nation.” This is done amply by disrespecting constituted authorities, sometime apathy and absence of commitment of the behaviors of the citizens' for conducive and rancor free atmosphere necessary for progress. Achebe (1983:2) also observed that;

Indiscipline pervades our life so completely today that one may be justified in calling it the condition par excellence of contemporary Nigeria society. We see and hear and read about indiscipline in the home, in the school, in the public service, in the private sector, in the

government and in legislative assemblies as follows: "a failure or refusal to submit one's desire and actions to the restraints of orderly social conduct in recognition of the rights and desires of others.

More so, if the leaders should be educated politically on that leadership entails - service; and the-led (people) made to understand their position too, obedience -the magic of decorum and political awareness would have been effective. The Nigeria political milieu has not been satisfactorily done. Religion can bring about sustainable political development through the inculcation of high sense of duty, morality, selfless service, respect for human lives, public accountability, love of one's neighbor, sense of humanity, abhorrence of violence. With religion, there is a sense of religious reawakening which is supposed to have a positive impact on the political development of the country. Religion can contribute to national integration, political mobilization, reformation of ethnic identity, nationalism, peaceful co-existence, economic social and political development (Afolabi, 2015). In agreement with all of the above submissions, this study concludes that while it cannot be completely denied that religion has caused one or two negative influence on Nigerian governance and development, it is however, the position of this project that religion has tremendously influenced governance in Nigeria, positively. Hence, the researcher calls for amore collaboration and incorporation of religious groups in governances in Nigeria. The influence of religion, cannot be neglected and must be priority in the day to day affairs of governance in Nigeria. However, the governments should also continue to check the excesses of religious groups to avert its dangers.

5.2 Conclusion

This project was undertaken under the Department of Religion. It was approached from the religious perspective. It evaluated the issues of religious influence on governance in Nigeria. Here while we try to conclude the hallmark of the study, therefore, it can be situated that from the research, religion and politics are interwoven in Nigeria. Many have stressed that they are inseparable. Thus, it is necessary to highlight some hard and incontrovertible facts pertinent to our religion-in-politics dilemma. From the study so far, it was discovered and established that religion played enormous roles on governance in Nigeria. Its influences, however, were further categorized into two aspects; that is, the positive as well as the negative influence of religion on governance in Nigeria. One of such facts is that history is replete with religious zealots. The Christians have their crusaders and the Muslims their Jihadists. Vestiges of both and recidivists are found in Nigerian politics; where the religions co-exist and are practiced. Therefore, Nigeria is not an exception.

Secondly, Religion has a place in the life of every nation, Nigeria inclusive. Irrespective of the faith or denomination, religion when truly practised in its truest form and spirit, has been and remains sacred. It plays a vital role in purposeful leadership, community building, social justice, law and order, peace-making, reconciliation, forgiveness and the healing of wounds, by the political, family and personal. Thirdly, it is to be re-emphasize that the Nigerian constitutions past and present proclaims loudly the secularity of the Nigerian state, the separation of religion

from politics and the freedom to practice one's religion without fear of persecution and prosecution. Provisions of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution (section 1) stipulates that the constitution is supreme and that its provisions have binding force on all authorities and persons throughout the federation. Section 10 of the constitution is categorical in proclaiming, 'the Government of the federation or of any state shall not adopt any religion as state religion.' Additionally, in subsection 2, the constitution stipulates that "the federal republic of Nigeria shall not be governed, nor shall any person or group of persons take control of the government of Nigeria or any part thereof except in accordance with the provisions of this constitution." All said, the constitution bars a state religion by adoption, and any attempt by anyone to foist a religion on the nation. Because of this established law, Nigeria is only opened to all the religions, but do not allow for excesses.

Furthermore, it is also discovered that our political leaders, on both sides – Muslims and Christians have invoked the name of God in politics and sought to use religion freely in influencing the polity decisions and swaying national political and economic policies and to that end governance. In Nigeria, religion has become a tool of politics. We are evidently, no longer able to maintain the fundamental principles of a secular state. The sanction and endorsement of Sharia laws in and by some state governments have also compounded our problems. In considering these incontrovertible facts, the knowledge that they are realities and their possible implication for Nigeria, is more prescient and troubling. Our leaders have been

mostly ambivalent. Unfortunately, some still do not see religion-in-politics as a problem so long as it serves their petty personal or sectional interests. Those who are genuinely concerned about this problem have spoken out.

While the study has been able to trace the historical development of the influence of religion on governance in Nigeria from pre-colonial era to post-colonial period, it has also identified reasons for religious participations, interventions and influences in Nigerian politics and governance. Also, the study has highlighted and showed both the negative as well as the positive influences of religion on governance in Nigeria. Hence it will make suggestions as possible solutions to seemly unabated and unresolved problems facing governance in Nigeria. In conclusion therefore, the study posits that any nation where people lack religion is bound to lack conscience, compassion and progress. We need and must support unreservedly the free practice of religion by Nigerian Christians, Muslims and Traditional animists. No religion in Nigeria should be deemed superior or subordinate to the other, and none should be state sanctioned or enforced. Finally, we must be willing to overcome the temptation to mix religion and politics or make religion a tool of our national partisan politics because of the intricacies involved.

5.3 Recommendations

Religion is characterized by functional and dysfunctional element, most especially in Nigeria; it is also admitted that it deals with abstract things, that is, conception of God is intuitively mediated quite unlike science which has a conceptual

knowledge which centers on sense perception. Religion, just as its dysfunctional aspect has functional aspect as evidenced in morality, justice, truth, economic development, educational and social services which it can render through its various institutions. These functional aspects can be incorporated to the benefit of the nation's development, when religious dialogue, tolerance is given its due place. Multiplicity in religion is the fate of Nigeria and therefore tolerance and dialogue must be an antidote to reap the benefits of these religions. In view of the issues raised and discussed in this project therefore, the study puts forward the following recommendations.

- i. Religions should be carried along in government policies to always inculcate moral principles, justice, truth, equity and honesty which is a reagent to personality change thereby reduce corruption. This is because laws and plans on eternal aspects of man exploiting scientific models are failing Nigeria.
- ii. Also government should make use of the various organs like Council of Religious Groups (CRG) provided by different religions in the country to carry its message to the people. Moreover, proven and virtuous religious people should be used in the sensitive areas in political social and economic goals of national development to prevent constant failures of government well-conceived programs.

- iii. The study of moral education should be made compulsory in all categories of learning and national orientation agency should also include it in their plans.
- iv. Promotion of the culture of Religious tolerance, through education and enlightenment of the people through the mass media, civil society organizations and educational institutions to respect and tolerate other religions as well as extol the culture of others is helpful. It will effectively mitigate the persistent occurrence of religious violence in Nigeria,
- v. The government needs to be pro-active in promoting the culture of tolerance by adherents of religions. The best way to do that is the enlightened of various religious adherents through the use of credible religious scholars, to imbibe the habit of reporting through the right channel.
- vi. Finally, the government should give more power to the Christian Association of Nigeria and Islamic Society of Nigeria in promoting inter-religious dialogue and religious tolerance through organizing seminars and workshops for religious adherents which will help in building sustainable political development.

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