RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE AND INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *Ethnic and religious disputes present Nigeria with more internal concerns than external ones at the moment. Socioeconomic, political, and governance deficiencies are frequently cited in the research on religious violence in Nigeria as the primary drivers of this violence. Insecurity and religious violence in Nigeria are examined in this paper. Assassinations, ritual killings, armed robberies, kidnappings, tribalism, avarice, corruption, ethno-religious violence, banditry, and insurgency are just a few of the security concerns the nation currently faces. The technique relies solely on textual sources, which include books, journals, records, monographs, manuscripts, and magazines. The paper's major argument is that, when combined with other circumstances, religious violence has raised the sense of insecurity in the nation. As a result, there have been losses in human life and property, an increase in armed conflict, fear and instability across the nation, and the need for more security personnel. The study suggests, among other things, electronic surveillance of the nation's borders to prevent the smuggling of illegal weapons into the country, correct religious teaching, de-radicalization of religious violence, and more. Such actions are thought to aid in halting the nation's unsightly tide of insecurity. In addition to ensuring the peaceful coexistence of Christians, Muslims, Traditionalists, and adherents of other faiths, this would also contribute to Nigeria's restoration of peace, security, progress, and prosperity.*

KEYWORDS: Religion, Violence, Religious Violence, Insurgency, Security, Insecurity.

INTRODUCTION

Religious violence has been directly linked to the rise in militant activity by Muslims and Christians in Nigeria, and this has created a culture of religious violence that is particularly common in the country's north. Africans practiced African Traditional Religion, which encompasses a range of approaches to worshiping the Supreme Being, before Islam and Christianity arrived in Nigeria. Religiously driven violence was extremely rare among Africans who followed traditional religions. Consequently, when Christianity and Islam were brought to Nigeria, there was rivalry and a struggle for dominance.

The United States of America was the primary location for the creation of the notion of national security after World War II. At the moment, the phrase refers to non-military security, such as food, energy, and financial security. Risks to security can come in a variety of forms. Nigeria's security is now at risk due to Boko Haram's terrorist strikes against the government and the country as a whole. The safety of many different religions' members in Nigeria is also at stake due to religious violence.

In Nigeria nowadays, security issues are a big deal. However, the appropriateness and survival of the culture of peace among students in schools is essential to the development and maintenance of education in Nigerian schools, especially in the state of Cross River. According to Effiom and Ukam (2019), the establishment of a culture of peace is considered the fundamental requirement for student interactions that will reduce or eliminate violence and, consequently, conflict in schools.

In Nigeria, several political concerns are manipulated to assume religious dimensions through the use of poverty, ignorance, illiteracy, and politics. Indeed, a lot of people have suffered bodily and psychological harm as a result of violence prompted by religious affiliation and policy, which has legitimized a divide among Nigerians who simply worship different religions. Examining the reasons behind religious violence in Nigeria since the country's democratic transition in 1999 is essential to comprehending how religion could encourage peaceful coexistence.

Every nation faces security difficulties, according to Nwamarah (2018), but when the level of insecurity increases daily, immediate action is required. Nigeria's present security situation is one of constant increases in property and life insecurity.

According to Shafiu (2011), there have been multiple incidents of insecurity recently, which have resulted in fatalities and psychological harm to individuals and families all around the country. Residents need to be far more concerned about security because religious radicals have the potential to cause even more unrest than those who came before them. Additional security indicators encompass the continuous animosity between the northern and southern regions of Nigeria, the intensifying unrest in the Niger Delta, and other parts of the country experiencing a surge in violent offenses and abductions. Racial tensions, religious disputes, unemployment, and a number of other social and political issues are fueling Nigeria's instability and creating more violent flashpoints and insecurity within the country. The administration ought to be worried by the justifiable national security concern. Nigeria's criminal justice system has been drastically undermined. The inadequate and sluggish implementation of the policy is proof that this has created a problem. A more robust Anti-Terrorism Act is needed to give the Nigeria Security Organization (NSO) the institutional and coordination framework it

needs to fight and eradicate acts of terrorism within and against the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It also needs to give the Criminal Justice System additional judicial guidelines so that terrorists can be prosecuted effectively and quickly. It is imperative that the government take the bold actions necessary to properly identify, explain, and implement any existing policies. Political instability can occasionally result from an uncontrollably high level of insecurity in a nation (Nwamarah, 2018).

In order to put the current insecurity in Nigeria in perspective, this paper will define and examine the causes, effects, and rise in violence indices that have recently characterized Nigerian society; it will also highlight the challenges and evaluate its political, religious, and cultural implications for the nation.

CONCEPTUAL DISCUSSION

Religion

There is no one universally agreed upon definition of religion. People have defined it in a multitude of ways, depending on their experience and point of view. Agha (2012) defined religion as "the conscious or unconscious belief in spiritual beings and elements (forces of nature) with powers." It comes from the Latin words religio (connection, bond) and relegere (to join or link), according to Sani (2007) and Fox (2004). As a result, it alludes to a bond or interaction between species that are larger than humans and already exist. Man and religion are intricately interwoven in all human cultures.

However, according to Webster's Dictionary of English, religion is man's acknowledgement of the divine expressed via a system of ideas and behaviours relating to the holy that binds believers in communities. This illustrates how religion emphasizes the ultimate or absolute while teaching worship. Humanity must totally surrender to the transcendent and follow him without inquiry in order to establish a connection with him (Juergensmeyer, 2004). Similarly, religion is a system of symbols that work to implant in men strong, enduring, and motivating moods and motivations by generating ideas about a general order of existence and disguising these ideas in a way that lends the motivations and moods a particularly realistic appearance.

Barbour (2006) stated that there are many definitions of religion, but just a handful are covered here. The traditional definition of religion includes references to "belief in, or the worship of, a god or gods" as well as "service and worship of God or the supernatural." However, because the definitions of "belief in god" are inadequate to capture the range of religious experiences and thought, writers and scholars have expanded upon them.

Clifford (2004) defined religion as "the belief in spiritual beings." In 1871, he contended that many people would be left out of the religious group if the term was restricted to those who engage in idolatry, acknowledge the existence of a supreme deity, or believe in an afterlife. This, according to him, "has the fault of identifying religion rather with particular developments than with the deeper motives which underlie them." He added that every society he had researched up to this point had some sort of spiritual belief. All of these definitions mention the issue with beliefs. Therefore, one way to characterize religion is as a system of practices and doctrines pertaining to a supernatural being that unite adherents into an ethical community.

Violence

According to Wellman and Tokuno (2014), and Fox (2014), violence is defined as the intentional use of physical force or power, whether actual or threatened, against oneself, another person, a group, or a community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development, or deprivation. This definition identifies intentionality as the act of doing something, independent of the outcome.

According to Cavanaugh (2019), violence can also refer to the threat or actual conduct of actions that have the potential to seriously impair the physical, psychological, or emotional health of a person or group of individuals. Everywhere is a potential site for violence: the streets, homes, workplaces, clubs, schools, and even the road, where "road rage" has recently surfaced as yet another illustration of the violence's purported rise. Acts of violence can range from small-scale assaults to mass killings. Violence, however, is inevitable when accommodating processes breakdown (Punch Editorial, May 17, 2004:6). Violence's etymology of "violate" is best explained by this (Yahaya, 2019). Violence violates someone, and that is its basic flaw. According to the previously described perspectives, the enlarged definition of violence allows us to include any act that infringes upon a citizen's freedom by the use of force.

Religious Violence

The aforementioned points of view suggest that the following succinct definition of religious violence is: acts that are threatened or carried out for religious reasons that have the potential to cause physical, psychological, or emotional harm to an individual or a group of individuals. Actors with violent religious motivations often act or represent a particular religious cause. The term "religious violence" also encompasses circumstances in which religion is the cause or the object of violent behaviour, according to Wellman and Tokuno (2014). Religious violence is defined as violence motivated by or in response to ideas, texts, or precepts from religion. This includes acts of violence motivated in part by the attacker's or target's faith, as well as violence aimed against religious organizations, individuals, or objects. Acts committed by religious organizations against other religious organizations as well as acts committed by religious organizations themselves are considered forms of religious violence.

Insurgency

The emergence and activities of the lethal Islamic organization known as Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria have sparked worries about the security of the country (Ede, 2017). To fulfil their holy objective, this fanatical Muslim sect started an insurrection. The primary goal of Boko Haram's ideology is to overthrow the Western-oriented Nigerian government and replace it with an Islamic Sharia government that will apply harsh laws to the entire country. Anugwom and Oji (2004) connected Boko Haram to other Islamic fundamentalist events in Nigerian history, such as the Maitatsine riots and Usman Dan Fodio's jihad. The most common translation of Boko Haram is that it is prohibited to receive an education in the West. Western education was initially associated with the Arabic word for fake, as opposed to haram, which means forbidden. It is also possible to translate "Westernization is sacrilege" and "Western influence is a sin" into this expression (Sunna Jama'atu Ahlis). According to Banjo (2016), the official name of the organization is Lidda'awati wal-Jihad, which means "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad" in Arabic. The group was founded in

Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State, by Mohammed Yusuf. Yusuf, who adhered to a strict and conservative interpretation of the Qur'an, claimed that when British colonialists established Nigeria, Muslims there were compelled to embrace a Western and non-Islamic way of life. He constructed a religious complex that attracted impoverished Muslim families from all over Nigeria and its neighbors. It included a mosque and an Islamic school. The center's political goal was to create an Islamic state and it functioned as a hub for terrorist recruitment (Ede, 2017). The organization was nonviolent since Yusuf did not openly promote violence at first (Kukah, 2015). But after Mohammed Yusuf was killed in 2009 as a result of an attack by Nigerian security forces, the gang turned violent and started causing mayhem by attacking public and religious facilities. In 2010, Boko Haram reappeared with a major jail raid and a spate of assassinations after going into hiding for over a year. Videos of Yusuf's deputy, Abubakar Shekau, who the authorities thought was killed in the 2009 revolt, began to surface, identifying him as the group's new leader. Over time, attacks became more sophisticated and deadly, particularly when explosives were used.

From savage drive-by attacks on beer bars, the cult progressed to bombings of government buildings, security institutions, and Christian groups (churches), which were the ones most immediately affected. The terrorist group Boko Haram is still attacking defenseless Nigerians, especially in the country's northeast, despite claims made by President Muhammadu Buhari's administration that the group has been "technically" destroyed (Dara, 2016; Adeniyi, 2016). It appears that these insurgents and Islamic radicals have ties overseas (Uji & Tserakaa, 2014). According to sources, the organization was previously dependent on donations from members; however, because of its affiliation with Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), it was able to obtain funding from Saudi Arabian and British organizations.

Security

Diverse concepts have been employed by academics to define security. Akin (2008), cited by Ozoigbo (2019), defined security as "any established procedure toward the protection of persons and property against hostile persons." It describes a situation where a conducive atmosphere is created so that people living in the state can carry out their regular daily activities without fear for their lives or their belongings. "Security is a situation in which citizens are free from any threats to their life and means of livelihood, safe from bodily harm, diseases, unemployment, and human rights violations wherever they may find themselves within a sovereign nation" (Adeleke, 2013). Thus, among other things, security is the lack of risk, anxiety, and ambiguity. Otto and Ukpere (2012) defined "security" as the absence of a crisis or the presence of happiness, safety, and the preservation of natural and human resources. Thus, the absence of any act of violence or threat that could cause property or human casualties can be characterized as security.

Insecurity

Nigeria's biggest problem right now is the country's insecurity. The country, which has recently served as a haven for numerous individuals serving as peacekeepers for warring nations, was caught off guard by the increasingly sinister behaviour of opportunistic cabals (Effiom & Edinyang, 2013). Insecurity is the state of being open to damage or danger, anxiety resulting from feeling exposed and uneasy. This meaning of "insecure," as given by the Advanced English Dictionary, can help us better comprehend this phrase. "Insecure" means "not confident about yourself or your relationships with other people; not safe or protected." The definitions of insecurity given above, which include "a state of not being secure, lack of confidence," are correct, according to Cole and Brett (2010). In addition to the term's more general meaning, this definition goes further by addressing "not being confident about oneself" on a personal level. A lack of confidence or unease with oneself is referred to as insecurity. It may also describe a situation in which one is exposed to risk or injury. The state of the economy may be causing you anxiety about job uncertainty. Another reason you could have problems sleeping is the unpredictability in your turbulent relationship.

Presently, Nigeria is beset by societal chaos, uncertainty, political crisis, destitution, illiteracy, the weighing scale of disbursement shortfall, impoverished health facilities, tribal and religious discords, dishonesty, corruption and misdemeanours. Thus, security is a necessity for the political durability and socio-economic expansion of any nation (Nkanta, Ele & Ogar, 2021). The insecurity of Nigeria worries every sane Nigerian person deeply. The safety of the entire nation is at risk because of the prevalence of banditry, insurgency, armed robberies, kidnappings, ritual killings, and ethno-religious violence in various parts of the nation. These issues are undermining the sense of "identity and security" that exists in the country because they affect nearly every individual in it. The insurgency and other religiously-related conflicts in Nigeria are fueled by religious extremism. Religious intolerance brought on by religious fanaticism fuels religious strife and aggravates national security problems.

FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA

The term "religious violence" in Nigeria describes the Christian-Muslim conflict that has existed in the country since 1953. The Boko Haram insurgency, which seeks to establish an Islamic state in Nigeria, is currently the main cause of religious violence in that country (Michael, 2020). Sixty-two thousand Nigerian Christians have lost their lives as a result of acts of terror by Boko Haram, Fulani herdsmen, and other groups since the year 2000. One description of the murders is "silent genocide."

Since gaining independence, religious violence has come to characterize Nigeria and her politics. According to Kukah (2015), Islam and Christianity are both straddling Nigeria's political landscape, each of them attempting to gain control of the country's architectural layout and construction rather than merely knocking on doors and begging to be allowed in. It is challenging to draw a distinction between politics and religion because both have become politicized and religionized. In Nigeria, religion, which has brought us together on two levels, has done more harm than good.

The literature has identified a number of elements that contribute to religious violence in Nigeria (Omotosho, 2013; Gofwen, 2014; Iwara, 2016; Salawu, 2010; Sampson, 2012). The research places attention on the underlying socio-political, economic, and governance elements

that give rise to violent conflicts in Nigeria, including religious conflicts, even if most of these causes overlap. However, the direct and obvious causes of religious violence are the main focus of this paper.

i) Personalization of Religion: People in non-Western nations find it easy to use their religion as a means of identifying with their attire, monikers, and speech patterns. Modernity brought with it a heightened level of religious consciousness and personalization. Identity in Nigeria is founded on fundamental elements including ethnicity, nation, race, language, and religion, particularly in the north. These innate characteristics set one person apart from another. One of the most significant underlying causes in Nigeria is religion, which has caused personalization among the same persons who speak different languages, nationalities, and ethnicities.

Islam and Christianity are the two different, highly customized religions practiced in the northern section of Nigeria. While Christians make up the majority of the minorities, Muslims make up the majority of the population. As a result, the majority is now discriminating against the minority. According to Fox (2014), religious considerations have the potential to spark discrimination and grievances, which in turn might spark confrontations between different ethnic and religious groups. In summary, the personalization of religion has the potential to result in discrimination based on religion and eventually give rise to radicalism, fundamentalism, and terrorism. Why? When religion is personal, followers often believe their own to be better than others', which leaves a lasting impression on them and motivates them to fight and die for their convictions as well as use religion as an excuse for using violence. This is the real story of Nigerian religious violence.

ii) Religious Conversion: Both Islam and Christianity have followers in Nigeria who think their respective faiths are not only better but also offer soul salvation and the opportunity to experience life after death. Preaching religious conversion accomplishes this. According to Jenkins (2012), the process of religious conversion has the power to incite conflict and alter the demographic distribution of followers of various religions within a state. Thus, religious conversion can result in violent acts against other religions as well as demographic shifts. However, since Boko Haram's actions have switched from persecuting Christians to Muslims, they are perceived to be false followers of Islam. It may be difficult for them to explain religious conversion as a contributing factor to acts of religious violence. However, Muslims, who make up the majority of the population in the north, face a serious threat from religious conversion.

iii) Isolated Settlement and Heterogeneous State: According to Olomojobi (2013), sixteen states in northern Nigeria—Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Kebbi, Kogi, Kwara, Jigawa, Nassarawa, Niger, Sokoto, Yobe, and Zamfara—practice Islam to a great extent. While there is a minority of Muslims in Taraba, Benue, and the Plateau, Kano, Katsina, and Sokoto have long been hubs for Islamic missionary work and education. He points out that an increase in the migration of other ethnic groups from other regions of Nigeria to the north was caused by economic activity, the existence of lucrative prospects in commerce and agriculture, the construction of federal institutions throughout the north, and the railway system. Rather than allowing other ethnic groups to dwell wherever they found room, the indigenous people of the north are stationed in a specific area known as the Sabon Gari quarters, which means "strangers' quarters," across the region. This is because men are divided into two groups under Islamic practice, which is based on Sharia law: those who are part of the Umma and those who are not. This brings up the subject of states that are heterogeneous. Ethnic and religious disputes are likely to arise during the early phases of creating a democratic rule in a

heterogeneous state, according to Wimmer (2013) and Fox (2014). Since 1999, there have been more religious and ethnic problems in Nigeria, a state known for its diversity. Therefore, separate settlements and varied nations create a space for conflict between native Muslims and immigrants, particularly those who practice non-Islamic faiths.

iv) Religious Hegemony: Adherents of both Islam and Christianity struggle for supremacy in their own religions. But the Islamic faith not only brings ethnic groups together, it also rules the northern region of Nigeria. Lincoln (2013) made a similar claim, saying that religious conflict results from the deployment of the "religion of the status quo" as a means of dominating "religions of resistance." Long-term religious strife between the dominated religious minorities and the majority could arise from this. Therefore, Christianity is the "religion of resistance," and Islam is the "religion of the status quo."

v) Unemployment/Illiteracy: Undoubtedly, Nigeria's youth unemployment and illiteracy pose a serious threat to the country's security, given the government's inadequate efforts to encourage the vast youth population to engage in constructive activities. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reports that data from the first half of 2011 reveal that Nigeria's unemployment rate rose to 23.9%. An extra 1.8 million people joined the lengthy line, adding to the already alarming statistics of almost 43 million young people without jobs. This was ascribed to newcomers to the labour force and employee layoffs that occurred during the year in every area of the economy (Afolabi, 2013). Additionally, most of the 100 million Nigerians who are living in extreme poverty—those who can afford basic necessities like clothing, food, and shelter—dwell in the northern regions. Seventy percent (70%) of individuals in the northwest live on less than $1 per day, making it the region with the highest poverty rate. North-central is next with 59.5%, and north-east with 69%. There is also no reason for celebration in the three southern zones, where the poverty rate is between 49.8% and 58.7%. This demonstrates the degree of annoyance felt by young people without jobs, who have become a threat to the state's national security since, as they say, "an idle hand is the devil's workshop." Because of this, there is a significant correlation between the alarmingly high percentage of youth unemployment and the level of insecurity in the nation, with young people being used as weapons in robberies, kidnappings, theft, and acts of terrorism.

MECHANISM FOR PEACE IN RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE

According to Paden (2015), analyzing the nature and dynamics of grassroots conflicts is the first step in conflict resolution and mediation. After that, evaluating the human resources available for conflict mitigation—including the ability of traditional civic cultures to adapt to new conflict challenges—comes next. This is a crucial method for reducing religious violence because conflict is fueled by resources that can be used to promote long-term peace and social progress. It is crucial to remember that different cultures employ different approaches to reducing conflict.

Furthermore, resources ought to be dispersed equally throughout the nation. Nigeria is too wealthy to rank among the world's poorest nations in terms of international affairs and global strategy. The country's wealth is concentrated among a few people, which causes a substantial portion of Nigerian citizens to live in extreme poverty and creates a widening wealth disparity. The country's extreme poverty, particularly in the north, is one of the main reasons for religious conflict. The unemployed young, miscreants, talakawa, and almajiri are the poor in the north. Olomojobi (2013) contended that class conflicts and resource control are the primary causes of

religious conflicts in northern Nigeria. Socially speaking, the younger generation's lack of economic independence results in the denial of financial welfare, such as access to housing and the legal system. This causes a lack of education, which results in adults who are disadvantaged and have a propensity to commit crimes.

Furthermore, the government ought to lower the prevalence of illiteracy by educating the masses of young people, particularly in the north where the rate is very high. They should also adopt a culture of responsibility and responsible leadership, as well as spread the benefits of democracy to the masses by enhancing their standard of living via economic empowerment. More significantly, they must be aware of the early warning signs of conflict so as to intervene before it gets out of control.

Furthermore, by emphasizing the value of religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence, religion can bring about peace in areas where religious conflict abounds. Various religious leaders can teach their followers that both Islam and Christianity tolerate diversity of religious faiths, even though some Muslims may find this offensive and consider it sacrilegious. The press should use its resources to reduce conflict by supporting interfaith programs and highlighting places of concord between different religions, while the government should assume responsibility for orienting the general public.

IMPLICATIONS OF RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE

The cost of Nigeria's pervasive insecurity is difficult to quantify in monetary or real terms, but it is obvious that Nigerians have lost a great deal of material and human resources as a result of it. A vital component of human existence and survival is security. Because of this, Coupland (2007) said that insecurity has a profound effect on people's lives and well-being, and that the government must recognize its duty to ensure security. Here are some of the ramifications of Nigeria's pervasive insecurity:

i) Loss of Lives and Property: The loss of citizens' lives and property is one of the main negative repercussions of insecurity in the nation. Numerous security incidents in Nigeria have resulted in the deaths of numerous innocent bystanders, foreign nationals, certain members of the country's security forces, elected leaders, and numerous government employees. According to Onifade et al. (2013), "the insecurity challenge has assumed formidable dimensions forcing the nation's political and economic managers and, indeed, the entire nation, to rue the absence of safety in most parts of the country and the loss of their loved ones, investments, and other losses."

Oduwole and Fadeyi (2013) observed that:

The most painful consequence of religious violence is the reckless destruction of lives and property. It is a painful outcome of religious fanaticism and violence because no known scriptural religion tolerate murder, but at the slightest act of provocation, many religious bigots and fanatics deploy the latest and most sophisticated weapons of war available to destroy and maim human beings (pp. 55-56).

ii) Instability: Instability brought on by religious extremism contributes to the nation's plight as well. The country's very fabric of national integration is in danger due to the ongoing condition of insecurity, which also fosters a climate of dread, unease, and worry. It impedes social cohesion and national integration. It creates animosity between followers of different religions and denies Nigerians their right to live in peace with one another. Nigeria has not quickly realized all the benefits of contemporary democracy as a result of it. It undermines the nation's unity and impedes its expansion and advancement.

iii) Proliferation of Arms: Proliferation of weapons is one of the nation's major issues. The nation's open borders and security issues have unintentionally made it easier for arms trafficking to occur. To smuggle weapons, insurgents take advantage of the very rough terrain and weak security measures in the country's border regions. As a result, the proliferation of weapons in Nigeria has skyrocketed.

iv) Proliferation of Security Guards: Organizations and localities are hiring security guards in increasing numbers due to the country's severe security issues and Nigeria's poor public security system. Nowadays, various security companies provide their services to communities and organizations. Vigilante groups are now present in most communities to ensure the safety of their citizens.

v) Implication on Social Security: Access to the needs of life, including food, nutrition, clean water to drink, hygienic conditions, and shelter, is a prerequisite for human security. Social security benefits can only be provided in the event that the country is at peace. Fear, compulsion, displacement, and lack of access to basic necessities like food, water to drink, and medical treatment are all consequences of insecurity. Meddings (2011) asserted that when people feel secure, they are able to move forward with their life without fear of molestation or violent death. This freedom can be both psychological and physical. Therefore, it is crucial to have a feeling of total security for one's bodily, mental, and social well-being.

vi) Implication on National Economy: The national economy suffers from insecurity. The disturbance of people's socio economic lives is one of the effects of religious violence. During times of crisis, individuals flee to safer places and hide to save their lives, which negatively impacts society's economy. The availability and consistent supply of raw materials for production is a major factor in the productivity of the majority of manufacturing enterprises. The supply of these basic materials is cut off by uncertainty, endangering manufacturing processes. Also, since there is a constant outflow from unstable areas, instability has an impact on the sale of completed goods. Spending on security has also increased because the majority of companies in Nigeria keep private security teams at a high cost. According to Achumba, Ighomereho, and Akpor-Robaro (2013), the destruction of commercial real estate, equipment, and buildings amounts to a loss of money and has destroyed numerous firms in Nigeria. Therefore, security is essential to the development of the country because its absence prevents both economic growth and development.

CAUSES OF INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

Beattie (2014) claimed that there has been a sharp rise in violence, terrorism, and similar incidents in Nigeria recently. Irregular religious groups are intensifying their activities across the nation. We hear of several bombings, kidnappings, armed robberies, arson, and other incidents. These occur virtually every day, from east to west and from north to south. The term "insecurity" has been expanded to include insecurity in the political and economic arenas. Our focus in this paper will be on the historical aspects of the topic and how it relates to citizens' lives and possessions. Now let us take a look at the root causes of this issue.

i) Kidnapping: This is yet another overt indication of the nation's insecurity. In this new wave of crime that appears to be replacing armed robberies and other non-contact crimes, the offenders spare no one (Mbachu, 2018). Boys, girls, elderly people, and children have all been abducted for ransom in Nigeria since the inception of the act. The residents' lives have become intolerable as a result. People now live in constant terror of becoming these crooks' victims.

ii) Militancy: Criminal law defines militancy as using violence, unlawful force, the unlawful use of unjustified force, or the intimidating impact of threatening to use such force. When the Niger Delta began to take up guns against government exploration and the environmental degradation of their region as a result of oil exploration and exploitation, this word gained prominence in Nigeria. This is not limited to the Niger Delta region. The Niger Delta youth are known for their atrocities, but other sections of the country have seen militants who commit atrocities even worse than theirs. Until recently, Nigerian society had never heard of an "insurgence." According to Muyiwa (2011), the armed Islamic group known as "Boko Haram" is credited with starting this new phase of terrorism in Nigeria. It is reported that acts of "insurgence" are responsible for numerous shootings, bombings, kidnappings, arsons, car bombs, and suicide bombings around the nation. The level of insecurity in the country has increased as a result of these actions.

iii) Fear of Distrust in Government: Nigerians are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that their government's security apparatus is unable to provide their safety and security, thanks to the current wave of violence. As a result, this affects her people's overall sense of human security because it fosters dread and hinders their capacity to prosper economically.

iv) Unemployment: Since the middle of the 1990s, unemployment, economic downturn, and social inequality have contributed to an increase in crime in Nigeria. These factors are also supported by ineffective and dishonest law enforcement and customs agencies. The devil's workshop was created by idle brains. Most of these individuals are young, readily snagged by extremist organizations, and trained in a variety of crimes, including robbery, murder, kidnapping, smuggling, and high-jacking. Since many people in our society are only minimally employed and begging is a socially acceptable activity, it is difficult to collect accurate unemployment numbers, which generally have little bearing on the situation. This evaluation of the Nigerian situation is accurate.

v) Porous Borders: Due to the uncontrolled immigration flow into Nigeria from other nations, criminals are able to enter the nation unchecked.

vi) Proliferation of Arms and Ammunitions: Our air and marine ports have stopped a number of armament hauls, some of which involved extremely big numbers. The nation will not benefit from this. These weapons and ammunition wind up in the hands of criminals who use them for their evil deeds throughout the nation, making life unsafe for the locals.

vii) Illegal Armed Groups: The illegal trafficking of ammunition and weapons has made it exceedingly simple for individuals and groups to get weapons. We can list organizations that own weapons and ammunition, such as the Niger Delta militants, the Oodua People's Congress, and the Bakassi Boys' MASSOB.

viii) Oil Bunkering: Nigeria, one of the biggest producers of oil, is afflicted by illicit oil bunkering. The current wave of insecurity in the nation encourages this practice. This is a backup plan for the lawbreakers who are prepared to perish in Nigerian waterways. As a result, the coastal regions in our oil-producing states are dangerous.

ix) Labour Activists: The Nigerian Labour Congress called for nationwide strikes at the beginning of 2012 in response to a government-imposed hike in fuel prices. They charged that the administration was indifferent to the pain of the populace and that it was neglecting the issues related to national insecurity. Fagan (2016) claimed that nonviolent demonstrations by labour unions and other civil society organizations have frequently been set upon by criminals, causing suffering to participants and creating an unsafe environment in our cities.

x) Wrong Political Ambition: Ben Okolo, writing from Johannesburg, South Africa, observed that "the current crisis which started in Bauchi and has engulfed other states in the north has elements of theocratic ambitions in it." Ogunada (2012) also held the opinion that those responsible for the violent activities in some parts of the country are acting with a hidden agenda, intending to establish their own type of government that is selfish, criminal, and unpatriotic as Nigerians. With such ambition, they can try to make the country ungovernable or unstable. Their desire for political office is not evil, but nurturing negative reasons for that ambition can lead to one doing anything to achieve it.

xi) Electioneering: The nation appears to face significant security challenges during election seasons. According to Shafiu (Friday, January 21, 2011, p. 19 of Daily Sun), Nigerians as a whole are growing increasingly concerned about the country's security before, during, and after elections, even as prominent political figures step up their efforts to win over the populace. According to Ele (2019), past elections in Nigeria had clearly shown the biased position of some security agencies, who are supposed to be absolutely neutral and impartial in supervising the system to ensure fair play and security of life and properties. But they are obviously found to be active collaborators in disrupting the process because they succumb to government influence, collect bribes to harass and intimidate voters. These actions give rise to protests and subsequent violence by aggrieved individuals and parties. Dr. Fanon famously remarked, "Those who make peaceful change impossible make violent change inevitable." The government should take seriously the widespread worry for the country's security.

xii) Ethnic Violence: There have been reports of ethnic militias launching retaliatory attacks and releasing security in certain areas, like the Plateau and Benue States. Although there have been security breaches in other areas of the nation, such as the southwest, southeast, and south-south, northerners have always demonstrated a predisposition for violent confrontations. From the typical religious/ethnic disputes to the ethnic/religious/political confrontations in Jos from

2008 to the present, the northern states have demonstrated that personal and property security is still a long way off.

xiii) Desire to Actualize Ethnic Agenda: This is now a common occurrence in modern Nigerian society. They would like to be split apart from Nigeria because of some unsatisfactory or unfavourable circumstances in politics, the economy, development, and other areas. Movements for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) in the south, the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) in the south-east, the Boko Haram in the north, the BAKASSI BOYS, the Fulani HERDSMEN, and the VIGILANTE groups across the nation are among those we hear about. There are valid causes for the agitation of each of these organizations.

RELIGION AND INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

Given the foregoing context, it is clear that Nigerians lack clear definitions for what constitutes right and evil in terms of ethics because the country's major religious organizations hold divergent views on the subject. For example, the Christian religion completely detested the subject of violence including the taking of lives and the destruction of property, but the Muslim religion indulges in it without feeling guilty. Put another way, Christians see human life as sacred, whereas adherents of other religions regard it as sinful.

The unrest, murders, kidnappings, and disappearances of children in Nigeria today are at an unprecedented level both within and outside of schools. When one closely examines the geography of Nigeria, one finds that the northern region of the country is more affected by violence, terrorism, killings, conflicts between communities, conflicts between herders and farmers, and the Boko Haram situation. Thus, Unimna's (2018) observation that "the entire North, South, East, and West are in conflict or some other forms of insecurity" was highly appropriate. Furthermore, the peaceful coexistence of Nigeria's nationhood has been called into doubt by these security concerns.

Nonetheless, the core of national development is a multifaceted philosophy that necessitates appropriate cooperation across the board. Naturally, religion and ethics play a significant part in assessing a country's level of national security, such as Nigeria. Furthermore, we must not rush to discuss religious fanaticism and extremism as a major contributing element to the current state of insecurity in Nigeria. It is a cankerworm that has gnawed away at the foundation of national cohesion, economic expansion, and advancement.

Extremism and Fanaticism in Religion

One of the main causes of insecurity in Nigeria is extremism and fanaticism in religion. Many northern states are now dangerous for people's lives and property due to the recent and past attacks by Muslim extremists on churches and Christians in the country's northern regions (Michael, 2020). The following words demonstrate the harm these fanatics have caused. Religion has wreaked havoc on humanity, claiming countless lives and destroying countless pieces of property in its wake. It has harmed communities and postponed possible political agreements. Throughout history, religious violence has been the primary cause of the dissolution of various political orders. It has resulted in the assassinations of a number of heads

of state or government in recent years, irreversibly disrupting internal peace and prompting foreign involvement (Ogunade, 2012).

CONCLUSION

Insecurity and unchecked conflict have been created by religious violence in Nigeria. In post-colonial Nigeria, there have been multiple instances of religious violence, particularly in the north of the nation. Religious intolerance and rivalry between followers of the two major religions in Nigeria, Islam and Christianity, were the main causes of religious violence. In Nigeria, religious violence has remained hidden and has spread unchecked. Religious crises-related insecurity has recently progressed from the typical religious bloodshed to insurgency. The country's security situation has gotten worse due to the Boko Haram insurgency, which aims to establish an Islamic caliphate ruled by Sharia law in northern Nigeria. Nigeria's security is impacted by a number of variables in addition to religious violence, including open borders, the proliferation of weapons, poor government, and corruption. Nigeria's insecurity has led to the country's loss of life and property, the spread of weapons, terror, and instability.

One cannot overstate the peril of insecurity. When a country faces the challenge of insecurity, all other plans come to a standstill. With more than 200 million citizens, Nigeria cannot allow insecurity to thwart its ambitions for both political and economic progress. The nascent democracy in the nation is under danger. Nigeria has seen a rise in violent incidents lately, resulting in the loss of several lives and property. Therefore, every person of the nation should be concerned about security, and action must be taken quickly to address the problem before it renders the nation uninhabitable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

i)   Job Creation: As unemployment rises so also is the increase in violence and crime making the country insecure. This has been identified by scholars and leaders alike. Also, an insecure environment will definitely result in job loss. Government should therefore tackle and arrest youth restiveness by investing in job creation.

ii)   Provision of Proper Legal Framework: The editorial in the punch newspaper of Wednesday 13th of July 2011 gave the following summary that addresses this fact and stands as a suitable recommendation: security chiefs who met with senators at a closed session on 5th July 2011 claimed that efforts to rein in the sect had often been thwarted by the judiciary through generous granting of bails….(they) were unanimous on the need to have a judiciary integrated into action plans instituted by the security agencies. This will encourage the security operatives in their work and hasten the process of bringing to justice the perpetrators of criminal activities in the country.

iii)   Provision of Basic Needs of the Citizens: The basic goals of any civilized society are the survival of security of life and property. These basic goals are not negotiable, no matter who wins or loses in an election. Therefore, the ordinary Nigerians must be given protection at all cost through appropriate information, education, mobilization, job opportunity, pressure group formation and legal requirements in our democratic politics.

iv) **Need for Collaboration:** There is the need for collaborative effort in solving the insecurity problem in Nigeria. The government definitely cannot tackle the problem alone. The religious leaders and traditional rulers, civil society groups, and the labour union must team up with the government to find a solution to this monster that is threatening the fabric of the nations' peaceful co-existence.

v) There should be electronic surveillance of the nation's borders to check smuggling of illegal weapons into the country. This will help reduce the accessibility of weapons by terrorists and other religious bigots who go about killing people at every slight provocation.

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