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Religious Extremism and Youth Restiveness in Kaduna State: Issues and Prospects

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Abstract

This paper gives details of how religious extremism and youth restiveness intensify violent conflict in Kaduna state and beyond. The paper investigates how radical Christianity and Islamism destabilize the Nigerian states and challenge its secularity. It also examines the impact of religion extremist on youth restiveness in Kaduna state, issues and way forward. Data for this paper were drawn from both primary and secondary source, mainly from group discussion and the library. Historical-descriptive were also analyze via content analysis. Rawls theory of justice which was utilized is predicated on the notion that a good and peaceful society is characterized by a number of virtues. Justice is the first virtue of a good and peaceful society. The paper reveals that religion extremist and youth restiveness are caused by clash of different belief system, ignorance, illiteracy, unemployment, poverty, and unhealthy communication among others. These issues creates avenue for vulnerability among the warring parties. The paper recommends among others the need for religion as agent of socialization and means of social cohesion and bond to bring about moral community in Kaduna state in particular and in Nigeria at large.

Key words: Religious extremism; Youth Restiveness; Christianity and Islamism

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INTRODUCTION

Ethno-religious conflicts in Kaduna state have probably engendered far more serious violence than any other forms of communal instability. These tension and conflict is religion inclined, which is factored by extremist among the religion leaders and youth restiveness. Kaduna state encompassed the area of old Zaira (Zazzu) emirate and province. Smith identifies the two broad segments in the emirate province. These includes Hausa-Fulani group, which constitute about 60 per cent of the emirate population, occupies mainly the northern part of the province and the second segment is the pagan population of some thirty tribes. These are predominantly southern Kaduna (Smith, 1960, p.2). Consequently, the core emirate population of the youth from both old Zaira emirate and pagan population represent 51 per cent (National Bureau Statics, 2006).

Religious extremism is the expression of unjust actions taken by some believers, based on their understanding of religious teaching and scripture. Yet, the many believers regard such actions as fanatical, unacceptable and unrepresentative of their faith (Nicolas, 2017). This belief was born out of the fact that Religious extremists are willing to murder because they embrace theologies that sanction violence in the service of God. They have no sympathy for their victims, because they view those victims as enemies of God. And they readily sacrifice their own lives because they expect huge and immediate afterlife rewards in return.

Youth restiveness is a declaration embarked upon to enforce desired outcome from a constituted authority by an organized body of youths. This is marked by violence and disruption of lawful activity (Elegbeleye 2005). Youth restiveness represents the negative attitude of youths in a particular society and their involvement in crime. It was alleged that religion extremist among other factors are responsible for the negative attitude of youths in Kaduna state. For instance, Parents of Quranic students (almajirai)

were no longer committed to western education and the training of their children due to the belief that being an almajirai will give them opportunity to acquire Islamic education. Thus, children of these categories are now left to their own whims and caprices while the elders watch helplessly as they perpetrate all manner of crime.

The issue of youth restiveness in Kaduna state, however, requires domestic dialogue for the warring parties in the state. In other words, it is critical and a sensitive issue; which requires urgent government attention. In Kaduna state, religion extremist and youth restiveness raises many fears regarding freedom of worship, the clash of civilizations, and the prospect of civil war between Muslim and Christians. Shariah, for instance, is a whole way of life for Muslims. It should not be reduced to criminal law. Likewise, jihad is an internal spiritual struggle, rather than a holy war against Christians (Soares, 2007; Hefner, 2011). Consequently, the paper is not misleading when it appreciates that religion extremist is a struggle to convert Christians to Islam or Islam to Christians respectively. As for freedom of religion, it is often understood by legal practitioners as a right to follow a rite, to preach, to express religious beliefs in public and, more generally, to be allowed to build a church, a mosque, or a temple.

Data for this paper were drawn from the primary and secondary source mainly from focus groups' discussions and structure interviews with the key actors, traditional rulers, religious leaders and library. Historical-descriptive were also analyzed via content analysis. It is believed that both sources of data improve the understanding of religion extremist and youth restiveness in Kaduna state in particular and in Nigerian at large, in order to ensure a comprehensive analysis on religion extremist and youth restiveness, issue and prospects. This method benefited from the collection of academic journals, books, and government reports Gazettes, Newspaper, Nigeria dailies and websites to determine both the historical context and current reality of the paper.

The paper reveals that religion extremist and youth restiveness are caused by clash of different belief system; ignorance, illiteracy, unemployment, poverty, and unhealthy communication among others promote youth restiveness. Against this background, the paper set out to examine religion extremist and youth restiveness in Kaduna state.

REVIEW OF CONCEPTS

This part of the paper is dealing with the review of concepts, namely: religion, religion extremist, Christianity and Islam, youth, and youth restiveness.

Religion

Religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, uniting into a single moral

community all those who adhere to those belief and practices. Broom and Selznick (1960, p.400) viewed religion as a belief in God or gods. It also comprises the doctrines and the processes of worshipping the gods or God. Marshall (198, p.562) defined religion as asset of beliefs, symbol and practices, which is based on the idea of the sacred and which unites believers into socio-religious community. It means that religious belief and practices exist in every known society, from the most simple and isolated to the most complex and urban.

Tischler (1999, p.380) conceptualized religion as a system of beliefs, practices, philosophical value shared by a group of people, that it defines the sacred, helps explain life, and offer salvation from the problems of human existence.

From the various definition of religion structured above, we can define religion as the belief in the supernatural beings which cannot be approached directly because of its immaterial nature. There are several ways of communicating with supernatural being; some use deities, to approach supernatural beings, some use stone, animals, plants, rivers, cave, mountain, ancestor, moon and stars and sun to have contact with the superhuman who is mostly recognized as the creator of heaven and earth. The Christians use Jesus Christ as the medium while Muslims use prophet Muhammed as the 'go in between' to reach God. All the religion has the following attributes namely: ritual and prayer, emotion or feeling, belief and organization. These belief and practices are on the extremist because of the faulty foundation of the belief system. Edward Tylor approaches the definition as humanity who attempts to understand the soul, both theirs and others. It is belief in spiritual being (Berger, 1990; in Kirby et al, 2000, p.185). To functionalist theorist such as Durkheim, religion bonds social groups together into a moral community (Kirby et al, 2000, p.216).

Sanni writes that religion controls social behaviour, that is, behaviour that affects others and also regulates undesired behaviour (Sanni, 1999, p.34). The need to induce human beings to conform to the life styles, standard and expectations of their societies either by force or rewards is as old as society itself.

Religion Extremist

Extremism literally, means the state of being extreme or the act of advocating extreme view (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2010). The term is primarily used in a political or religious sense, to refer to an ideology that is considered to be far outside the mainstream attitudes of society (Mogahed, 2006). Religious extremism is the expression of unjust actions taken by some believers, based on their understanding of religious teaching and scripture. Yet, the many believers regard such actions as fanatical, unacceptable and unrepresentative of their faith (Nicolas, 2017). The adjective "extreme" represents negative expression of view against the moderate position of the

majority. I assume that 'religious extremism' refers to the kind of extremism which is expressed through violence. For instance, Religion is often considered synonymous with violence. For example, Al-Shabaab in East Africa and Boko Haram in Nigeria justify religion brutality (Nicolas, 2017). This is when it denies the value and humanity of others, whether those actions lead to direct harm, or simply reduces protections through legislation. This is a problem, of course, when religious freedom is lacking and governments support religious freedom against human rights and dignity of others, it condone, and even endorse discrimination. In such environment religious extremism is the outcome, therefore, threatening existence of national security.

It is true that religion is used as a tool to fuel conflict because whenever people are poor, unhappy, suffering and are in state of despair, the only light and hope comes from religion. Religious groups chose violence to improve the lot of their institutions and constituents, by resisting repression and gaining political power.

I do believe that the arrogance of some people and especially of religious extremists who regard themselves as pious messiahs and good saviours of others can easily cause them to overestimate their personal invulnerability to evil, as well as power to influence negative situational forces that surround them. To label religious extremism, it is therefore considered as the product of ignorance and compulsion that foster misunderstanding. It means religious extremists are justification for brutality, because it offers little on religious teachings, but more to do with human nature and social psychology. To escape the guilt of their atrocities, extremists try to infuse meaning into their madness by seeking creative ways to justify their actions and if possible, to even put radiance on it. For such people, quoting religious texts and authorities becomes a convenient instrument to justify their evil.

From 2010- date, various religious leaders take advantage of the growing number of unemployment, lack of quality education, children of single parent and poverty among the youths to create youth restiveness in Kaduna state and Nigeria at large. These unemployed youth, children of single parent, poverty and among others are potential for religious denomination to misled believers and nonbelievers from gaining essential truth revealed in the scriptures. Therefore, lead to the various religious conflicts in Kaduna state.

CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM

Obiadi write that Christianity was founded by Jesus of Nazareth, its origin lies in the combination of the old Jewish religion (Judaism) and the teaching of Jesus Christ (Obiadi, 1978, p.122). Christian is based principally on the New Testament and relevant portion of Old Testament. The Christian believes that there is only one God the creator of heaven and earth, both visible and invisible and

that there are three persons in this one God. Christianity believes that god is one love and that Jesus sermons in the bible show us how to live a good Christian's life as servant of God.

The Christians also believe in the last judgment which will determine where one should go after death, heaven or hell. Christians all agree that some kind of worship is an essential part of Christianity. Better still, Islam is a religion founded by Prophet Muhammad. Islam literally means surrender (Obiadi, 1978, p.124). So Islam as a religion summarily means surrender to the will of Allah. Allah is regarded as the only God, the creator and the sustainer of the world. Giddens (1993, p.461) observes that Islam is the second largest religion in the world, overlap with those of Christianity. Islam is derives from the teaching of Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century A.D.

Muslims believe in the five pillars of Islam which are the basic beliefs and the essential religions duties of those who adhere to Islamism. The five pillars of Islam is that there is no God but Allah and Prophet Muhammad is the sole messenger. The second is to pray five times daily, the third pillar is fasting during the month of Ramadan. The fourth pillar is zakat to give arms to the poor and the fifth pillar is to embarking on a pilgrimage to Mecca if you have the means.

Like Christianity, the Muslims believe in the eternity. The both believe that the righteous one will go to paradise and the unrighteous will go to hell fire when they die. The both believe in the last judgment. Like the Christians too, Muslims believe that some kind of worship is essential part of Islam.

It was alleged that spread of Islam unlike Christianity was not peaceful. This is factored by extremist among the Muslims. In fact, Obiade (1978) observes that the spread of across the globe is by use of force. His follower waged (Jihad) holy wars against non believers and brought them under control. Today, this understanding was exercise among the Muslim faithfully making practice of Christianity difficult in the northern Nigeria. This is because Islam was embrace after traditional religion in the north.

Youth

The National Youth Development Policy (2001) defines youth as people aged 18-35. They constitute about 40 percent of the more than 140 million people of Nigeria. The total population of youth between 10 and 24 in Nigeria was 45.4 million in 2006, which is 34 percent of the total population. Youth occupy a prominent place in any society. Apart from being the owners and leaders of tomorrow, they outnumber the middle-aged and the aged (Onyekpe, 2007). Besides numerical superiority, youth have energy and ideas that are society's great potentials (Onyekpe, 2007). The National Youth Development Policy (2001, p.1) asserts that:

Youth are the foundation of a society. Their energies, inventiveness, character and orientation define the pace of development and security of a nation. Through their creative talents and labour power, a nation makes giant strides in economic development and socio-political attainments. In their dreams and hopes, a nation finds her motivation; on their energies, she builds her vitality and purpose.

The statement above acknowledges the role of the youth in the peace and security of a nation. As the most active segment of any society, youth are the major determiners of peace and stability of a nation. Conversely, the degree of disorderliness and instability in society is also determined in part by youth. The United Nations General Assembly and World Bank cited in Adewuyi (2008) defined the youth as people between ages 15 to 24 years. In Nigeria, the people within the age limit of 30 years are considered as youths hence they are allowed to participate in the National Youth Service Scheme.

Youth Restiveness

Elegbeleye (2005) writes that youth restiveness is a declaration embarked upon to enforce desired outcome from a constituted authority by an organized body of youths. It is marked by violence and disruption of lawful activity. Chikuezi (2009) defined youth restiveness as a combination of actions that runs contrary to accepted societal norms and standard. The Advanced Learner Dictionary (1999) observes that restiveness is the inability to stay still or unwilling to be controlled, especially because of dissatisfaction. So far, Youth restiveness has unspoken inclusive dimension in all the communities around major cities in Kaduna state where the youths are unsatisfied with government policies or where religion extremist misled believers and nonbelievers from gaining essential truth revealed in the scriptures to instill negative thought and capture restiveness in youth. Similarly, the miss- world beauty pageant held in 2002, in Kaduna state led to a serious religion crisis. This is because the youth were misinformed on the news from Nigeria dailies which triggers youth restiveness in the state.

On the other hand, when the energy is negatively channeled, restiveness and its resultant effects are likely to be felt. Chika and Onyene (2010) observed that to be restive is to be unable to stay still, or unwilling to be controlled especially because one is bored or not satisfied with certain decisions, changed or existing laws considered to be unfavourable. Youth restiveness involves the combination of actions, conducts and behaviour which constitutes unwholesome, socially unacceptable behaviour exhibited by youths in the society.

Youth restiveness has been a device used by the youth to get what they want from the relevant authority. Chika and Onyene (2010) asserted that youth resistance to conditions, issues and unwelcomed leadership regimes dates back to 1934 when Herbert Macaulay floated a political party to kick against dependency with fellow

elite youths that had contact with the West.

A number of studies have identified many factors responsible for the negative attitude of youth's restiveness in Kaduna state. Parents are no longer committed to the training of their children due to frantic rush to make money and make ends meet. Children are now left to their own whims and caprices while the elders watch helplessly as youths perpetrate all manner of crime. Apart from poor parental care for their children nowadays, influence of religion extremist, the education system has failed. Peer group influence cannot be discounted. Our youths are neck-deep in joining secret cults, and smoking, drinking, arm robbery, kidnapping, and arm insurgency. This is activities prominent in Kaduna state and beyond.

Elegbeleye (2005) identifies three major factors that cause youth restiveness in Nigeria. These include the peer motivated excitement of being a student, the xenophobic pursuit of patriotic ideas, and perceived victimization arising from economic exploitation. Better still, Ofem and Ajayi (2008) identified lack of humanitarian and social welfare, lack of good governance, corrupt practices of government officials, inadequate training program, unemployment, inadequate recreational facilities, lack of quality education, and poverty as the basic reasons for incessant youth restiveness.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for this paper is theory of justice by John Rawls. John Rawls a contemporary American philosopher, in his celebrated work "theory of justice. This proponent has pointed out that a good society is characterized by a number of virtues. Justice is the first virtues of a good society (Rawls, 1971). Those who argue that justice should not be allowed to come in the way of social advancement, runs the risk of causing anti social behaviour in the society. Perhaps, if the various religious denominations practice in Nigeria is not regulated by law, people take advantage of such and mislead the youth who are now left to their own whims and caprices while the elders watch helplessly as they perpetrate all manner of crime.

Rawls in Theory of Justice revived the social contract tradition of John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Rawls defends the theory he calls 'justice as fairness'.

Justice as fairness is primarily concerned with 'the way in which major social institutions distribute fundamental rights, duties and determine the division of advantages from social cooperation' (Rawls, 2001, p.6). As such, justice as fairness is a theory designed to apply to what Rawls calls the 'basic structure': the political, social and economic institutions of society. It provides a standard idea in judging the political constitution of society, social arrangements and the principal economic. The just society, according to justice as fairness, is one governed by the three principles of justice. These include:

- Principle of equal basic liberties, i.e. equal right

to most extensive liberty compatible to with similar liberty of other (Rawls, 1971, p.220). This postulates that nobody's freedom will be sacrificed for the sake of any other benefit. Freedom in this sense implies equal right to freedom of expression, worship, and equality before the law, etc.

- Principle of fair equality of opportunity. For example, social inequalities are to satisfy two conditions, regarding acquiring a particular office and position. And these offices and positions are meant to be open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity.
- Difference in the principle implies that any departure from equal distribution of the primary goods can be justified only when it could be proved to bring greatest benefit of the least-advantaged members of society (Rawls; 1971, p.72). In other words, a special reward for extraordinary effort to any individual can be treated as just if it results in the greatest benefit to the least privileged.

The above principles provides framework to explains a just society, which maintained a social order; despite its social, religion and political differences. The principle of justice therefore, creates free and equal persons, personal liberties and equal opportunity that benefit the less advantaged members of society. This also guarantees freedom of worship among the various religious denomination in Kaduna state and Nigeria at large.

Rawls (1971) argued that justice is what frees and equal person would agree to as basic term of social cooperation in condition that is fair for this purpose. The idea he referred justice as fairness interprets principles of well-ordered societies. A society that is effectively regulated by a public conception of justice; his member to understand and give allegiance to the public conception of justice and its member should share common knowledge among all members of the society. If society strictly adherent to these principles, religion activities will be regulated to curtail extremism in the religion circle. Otherwise it lies beyond our power to control freedom of worship, which is entrenched in the constitution of liberal democratic society (Rawls, 1971, p. 220).

The conception of justice comprises a set of right which includes freedom of religion, freedom of conscience, and freedom of association, freedom of expression, etc. All of this of course, creates a standard to regulate extremism and youth restiveness in this part of the country. Rawls writes that the main focus of justice is the basic structure of society or more exactly, the way in which the social institutions distribute fundamental right and duties determine the division of advantages from such social cooperation (Rawls, 1971, p.218). If for instance, the rule of law which is the basic substance to which religion liberty proposes freedom of worship and practice, this right dislodge the supremacy of a particular religion over another; as such denied extremism among religious

that could degenerate into violence. From this background we understand that constitution protects the legal right of various religious denominations, and remove disparity exhibit by religion extremist in Nigeria.

Rawls defined society as an association of people who cooperate to improve their situation and agreed on certain rule and practice, which has fair system of cooperation among communities. Therefore, justice is the set of rules accepted by people who lives together in the society. These sets of people are reasonable citizens. Citizens are reasonable when, viewing one another as free and equal in a system of cooperation over generations, they are prepared to offer one another fair terms of social cooperation and they agree to act on those terms, even at the cost of their own interests in particular situations, provided that others also accept those terms. For those terms to be fair terms citizens offering them must reasonably and those citizens to whom they are offered might also reasonably accept them. In fact, they must be able to do this as free and equal, and not to fulfill religion and social pressure (Rawls, 1996, pp.49-54).

Rawls Theory of Justice reflects the principle of justice, which addresses issue of public culture and constitutionalism. The equal liberty principle reflects the idea of fundamental human rights such as freedom of worship, etc.

Fair equality of opportunity reflects the ideal society in which social class (especially the youth) and ethnic interest, which satisfied public morality and to abide the existing laws. These open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity.

The difference principle reflect the ideas that will limit youth restiveness as means of expressing their grievances , so that the acts of violence and lawlessness, including things like hostage-taking of prominent citizens, arms insurgence, cultism and arms robbery should regulated to bring about a fair deal for various religion practice . This development is about principles of justice that removed unequal basic structure from the society by creating enable environment where various groups with different religion ideology, can to seek redress. On this note, equal liberty and fair equality of opportunity presupposes a mechanism for maintenance law and order in Kaduna and Nigeria at large.

To conclude this part of the argument people must agree that institutions are just if there is no arbitrary distinction between people in exercising their fundamental human right. And if there are, at least try to find a balance between competing claims because justice is an essential way of ensuring fairness. Hence, Justice as fairness attempts to account for basic right and liberty.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The paper identified illiteracy, unequal distribution of natural resources, poor child upbringing, unemployment,

poverty among others were the causes of youth restiveness. Illiteracy among Nigerian youths has been a thing of concern to many citizens. Some religion leaders take advantage of ignorance among Nigerian youths to use religion as tools to fuel conflict between Christians and Islam. In other words, religion extremist have in mind the people who are poor, unhappy, suffering and in state of despair, to light up their hope. Perhaps, it's a means to win and mobilizing communities of believers and non-believers regardless their tribes and language. Whereas, knowledge acquired through various religious leaders most often reduce the value of patriotism and healthy lifestyles. National Population Bureau (2006) observes that between 2000 and 2004 about 30% of Nigerian youths were not enrolled in secondary schools. Hence, the findings agree with Onekpe (2007) assertion that most youths that did not have access to formal education are talks for restiveness.

Chukwumeka and Aghara (2010) agree that incidence of marginalization, denial of social right, and lack of Government presence in some parts of Nigeria are reasons for youth restiveness. For example, southern Kaduna was predominantly Christians who felt marginalized by the political elite in the northern Kaduna. Thus, the furious youths among southern Kaduna use all sorts of restiveness to express they grievance under the auspices of religion violence. Ofem and Ajayi (2008) also writes that youth restiveness is associated with lack of compassionate promoted by religion extremist, lack of good governance, unemployment and lack of quality education. These indications are the causes of youth restiveness that are multifaceted in nature. It therefore means that curbing youth restiveness of this nature in Nigeria required a multidimensional approach.

The paper also identified upsurge of social vices and crimes (armed robbery, hostage, abduction) among others and destruction of lives and properties. Incidences of such seem to be on the increase in our society in recent years. These have also been linked with youths either from Nigeria or neighbouring. The incessant harassment of traders in Kaduna central market and the every-day-clash between Christians and Muslim in Jos are outcomes of youth restiveness in Nigeria.

Increase in unemployment rate is associated with high rate of youth restiveness that discourages investors. Zakaria (2006) agrees that youth restiveness increases youth unemployment because most of the local and foreign investors were discourage from investment in the conflicts prone environment as it is in the case of Kaduna state. He however asserted that the absence of job opportunities in developing countries like Nigeria is responsible for youth restiveness with disastrous consequences.

Enlightenment campaigns against youth restiveness are also important. During this period relevant information is disseminated to the citizens. This fact was collaborated

by Ifidon and Ahiauzu (2006) who maintained that information is a structured data that causes a human mind to change its opinion about the current state of real world and contribute to a reduction in the uncertainty of the state of the system. Religion is therefore is a change agent that will assist the youths to change their misconceived ideas and opinions, rather than on the contrary.

CONCLUSION

This paper predicts violent that will arise from religious extremism, especially those that emphasize on militant theology. This paper offers unique analyses that explain persistent demand for religion and the different types of religious that naturally arise. Thus, various religious denominations became skillful at producing good spiritual materials to perfect their ideology and religious violence in Kaduna state. For example, where governments and economies function poorly, the religion extremist often become major suppliers of social services, political action, and tendency to display might. Their success as providers is much more due to the advantages of their organizational structure than it is to their theology. Religious militancy and youth restiveness are effectively controlled through a combination of divers teaching that foster violence, religious competition, improve social services in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATION

The paper recommends a guideline for religious practice in Nigeria and public enlightenment campaign for children of Single parents. Parents too should make child education their priority; Political leaders at various levels of governance put law in place to criminalize youth restiveness in Nigeria.

Government should adopt proactive poverty alleviation programs rather than pay lip service to the issue of masses welfare; also leaders should strengthen their roles and responsibilities in addressing societal ills and problems; especially the problems of tribalism, nepotism, selective prosecution, sectionalism, and marginalization in the country.

Government should prevent rather oversees the external aid or funds that is use to boost the extremism of sectarian groups, and not merely by placing more resources in the hands of fanatical leaders. The Nigeria government should reform its weak legal institutions, to meet the contemporary.

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