

## **RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS IN NIGERIA AND THEIR IMPACTS ON SOCIAL LIFE**

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**ABSTRACT:** *Our thinking, feeling and relation with other people impact our belief system. in some societies religious conflicts are not more common but there are some countries where these religious conflicts are that much powerful that they even effect the lives of the people in the society. It is also common practice that usually these type of conflicts arises in the developing and under-developing counties. Developing countries have some other issues to fight on. As far as Nigeria is concerned, this is the country where this conflict is more powerful than any other concept. This paper is about the religious conflicts of the people in Nigeria and its impact on their social lives.*

**KEYWORDS:** Religion, Social Life, Muslims, Christians, Sharia Law

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In Nigeria mostly there are two types of religions, Islam and Christianity. Islam started from Arab and eventually spread throughout the world. When Arab merchants entered in Kanem Borno Empire in nineteenth century then it result in Jihad. So jihad results in the speedily spreading of Islam especially in Northern part of Nigeria. Then gradually it also spread in Southern part of the country mostly in Eastern region of the country. Islam is a religion which provide complete code of conduct for every human being and in Islam perspective all the Muslims are part of Islamic Ummah. Muslims are related to each other as being Ummah, either they are in any part of the word. But like every religion extremists in Islam are destroying the beauty of Islamic religion. People from both religions are not in state of accepting each other, Muslim fanatics consider that Nigeria must be a Islamic State and the other part consider that it must be Christian State. Nigeria is mainly consist of Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa tribes. And these tribes also have strong effect on the social life as well. In Northern part Hausa people have more influence than any other tribe and they considered themselves more strong practicing Muslims than any other tribe. But their practicing style results in misconception about Islam in Eastern part.

### **Growth Of Ethno Religious Conflict and British:**

Colonial masters play a vital role in the growth of ethno religious conflicts, these colonial masters brought the Christianity with them and try to penetrate the western values in the system of Nigeria. And try to produce the ethnic groups conflicts. And British also used this to exploit the traditional culture of Nigeria. British, as usual use their divide and rule policy to sow the seed of conflicts on the basis of religious conflicts among the people in Nigeria. Another achievement at the part of British people was division of Northern and Southern Part of the basis of ethnic groups and they done this under the name of native right ordinance in 1910.

Towns that have experienced some of the notable religious conflicts in the post-independence era include; Maitatsine riots in Bulumkutu (1982); Maitatsine riots in Jimeta (1984); Kano(Maitatsine-1980,1982, 1987, 1990, 1995) Maitatsine riots in Gombe (1985,1991); Illorin religious conflict (1986); Jalingo (1992, 2009); Shagamu (1999); Kafanchan (1987); Tafawa Balewa (1991, 1995,2001); Zangon-Kataf (1992); Tiv-Jukun and Tiv-Kuteb (1992-93); Potiskum (1994, 2009) Kuteb-Chamba (1997-1998); Igbirra-Bassa (1986-2000);Moon-Eclipse crisis in Borno (1996); Kaduna (Maitatsine riots in Rigassa 1982, 1992, 2000) Tiv and Others in Nassarawa (2001); Jos (1994,2000, 2001-2003,2008, 2009,2010); Ikulu-Bajju (2001); Yelwa-Shandam (2002,2004); Mangu-Bokkos (1992-1995); Bukuru-Gyero (1997); Maiduguri (2006,2009) Iggah-Oyikwa (2002); Kano(2004); Numan (2004); Azare (2001); Bauchi (2010); Ibadan(2010), Wukari (2010).

Ode John has done a study which presented the argument on how ethno-religious conflict affects the Igbo man in the Nigerian nation. In his book *C.A.N. My Foot: The Reckless Utterance of a Wilful President*, he described the sorry plight of the Igbo people in Nigeria; each time ethnicity, power politics and religious frenzy combines to set a part of the country ablaze. He argued that in Nigeria, if a religious conflict starts anywhere, the Igbo man will in one way or the other be made to bear an extra portion of the brunt of the conflict. If he manages to escape alive, his petrol station, his shop and his home will be burnt down or his life and all of them will go. He argued that if a strong wind tears the pages of the Holy Koran apart and carries them away in Kano, Kaduna or Bauchi, it is the Igbo man that has desecrated the holy book. If they manage to escape alive, their petrol stations, their Churches, their shops and their homes will be burnt down or their lives and all of them will go.

It is also being considered that Christians and Muslims will not forget their losses of their properties and lives of their loved ones who refused to join the Boko Haram's concept of Islam during his activities in 2009 in the area of Maiduguri and Borno State. So there is no distinction in actual between the loss of lives of Muslims and Christians. But in fact the ground realities are different. The actual situation is that both Muslims and Christians are losing their properties and lives, but result is increasing the feeling of hatredness among both religions. And it result nothing but the tension and limited social activities, lower economic growth, lack of education and lack of social interaction and most important is loses of innocent people.



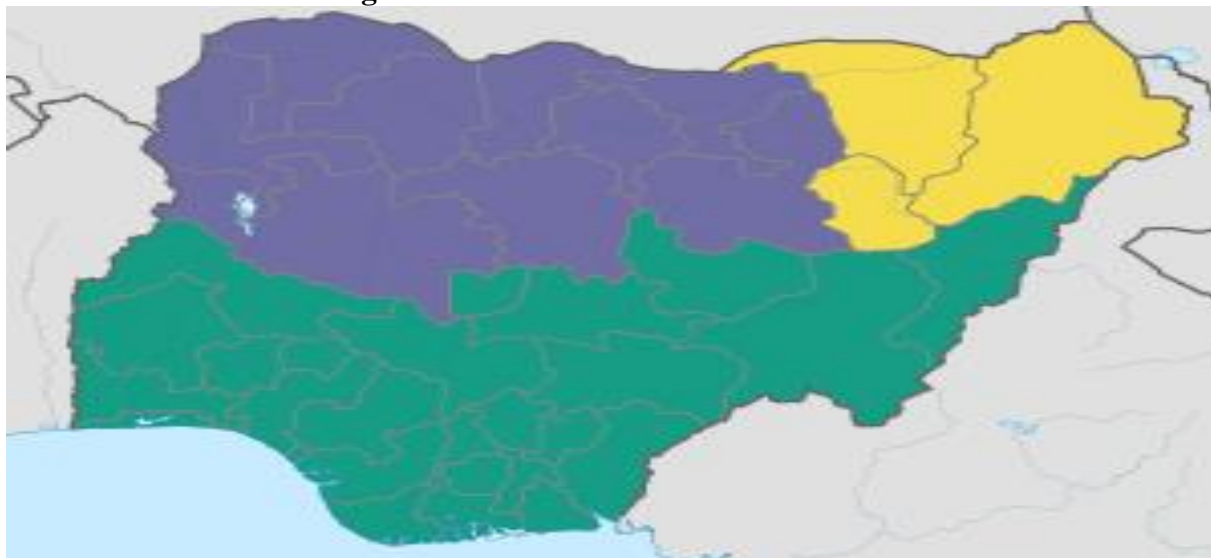
Nigerian Army forces man a checkpoint to protect Sunday Christian prayer services in Sokoto, Nigeria on April 14, 2013, where less than 5 percent of the population is Christian. (Ed Kashi/VII/GlobalPost)

As West Africa's most powerful pre-colonial state, it is a source of great pride. But for some, its defeat by the British in 1903 and subsequent dealings with colonial and post-colonial states mean the caliphate is tarnished with the corrupting influence of secular political power. The impact of colonial rule was paradoxical. While policies of indirect rule allowed traditional authorities, principally the Sultan of Sokoto, to continue to expand their power, that power was also circumscribed by the British.

It is also important thing is that this religious misconception is increasing day by day. And specially the concept of indigene is the main conflict inside the country. As this concept is the source of reinforcement people among different areas.

As far as Christians in Nigeria are concerned, according to their religion they are not allowed to marry more than one women. But in Nigeria their Churches allowed them to marry more than one women to increase the population and number of people as well. And in the case of Muslims and especially in Northern part they also marry more than one women. So this is another fact of the social aspect of their lives and competition related to the size of population in.

### Sharia Law and Nigeria:



Status of sharia in Nigeria (2008):<sup>[16]</sup>

Sharia applies in full, including criminal law, Sharia applies only in personal status issues

No sharia

In the North of the country are numerous Muslim groups, which want to introduce shari'ah in the whole country. In the states of the North these demands have been executed in 1999 and 2001.

In the following 9 states the Sharia has full validity.

- Zamfara (approved by parliament September 1999, in effect 27 January 2000)
- Kano (21 June 2000)
- Sokoto
- Katsina
- Bauchi (June, 2001)
- Borno
- Jigawa
- Kebbi
- Yobe

In the following states the sharia is valid for areas with a mainly Muslim population:

- Kaduna
- Niger (13 January 2000)
- Gombe

### CONCLUSION

If conflicts between Muslims and Christians remains the same then definitely its effect will continue not only lives of people but also on the economic growth, country's reputation at international level, political, social and economic instability. which will lead Nigeria to more decline and more worst. There is need to create awareness among the Muslim and Christians to

bear each other and show some responsibility towards their country and they system must also be changed which also create more instability among the lives of people.

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