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THE POLITICAL OUTCOMES OF ETHNICITY AND RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The marauding of ethno-religion cleavages have become the pervading situations in all corners in Nigeria political system to the extent that heats from it, are killing the political development in Nigeria. This has a serious impact on peaceful human-coexistence, leadership positions, employment opportunities, nationality, political party formation, investment, and serial unending conflicts arising from these ethno-religious cleavages in Nigeria. The totality of national development is premised on regional, tribal and ethnic development of communities arising from unlit oneness of the central state. The paper used content analyses to explain the impacts of ethno-religious cleavages on Nigerian political development. The paper recommended among others for tolerance among various ethnic and religious cleavages in Nigeria for peaceful human co-existence.

Keywords: Ethnicity, Religion, Intolerance, Political outcome, and Development.

INTRODUCTION

Ethnicity and religion identity is one of the major banes to political development in Nigeria. Every activity in Nigeria is given ethno-religious outlook. According to Thomson (2007), ethnic and religious mobilization can often be found at the heart of political competition. As with all social cleavages; fault lines within societies form along these identities, creating opposing interests. These differences of interest, in turn, offer themselves to potential or occasionally violent, conflict.

There are over 250 ethnic groups in Nigeria and the major ones are Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa with each ethnic group attached to each religion in their region; North (predominantly Muslim), South West (co-mixed of Christians and Muslim) and South East (predominantly Christians). It is however very disturbing that Nigerians have become slaves to their ethnic origins and religious affiliations instead of harnessing these diversities towards national development. Nigerians are fanatics when it comes to ethnicity and religious issues (Adeolu, 2017). It is therefore not surprising for a Nigerian to get angry because he/she is wrongly associated with another group, tribe and religion. This is just true reflection of a Nigeria federal state.

Before the colonial invasion, the various ethnic groups in Nigeria were inter-dependent but they did not constitute themselves into one society. It was in 1914 that they were amalgamated. Nigeria is a British creation by uniting the various entities into a single country called the federal republic of Nigeria. Some Nigerians are of the view that, Nigeria is a forced marriage which did not receive the approval of the couples involved (Adeolu, 2017). Awolowo (1982) opined that, Nigeria is not a nation; it is a mere geographical expression. To Awolowo (1982), there are no 'Nigerians' in the same sense as there are 'English', 'Welsh' or 'French'. The word 'Nigerian' is merely a distinctive appellation to distinguish those who live within the boundaries of Nigeria and those who do not. The co-existence of these ethnic and religious groups within the same polity has frequently led to the description of Nigeria as an accident of history (Adeolu, 2017). This is the reason that, whatever is done in Nigeria always has an ethnic undertone be it, politics, employment and provision of social amenities and which have serial consequences. Tribal affiliations are always very strong and visible. This often resulted to violent conflicts and crises among various ethnic groups in Nigeria resulting from allegiance to one's ethnic group and this has not worked well for the development of the country.

In the light of this, the paper deals with the analysis of the impacts of ethno-religion identity in Nigeria political development and how ethno-religious crises affect national development.

Theoretical Framework

Conflict theory is a social phenomenon used to analyze the general structure of a society arising from the tension of social, political and economic inequalities among individual or groups in the society. The basic elements of conflict theory were set out by Karl Marx and Max Weber (Wallace and Wolf, 1991).

Studies have shown different notions and assumptions of conflict in the society, among them were the written by Collins and Sanderson (1975) and Wallace and Wolf (1991) which are: That, there are certain “goods” namely wealth, status, positions, power, prestige, resources, that people will pursue in all societies and that people dislike being ordered around and they always do to their best to avoid it. That, he assumes that, people have certain basic interest wherever they live and that will not act accordingly. The second assumption place emphasis on power as the core social relationship. Conflict theorists always view power not only as source of conflict but also an essentially coercive. This analysis leads in turn to concern with distribution of resources among varying groups in the society which give people more or less power. The third assumption of conflict theory holds that, the values and ideas are the major weapons used by different groups to advance their own ends rather than as a means of defining a whole society’s identity and goals.

It is necessary to know that, conflict is inevitable among various groups, social structures and organizations because of group interest and the imbalance in the resources. Therefore, by tracing social behavior back to group interest and purposive way they pursue them, it shows changes may actually occur within the society (Wallace and Wolf, 1991; Collins and Sander, 1975). Similarly, According to Wallace and Wolf (1991), conflict theory tends to place more emphasis on how ideas or goals in a given group often jeopardize other ideas or goals of the other group which are essentially criticize to undermine the current order of the society. Although, conflict theory provides mechanism of changes, it does not provide an entire satisfactory account of it. This is because, conflict theory is better at showing how power, status, position, and resources are competing for in the first place among group in the society.

It is obvious that, most of the religious and ethnic indifferences in Nigeria are as a result of unequal and unquenchable desires for power, status, wealth, resources and positions among various religious and ethnic group elites to achieve their desires. The desires are not being defined among various groupings in Nigeria rather the goals are being given intra-group definition and refining. Therefore, individual elite within the group tends to use his/her innate desire to pursue group goals thereby causing conflicts and intolerance among groups where there are conflict of interests among different ethnic groups.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many scholars have documented the influence of politics on ethno-religious relation in Nigeria. Historically, the study by Tsolaye (2015) contends that, Nigeria is a multi-ethnic nation with diverse cultural groups that are about three hundred in number. Nigeria is also seen today as one of the largest black nation and most populated country in Africa with a population of about 160 million people in African continent. Rather than harnessing our diversities towards viable national development, we have become slaves to our ethnic and religious origins to which our allegiance is largely focused at the detriment of nation building. Fanatical ethnic and religious

consciousness has resulted into ethnic prejudice and mistrust, religious and political problems, and socio-cultural conflicts, these vices have pervaded all spheres of life in Nigeria, be it employment, education, religion and admission into federal Institutions. Interfaced with religion, states and class, ethnicity is a potent reality in the Nigerian federal equation.

Barack Obama in his speech during African Summit in South African, opined that, a politics that is based solely on tribe, religion and ethnicity is a politics that is doomed to tear a country apart (Adeolu, 2017). Barack Obama tends to see the politics of America beyond the realm of ethnic loyalty and divisional politics of regionalism, rather as a politics that is built on utmost desire for the national development. However, as different from America politics, Nigeria political scene is characterized with much intolerance due to the inherent heterogeneous society and this has further led to the idea of political imbalances among various ethno-regionalisms in Nigeria.

Omilusi (2015) in his study situated the problem of Nigerian political system along the divisions of ethnic, class and religious lines. Deliberate manipulation of these primordial identity symbols to gain political advantage in an electoral contest has been a recurring phenomenon of Nigerian politics since independence in 1960. State apparatus has always been used by rational self-interested leaders to amass power, control social values, and distribute resources based on differentiated ethnic group support. As a matter of fact Nigerian elites often develop patron-client relations based on ethnic or regional commonalities and religion cleavages.

Ojo (2010) in his study, "A survey of ethno-Religious Crisis in Nigeria and its Implications for Democracy" highlights a number of factors responsible for the ethno-religious malady which ranges from weak state status of Nigeria to corruption cum religious intolerance and problematic citizenship as the bane of the polity. However, other factor like elitism, poverty and distortions were not mentioned by Ojo (2010) as the major causes of ethno-religious malady in Nigeria and their effects on the political system.

A study by Nwabueze (2004) maintained that, the status quo as far as it is concerned on ethnicity and religious intolerance in Africa was a result of manipulation of political elite which is the *raison d'être* for their continue exploitation of the masses to satisfy their selfish interest; the preservation of the wealth, property, comforts and the privileged positions of the ruling elites. Nwabueze believed that, African elites particularly the ruling elites are so tribalistic, clannish and nepotism on a much more eminent and dangerous degree than the unfettered masses and they are so more for the motives of personal advantage than for any benefit it brings to their village, clan or tribe. Nwabueze (2004) did not only situate the problem of ethnic and religious identity on colonialism but more also the elitism is which he called the upshot of colonialism.

Ibrahim (2003) examines the issue of ethno-religion identity in Nigeria as more prevalent with regional ethnicity and religion. He observed that, ethnic-regional identities have equally become problematic in Nigeria because they have been

associated with perceptions of discrimination and inability of some groups to exercise certain rights and civil liberties. The main issues have been the control of political power in general, and specifically, control of the armed forces, the judiciary and the bureaucracy. There is also the question of the control of economic power and resources (Ibrahim, 2003). That is, the northern part of the country predominantly Hausa/ Fulani ethnic group mostly they are Muslims proving lordship over the rest of the ethnic group in the southern part of Nigeria which are mostly Christians.

Ibrahim's was collaborated the article written by Isaac (2014), he observed that, the northern region elites particularly championed a policy of regionalism, which was essentially aimed at weakening the center and strengthening the regions, the objective of which was to promote peculiar regional tendencies, particularly adherence to Islamic law. In spite of the relative regional autonomy, the legal system was unified and cast in a constitutional framework which gave pre-eminence to the secular legal order, while subjecting all other laws to the unified control of the secular federal Supreme Court and, ultimately, the Crown.

Also, situating the causes of ethno-religious identity formation, Graft (1983) in his study "African Elite Theories and Nigeria Elites Consolidation: A Political Economy Analysis" argues that, manipulation and exploitation of ethnicity became a veritable tool of political contest by the political elites. Thus, a symbiotic relationship develops between politicians who wish to achieve their own positions, and their 'people', who fear political domination and economic exploitation by a culturally distinct group allegedly organized for themselves. A politician thus gains a tribal power by successfully manipulating the appropriate cultural symbols and by articulating and advancing his peoples collective and individual aspiration (which he himself probably helped to arouse) (Graft 1983). Graft situated the Nigeria polity in the realm of manipulation of ethnic group by the political elites of each ethnic group, however, despite Graft examined the underlined strategic impacts of ethno-religious identity to Nigeria political development.

Most of the studies reviewed on ethnicity and religious identity in Nigeria underpinned the influence of elites in the vituperation of ethno-religious crisis in Nigeria. Other studies looked inwards to political factors, poverty, greediness and manipulation of primordial identities, but more importantly, the review of the relevant literature on ethnicity and religious identity by scholars will help us to understand the deadly nature of the infections (ethno-religious cleavages) and its impacts to the nation's political development. Hence, this study will concentrate on overall impacts of ethno-religious identity on Nigeria's political development.

Impacts of Ethnicity and Religion Identity on Nigeria Political Development

One of the greatest impacts of ethnicity and religious cleavages in Nigeria is the uses of ethno-religious identity to perpetrate evil in the society. Isiaka (2006) argues that, the most worrisome and critical effects of ethno-religious cleavages in Nigeria is the new brands of unleashed political forces, which suggest that each of the groups must struggle for what rightly belongs to it, underlies the emergence of ethnic nationality/identity movements, otherwise known as the ethnic militia movements.

Ethnic militia movement on the other hand is the extreme form of ethnic agitation for self-determination as various ethnic groups assume militant posture and gradually metamorphosed into militia groups each of which bear an ethnic identity and purport to act as the machinery through which the desires of its people are sought to be realized (Isiaka, 2006). The common features of these ethnically inspired movements are, the “resort to violence, preponderance of youth membership, ethnic identity affiliations, and that they are mainly popular movements demanding change over the status quo (Agbu, 2002).

The Independent people of Biafra (IPOB), The Movement for the Emancipation of Niger/Delta (MEND), Fulani Herdsmen, Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Arewa Consultative Forum, Boko Haram and Oduduwa Grand Alliance for Independence (OGAFI) are at present the major deadly ethno-religious identities fighting not only for resources control but more also for the independent of their ethnic group. All these ethno-religious groups are putting threats to the peaceful co-existence of Nigeria as well clamoring for self-independence which hamper unity and oneness of the Nigeria state and if care is not taking in Nigeria, this can either result to second civil war as experienced in 1967-70 or splitting the country to different independent nations.

There is also lack of political ideology and good leadership. Political parties in Nigeria are formed based on ethnic and religious affiliation. As a result, political parties in Nigeria lack political ideology because party is more affiliated to ethnic-based foundation and their ideology is towards the ethnic or tribal organization. Ethnic and religious factors have therefore emerged today as perhaps the most defining factors to contest for leadership positions in the country. As a result; there are incidences whereby leaders are produced with very narrow and parochial perception of their constituencies. In many cases, they even emerged just based on the endorsements of sections and few members. Even the practice of campaigns using posters, handbills and media hardly takes place, and if it does, it is reduced to mere symbolism. It is just simply a case of arrogance and contemptuous disrespect of the support of other sections and citizens other than so-called birth places, local governments, senatorial districts, states and geo-political zones (Adeline and Eme, 2015). According to Babatola (2015), a major contributing factor to this reality could be attributed to apparent lack of unity occasioned by ethnic politics and religion dichotomy.

Ethnic politics started during the colonial era and it has had cumulative effects on the third and fourth republics. For instance, in the first Republic, the Action Group (AG) as a party metamorphosed from a Yoruba Cultural Association that is Egbe Omo Oduduwa; the National Council of Nigeria Citizens (NCNC) intimately linked with the Igbo Union and Northern Peoples ‘Congress (NPC) was an offshoot of Jamiyyar Arewa. The leadership of these parties was drawn along ethnic cleavages with their ethnic colorations. The Action Congress (A.C) was led by late Chief Obafemi Awolowo, a Yoruba and a Christian; the NCNC was headed by late Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe; an Igbo, also a Christian while the NPC was coordinated and led by Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto, a Fulani and a Muslim (Babatola, 2015).

All these were products of the colonial administrative arrangement that propelled ethnic politics in that it divided Nigeria into three regions for effective administration; that is, West – Yoruba, North – Hausa/Fulani and East – Igbo. Since then, the political process in Nigeria followed ethnic and geographic division. This affected the type and quality of constitution and leadership put in place by different government since independence (Owoeye and Amusan, 1999).

The 1966 coup d'état was believed to be ethnically inspired and cost the North almost all its seasoned political leaderships as the death of the Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, and others would prove. This coup was followed by a counter coup by young Hausa/Fulani officers in July 1966 which ultimately led to the death of the head of state, General Aguiyi Ironsi. This division reflects the three major ethnic groups in the country. In Aborted Third Republic, formation of political parties of SDP (Social Democratic Party) and NRC (National Republican Convention) were mainly based on religious grouping. Sheikh Abubakar in October 1987 could be used to sustain this postulation. He said: "The two-party system of government will not only be south against North but also Islam against Christianity. Once you are a Moslem, you cannot accept to choose non-Muslims to be your leader. If Christians do not accept Muslims as their leader, then we have to divide the country.; Nigerian unity is to try to convert Christians and non-Muslims (to Islam) until other realign become minority and they will not affect our society" (Babatola, 2015).

Job racketing and promotion is also part of the contributing impact of ethnocentrism and religious intolerance in Nigeria: Due to the influx of ethnicity and religion mobilization into the politics and principle, it has accelerated the promotion of incompetent and ineffective civil servants, military, paramilitary officers, even top government functionaries. Omilusi (2015) avers the manifestation of ethnic and religious identity in daily life throughout the country. He argues that, all official papers and documents identify a person's place of birth and also religious group. Any forms that a person needs to fill out (e.g., applying for a job, driver's permit or university admission, opening a bank account, leasing a home, et cetera) requires them to indicate their place of birth, not where they currently live, regardless of how long they have lived there. From the person's birthplace information, assumptions are made about that person's ethnicity and religion, which then directly impacts their quality of life. Preferential treatment in all aspects of daily life including access to jobs, education, housing, and public services is given to individuals whose ethnicity is indigenous to the local area.

Related to the problem of ethnicity and religious identity in Nigeria Federal Civil Service, the Federal Government entrenched the principle of quota system and federal character principle. However, According to Nasir (2008), the inappropriate application of federal character principle creates mediocrity, inequality, corruption, lack of transparency and above all tribal dominance by the major ethnic groups. According to Babatola (2015), the imbalance in the literacy rate between the South and the North of Nigeria has made it impossible to have qualified people in sensitive government positions. For example, the North would rather let an Arabic "Alamijiri" teacher from the north to be the minister of education, than allow a southerner to play

the role, all because of a perceived need for proper representation in the name of federal character principle which has been ethnicized. Supporting this view, Umezina (2012) avers that, instead of the federal character arrangement to ensure greater unity of Nigeria it has bred mediocrity in the running of government.

This is because the Constituent Assembly for the 1989 Constitution wanted to include merit on the existing federal character arrangement. What some members wanted to add to the federal character clause in the constitution was: Nothing in this sub section shall preclude the employment of merit and excellence and federal character means as much as practical, representation of the states of the federation (Aniagolu, 1993 cited in Umezina, 2014). This was put to vote, it was defeated by 81 to 186. The implication of this on Nigeria political system is recruitment and appointment all manners of people to hold public offices in which they had neither trained nor experienced (Umezina, 2014). This is tragic as incompetent people filled up ministries, parastatals and government agencies. This is bane to Nigeria underdevelopment. The recent employment racketing in Nigeria Para-Military of State Security Service attested to the fact that ethnic bigotry is the main bane of Nigeria development.

Nigeria voting system since independence reflected the exertions of ethno-religion mobilization. Taking a cue from 1993 election, presidential election was held in Nigeria on June 12, 1993, the first since the 1983 coup. The result was a victory for Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola of the Social Democratic Party who defeated Bashir Tofa of the National Republican Convention. However, the election were later annulled by military ruler Ibrahim Babangida leading to a crisis that ended with Sani Abacha a coup later in the year (Africa Election Database, 1993). The annulment of the 1993 Presidential Election by a Hausa man, the election won by Yoruba man, that contested between Hausa and Yoruba man signified that, there is ethnic coloration in the annulment of the presidential election. Supporting this assertion, Umezina (2012) argues that, the level of ethno-religious rivalry in Nigeria has made it impossible to produce the right leaders who live above boards, who exude impeccable and predictable character, and who are ready to spend themselves for the development of the nation. Ethnic affiliation has not allowed such leaders to emerge, instead at each election in Nigeria; the emphasis has always been on where the candidates came from rather than on the right candidates for the election (Umezina, 2012).

This part of the reasons each ethnic and religious group clamoring for zoning of the presidency as well as inserting deadly messages if their ethnic group do not emerge in the election. In 2015 general Presidential election that keenly contested between Hausa and Igbo, the result later favored the North. However, what preceded the election result was, riot and shouting in all corner by Godsdan Orubebe for the cancellation of the result. The mere fact that Godsdan Orubebe (The former minister for Niger/Delta) shouted vigorously without stopping in the need for cancellation of 2015 Presidential election by INEC umpire Professor Attahiru Jega attested to the ferocious lullaby for the ethnocentrism and primordial politics in Nigeria. It is vivacity of the ethnocentrism in Nigeria polity for Orubebe to keep shouting on the top of his voice revealing the hidden truth about bias nature of the INEC umpire Prof.

Attairu Jega of his support for ethnic bigotry of Hausa Presidency. According to Orubebe, Prof. Jega has been compromised; selective, partial and tribalistic (Punch 31 March, Tuesday 2015). He said further that, APC had written a letter to INEC concerning an alleged rigging in Rivers State which he immediately sent a committee to investigate the issue but, that when PDP wrote letters on the underage voting in Kastina, Kano, Gombe, Kastina and Jigawa, Jega didn't send anyone to attend to their protest (Punch 31 March, Tuesday 2015). The fact that Jega permitted underage registration in the first place in the northern part of Nigeria and later underage voting made the INEC umpire of being bias and compromised of other part of the country where this was not possible.

According to Umezina (2012), ethnic rivalry shows its hydra in Presidential election; it leads to the emergence of incompetent president. To defuse ethnic tension some have adopted the rotational idea of the presidency among the six geopolitical zones. But then the implication of this is the same as that of federal character clause. The implication is that the president is elected not on the basis of merit but rather on the basis of where he comes from. The zoning of the presidency, though it is not a constitutional matter is threatening the corporate existence of the country. The altercations and noises from different ethnic groups are distractions in the running of government. In the 2011 presidential election, there was loss of lives and property in the Northern part of the country as a result of agitation against the outcome of the election. In 2015 election, the zoning of the Presidency reared his ugly head again, however, what pervaded the society each ethnic group using the numerical strength to judge between the winking South-South region and the Fulani Northern region without considering their competence and charismatic efficacy of their government.

The share value of 2015 presidential election was using the underage voting to claim back presidency seat to the north, not mind the competence and capability of the candidate and why the South using financial and materials inducement to convince people to vote for their ethnic leader. There was the issue of ethno-religious conspiracy by the northern leaders against the presidential ambition of the President Jonathan from the south since 2011 (Adeniyi, 2017). The issue of zoning of the seat of presidency as a matter fact laid credence to the ethno-religion bigotry of the regional democracy practices in Nigeria. Olusegun Adeniyi argued that, while the pursuit of equity in the distribution of opportunities in a plural society is good for national cohesion and development, regionalism has always been the tactic of choice for Nigerian politicians who profit from promoting ancient differences (Adeniyi, 2017). The ethnic bigotry was more pronounced in 2015 election, as what Jonathan the Presidential candidate of PDP and the incumbent president from South-South observed in the election result, He posited that, Go and check the results from Kano. The presidential election and that of National Assembly happened on the same day and same time. The National Assembly result reflected that about 800,000 people voted but that of the presidential reflected a vote of about 1.8 million (Adeniyi, 2017).

Also, the impact of ethno-religion cleavage is felt in Nigeria in the dehumanization of other ethnic group as if they are animals; this has resulted in many lives and properties lost to the ugly situation in Nigeria. Dokubo (2017) lamented the

extent of the ethnic-religious killing in the Northern Nigeria, he observed that, so, if in the north there is a riot, they do not kill Senegalese, they do not kill British, they do not kill Lebanese, they will kill a Yoruba man. They will kill an Igbo man; they will kill an Ijaw man. They will kill an Efik man, they will kill others but they will not kill a Lebanese, they do not kill a Senegalese, they do not kill Nigerian or Malian. The statement by Asari Dokubo the leader of Militia groups in Niger/Delta region clearly shows the extent of ethnic chauvinism as a deadly disease that chucks and can tear the country apart.

Musa (2011) observed that, more than millions of people have lost their lives to ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria since independence. He gave the statistics of ethno-religious violent killings between 2000-2011 as he accounted for more than millions of people died within the Northern region to Islamic extremism; introduction of sharia law, Christian-Muslim fighting in Jos, Fulani Herdsmen killing in Jos, Kaduna, Bauchi and Benue, Miss World contest that left more than 100 people dead; Boko Haram sects killing in Gombe, Yobe, Borno, Adamawa, Bauchi, serial killing in Kano, Kaduna, Zamfara, Kebbi and other northern region.

However, Musa (2011) could not cover 2011-2017 and southern region of the country, but more than millions of people and properties have been lost to ethno-religious motivated conflicts orchestrated by Boko Haram in the North Eastern part of Nigeria and Fulani Herdsmen killing innocents' citizens all over country. The latest onslaughts of southern Kaduna killings and Ife-Hausa crisis in 2017 where many lives and properties were lost to the incidences contributed to greatest damages to the nation.

Ethno-Religious Crises in Nigeria and National Development

The nagging violent conflicts and marauding of Boko Haram, Niger/Delta Militants, MASSOB, IPOB, Fulani Herdsmen, Southern Kaduna crisis, Shiite crisis in Kaduna, Ife/Hausa crisis and host of others which are cohorts of ethnic based and religious crises resulted in Nigeria being ranked the 13th least stable country in the world on the Fragile States Index, FSI, released by the Washington DC-based think-tank, Fund for Peace, FFP (Olorunyomi, 2017). The Index measures levels of stability in 178 countries and ranks them according to their vulnerability to threats from social, political, economic and demographic pressures. This year, Nigeria outranks seven African countries viz South Sudan, Somalia, Central African Republic, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad and Guinea, who are all considered less stable than Nigeria. Zimbabwe is co-ranked 13th with Nigeria and Ethiopia follows both countries as the 14th least stable country on the world.

Also, the Global Terrorism Index released in 18 November, 2015 named Nigeria as third most terrorized nation in the world and Nigeria Fulani militants group as the fourth deadliest terror group in the world after Boko Haram, ISIS, and Al-Shabab (www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/global-terrorism-index-nigerian-fulani-militant-named-as-fourth-deadliest-terror-group-in-world-a6739851.html).

One thing that is worrisome in this ranking is two ethno-religious groups in Nigeria

that is Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen militants, named among the four most deadly groups in the world not even in Africa.

When the society is not stable, the economic activities is no longer viable, this is the case in Nigeria, the incessant violent conflicts occurred in Nigeria have destroyed the economic activities plugging the country to recession. The North Eastern part of Nigeria especially Benue, Borno, Yobe, Pontiskum, Yola, Chibok, and other towns in the North Eastern States which are commercial areas for international markets no longer safe for habitation and the market activities. Akwara et al (2013) observed that, Northeast Nigeria is now a theatre of war and habitation for violence which impoverishes the very people it ought to protect by destroying their businesses it ought to protect and improve their lots by its destruction of lives and property. According to Solomon (2016), it is a well-known fact that, the over 6 years-old Boko Haram insurgency, which has both its origin and stronghold in the North-eastern part of the country, has not only led to the loss of many lives and property, but also forced hundreds of thousands of Nigerians out of their domiciles. This situation which could sometimes be seen as a “basket case” has affected the growth of the country in all ramifications. While almost every part of Nigeria is crammed with victims of the protracted insurgency, who are best described as “Internally displaced persons” (IDPs), some countries like Cameroon, Chad Republic, Niger Republic, and Benin Republic that border Nigeria, have their own share of burden accommodating these same persons, who in this case are most appropriately referred to as “refugees.

Relying on statistics given as at January 2016, the population of the refugees in Cameroon stands at about 51,700 (registered), with the following percentage: Borno (96%), Adamawa (2%), others (2%). They are basically of the two major religions, Christianity and Islam, further categorized as follows: Protestants (50%), Moslems (34%), Catholics (15%) (Solomon, 2016). Also, the South-South part of Nigeria comprises Bayelsa, Delta, Rivers, and other states in South-South states are tense areas for militancy that destroy pipelines, keeping hostages and killings expatriates. The investment present in Nigeria in all the parts of this country is at risk for investors. According to Ekanem (2016), the result of the Niger/Delta Avengers or militants attacking the oil and gas installations, the Nigeria’s daily oil production dropped from 2.2million to 1.7million barrel and they still promised to bring Nigeria’s oil production to zero (Premium Times, Sunday June 19, 2016).

The ranging storm of ethno-religion crisis left more than 25 people dead within three days in Ile Ife, Osun State between the dangling Yoruba and the Hausa ethnic group. Economic activities paralyzed and society became ungovernable within a week of the crisis. The aftermath was the arrest made by police of only Yoruba tribe not minding the bug of the other tribes. However, what is at present disturbing and still continuing is the rate of suicide bombing in the Northeast Nigeria, pipeline vandalism in the south-south region, killing of IPOB and MASSOB members in the southeast and Fulani herdsmen killing all over the country. The rate at which the political elites turned the present crises to the empowerment of the people of the region is most worrisome aspect of the ethno-religion crises and conflicts. Each ethnic group sees the president in power as an enemy since he is not from their ethnic group

and the only thing to bring him down is the crying of marginalization and secession, bombing and killing of other fellow Nigeria which the president will see amnesty as the only way out. However, the amnesty is filled up with contract inflations, non-implementation of the contract, corruption and award of contracts not relevant to the development and empowerment of the ethnic group involved, the case of Babachir Lawal the former Secretary to the Federal Government on contract scam of Boko Haram victims is still fresh in the air (Saharareporters.com/2017/04/20). Also there was unexecuted contract of 4billion naira of Niger/Delta Development Commission (NDDC) project taken by Senator Peter Nwaoboshi and the contract scam by the Minister (Godsday Orubebe) and the board members of NDDC in 2013 which is still fresh in the memory of Nigerians (Isine, 2015). All these atrocities are done by the political elites of the ethnic groups to worsen the challenges of the people despite the group doggedness acts of insurrection.

CONCLUSION

Ethnic and religion intolerance has ruined the peaceful human coexistence and slowed down development. Now people live in fear and are not free to express themselves adequately for fear of offending other ethnic or religion group. No part of the nation is a peace haven for habitation. Therefore, it is imperative that peaceful co-existence among various ethnic and religious groups in Nigeria need a sacrifice of ones' ethnic or religion group for the national peace. There is need for cancelling of elite recycling through proper restructuring and revolution in the institutions of government in Nigeria, this will reduce corruption in higher places and merit system will be given a pride of place in employment, promotions and appointment. Tolerance of individual and group differences is a very vital issue in democracy which needs to be attended to in Nigeria. Most Nigerian homes classify others as "us and them", and also consider other people's religion inferior to them; it is recommended that, the Federal Government should develop universalistic institutions that transcend beyond divisions through religious and ethnic integration, re-indoctrination of the ethnic groups in Nigeria to national value and development. There is need for the total discouragement of dehumanization of other tribes, ethnic group and religion e.g. members of other tribes are equated with animals, vermin through hate speeches and while configure their religion as perfect and others as infidel need to be discouraged. Tribal and religious leaders should condemn the use of hate speeches and make it culturally unacceptable. People who incite riots through these hate speeches should be punished. The Federal Government should ban hate groups broadcast polarizing propaganda that intrigues these hate speeches causing riots. The media should be used by as a tool in for quelling riot.

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