

## Perspectives on Nation-Building and Development in Nigeria:

### Environmental and Economic Issues

This book examines environmental and economic issues whose handling have not helped Nigeria to realize her manifest destiny of being a leader in Africa. After identifying faulty handling patterns, the book offers a therapy to cure some of the country's ills. It is therefore recommended to policy makers and indeed, all Nigerians who are worried about the low level of development in the country despite many environmental and economic development blueprints that have been implemented.

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Perspectives on Nation Building and Development in Nigeria: Environmental & Economic Issues



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## Environmental and Economic Issues



Edited by:

Hassan A. Saliu

Adeyemo Aderinto

Isah H. Jimoh

Godwin T. Arosanyin



## **Dedication**

The book is dedicated to  
Professor Ifeyori I. Ihimodu, former Dean,  
for his contributions to the growth and development  
of the Faculty of Business and Social Sciences,  
University of Ilorin, Nigeria.

# **Perspectives on Nation-Building and Development in Nigeria: Environmental and Economic Issues**

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Hassan A. Saliu, Ph.D.  
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Godwin T. Arosanyin, Ph.D.



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## Chapter 24

### Theoretical Exploration of Ethno-Religious Violence and Its Implications for the Family Institution

\*Deborah Adekeye

#### Introduction

**N**IGERIA has demonstrated a very high propensity for ethnic and religious violence in the past three decades (Egwu, 2001). The conflict spiral generated by the politicization of ethnic and religious identities in Nigeria has become more alarming in the past five years. Beginning from 1999, when the country recommenced democratic rule, ethno-religious violence has come to occupy the centre stage, with nihilistic effect. Aside from the frequent loss of lives and properties, Gowon (2003) notes that communities that have lived together peacefully and harmoniously over the years, are turning against themselves in violent conflicts destroying everything, including the good will that could have facilitated reconciliation moves.

The level of ethnic and religious violence is attested to by the dramatic rise in the incidences of ethno-religious conflict and the volume of destruction of lives and property that have accompanied them as well as the tension which such conflicts have generated in the interaction between different ethno-religious groups in the country.

The main thrust of this chapter is to examine the implications

of violent ethno-religious conflicts on family life, using the period 1999 to 2005 as the basis of the study. In this regard, the chapter attempts to:

- (i) Examine the nuances and debates of ethno-religious violence
- (ii) Investigate the nature and sources of ethno-religious violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic (1999-2005)
- (iii) Discuss the implications of ethno-religious violence for the family Institution.
- (iv) Explore plausible measures towards solving the menace of ethno-religious violence and ensure family stability.

#### Conceptualizing Ethno-Religious Violence

A clear understanding of the nature and problem of ethnic and religious violence in Nigeria must be preceded by a definition of the concept of ethno-religious violence. Ethnicity as a concept is an immensely complex phenomenon that portrays different perceptions. According to Osaghae (1992), ethnicity refers to a social formation resting upon culturally specific practices and a unique set of symbols and cosmology. A belief in a common historical evolution provides an inheritance of symbols, heroes, events, values and hierarchies and confirms the social identities for separating both insiders and outsiders. Thus, ethnicity as a social construct can be regarded as the employment of ethnic identity and differences to gain advantage in situations of competition, conflict and co-operation (Osaghae, 1995). It is, therefore, logical to deduce from Nnoli's (1978), argument that the Nigerian political system has presented an image of struggle among various ethnic groups for the sharing of national resources. This struggle among the various ethnic groups had culminated in series of violent conflicts in the past. More than ethnicity, religion is a difficult subject of inquiry including attempts at its definition and conceptualization (Egwu, 2001). Religion is thus defined in many ways and the definitions usually vary among scholars. According to Adeniyi (1993), religion is a body of truths, laws and rites by which man is subordinated to the transcendent being. This implies that religion deals with norms and rules that emanated from God

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and which must be followed by the believers. Ejizu (1993) provides another definition of religion. According to him, religion is man's intuition of the sacred and ultimate reality and his expression of that awareness in concrete life. Many scholars such as Goody (1961) and Horton (1960) agree that the notion of 'sacred' at once indicates the idea of the transcendent in the concept of religion and they both go further to underline the fact that the 'sensuous religions' is a distinct type of experience that is essentially characterized by a feeling of mystery and awe.

Deriving from the above brief discussion, it is logical to explain ethnic and religious violence as a situation in which people of different ethnic and religious groups are involved in a violent conflict. According to Egwu (2001), ethnic and religious violence is the extreme manifestation of conflicts rooted in the crises of identity. Although it involves grievances directed against state's incapacity and failure, or the existing asymmetry in the distribution of social and economic power with nihilistic effect, it can hardly be endowed with attributes of social emancipation associated with revolutionary violence. While it seeks to address the "need to transform the symbolic and institutional frameworks of collective life" (Lawuyi quoted by Egwu, 2001), it does not, like revolutionary violence, have a clear ideological focus and political direction (Fanon, 1967). The main aim of ethnic and religious violence is the struggle for recognition of ethnic or religious identity. Where the two converge, violence becomes more devastating and of course, more difficult to manage.

### **Factors Responsible for Ethno-Religious Violence in Nigeria**

Various factors are responsible for violent ethnic and religious conflicts in Nigeria. Some of the major factors are discussed here. Nigeria is a multi-ethnic nation with cultural differences. The diversity has resulted in two major sources – namely, problems arising among the larger ethnic groups and the hostility that is derived from competition among people for wealth and power. Thus, the heterogeneity of Nigeria has been taken as being responsible for the series of ethnic and religious suspicions and the resultant conflicts (Ibrahim, 2004).

Generally speaking, ethnic and religious violence in Nigeria has been categorized under socio-economic and political factors. Poverty is one of the socio-economic factors breeding and nurturing ethno-religious violence in Nigeria. According to Ibrahim (2004), this is essentially caused by the economic and industrial retardation in Nigeria which creates unemployment, thereby causing youth restive and forming them rapidly into a pool that can easily be mobilized to riot or cause civil unrest. Poverty manifests in insecurity because people are forced to take certain unsavoury acts to sustain a living. In such circumstance, people are willing to compromise. Poverty has the cumulative effect of raising tension that easily explodes on the slightest excuse. Similarly, Diamond (1992) argues that mass poverty is a breeding ground for extremism-religious, ethnic, class-consciousness, etc. This thus explains why, in many cases of ethno-religious conflict in Nigeria, the youths and the poor are often manipulated to advance the course of such ethno-religious violence. In short, they are ready tools of violence.

The heterogeneity of the urban population in Nigeria reflects ethnic, occupational, social and religious differentials. The culture shock resulting from contacts among these people of sometimes conflicting backgrounds is a precursor of violent conflict, most especially when they are not prepared to tolerate each other's inadequacies (Obateru, 1994). Although ethnic and religious violence may be easily explained from this perspective, Nnoli (1978) opines that such violence often results from competition for power and wealth. Thovoethin (2005) observes that the reasons for ethnic and religious violence are diverse, and include those generated by continuous conflict and contradiction between citizens' and indigenes' rights, religious fanaticism, ethnic and communal intolerance, environmental degradation, historical animosities, political competition, hunger and tension arising from the dynamics of everyday life between indigenes and settlers or strangers.

Ethnic nationalism and formation of ethnic militias are also responsible for the promotion of ethnic and religious violence in Nigeria. The cases of Oodua People's Congress (Yoruba),

Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) in the North (Hausa/Fulani) and Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP in the Niger Delta) represent good examples of this perspective. Corroborating this fact, Akingboye (2001) notes that the competition among the dominant groups has often ended up in ethnic violence. Ethnic violence, on many occasions, usually escalate into religious riot. Ikengah-Metuh (1994) attests to this fact when he said that the Nigerian state has recorded a very bizarre experience in the domain of religious violence, including inter-religious conflicts capable of assuming socio-ethnic dimension.

The role of the elite in the creation of ethno-religious violence cannot be dismissed. According to Joseph (1999), the elite represent essentially capitalists who depend on the state machinery for survival. They are also key players in the ethno-religious game for exploitation and manipulation of the non-elite, usually directed towards personal or elite group interests, which mostly promote division and hatred among people in pluralistic societies (Otite, 1999). The elite use ethnic and religious sentiments to achieve their political and socio-economic goals.

### **Manifestations of Ethno-Religious Violence in Nigeria, 1999-2005**

Ethno-religious violence has taken the front burner in contemporary Nigeria, particularly since the return of democratic rule on May 29, 1999. In other words, ethno-religious violence has come to occupy the centre stage. The ubiquity of this form of violence is attested to by the sheer dramatic rise in the incidences as well as the volume of destruction of lives and property that have accompanied them. Below are the major incidences of ethno-religious violence that have been experienced since 1999:

- ◆ In July 1999, there was a clash between the Yoruba and Hausa communities in Sagamu, Ogun State. The brutal killing of a Hausa woman by "Oro" masquerades occasioned the clash. Her offence was that she ran foul of the rules of this cult.

Several people died and over fifty houses were burnt in the mayhem (Ali, 2003) Ayinla, 2004).

- ◆ On November 25-28, 1999, 144 people died in an ethnic clash between Hausa and Yoruba traders in Mile 12, Ketu Lagos over leadership of the market (Olukorede, 2002).
- ◆ On May 31, 1999, Ijaw and Itsekiri militias engaged in a violent clash in Warri town, Delta State. The conflict erupted over the Olu of Warri's throne and recognition (Okechuckwu, 2003).
- ◆ On March 10, 2000, many people died in an intra-ethnic violence between Ife and Modakeke Communities in Ife-Modakeke, Osun State over the siting of a local government headquarters which accentuated ancestral rivalry (Asamu, 2005).
- ◆ On May 4, 2001, many lives were lost in the renewed communal conflict between Ife and Modakeke communities in Osun State (Asamu, 2005).
- ◆ From September 7 to 12, 2000, Jos experienced ethno-religious violence, in which over 500 persons were killed and about 1,000 others injured (Olukorede, 2002).
- ◆ In October 2001, a violent protest by Muslim/Hausa youths in the streets of Kano over the US-led military action in Afghanistan, led to the death of 150 persons (Nduhjihe, 2004).
- ◆ From February 21 to 22, 2001, an estimated 3,000 people lost their lives in clashes between Muslims and Christians in the Kaduna metropolis over the introduction of Islamic criminal law. There was a reprisal attack in Aba, Abia State in which about 450 persons were killed (Ayinla, et al. 2005).
- ◆ From May 22 to 23, 2003 Kaduna was again brought on its knees in an ethno-religious riot, which claimed over 300 lives (Olukorede, 2002).
- ◆ In June 2002, several people were killed in a clash between some Christians and Muslims in Yelwa, Shendam Local Government Area of Plateau State over land and indigeneship (Ayinla, et al. 2005).
- ◆ In the fourth week of November 2002, an ethno-religious

riot rocked the city of Kaduna. This Day newspaper made a disparaging remark about Prophet Muhammed in the context of an international beauty pageant scheduled to be staged in Kaduna (Cherian, 2002).

- ♦ On February 23, 2004, Hausa/ Fulani militants launched an attack on a church in Yelwa and killed 48 persons. Later in May of that same year, there were reprisal killings of Hausa people (Abuh, 2004).
- ♦ In May 2004, three-day mayhem sparked off by protests against the May 2 Yelwa incident in Plateau State led to the killing of non-indigenes by the Hausa ethnic militias in Kano City. At the end of the carnage, more than 40 people were killed, several others injured and over 30,000 people were displaced (*The Punch* Editorial, 2004).
- ♦ In May 2005, an intra-religious clash between Shia and Sunni Muslims in Sokoto left two persons dead and many others severely injured. The two groups had been in dispute since the beginning of the year over access to the two central mosques in the state (*Daily Independent*, 2005).

### Implications for the Family Institution

The family is one of the basic social institutions with fundamental functions in the society. Its pervasive role is manifested in the lives of people. From the cradle to the grave, the family leaves its impact on the social experience of the individual (Yusuf, 2001:68). However, the family institution in Nigeria has been threatened by the series of ethnic and religious violence experienced since the return to democratic rule in 1999.

The consequences of ethno-religious violence on family life are devastating. The most damaging effect has been the irreplaceable loss of lives and property. Innocent souls have given away their lives unwillingly to the various violent conflicts that have engulfed the nation in the past five years. According to Ayinla (2004:13), with the eruption of violent ethno-religious conflicts, there are disruptions in family life as husbands have become widowers; wives turned to widows; and most children orphaned.

For example, in all ethnic and religious crises that engulfed Plateau State alone between 1999 and 2005, about 46,787 persons lost their lives. A breakdown of the casualty figure revealed that 11,931 were men, 17,397 women and 17,459 children lost their lives in the spate of crises in the state (Peter-Omale, 2004:1-2). Women and children often constitute the largest victims of violent ethno-religious conflicts in other parts of Nigeria. In the volatile Niger Delta region, hundreds of women and children have been killed in the various ethnic clashes. At another level, Egwu (2001) notes that ethno-religious violence has the potential of physical displacement and forced relocation of individuals, families and groups. The spate of this kind of violence in the last five years has certainly resulted in varying degrees of family disorganization. Goode (1971) used the concept 'family disorganization' to describe a break-up of the family unit. Among the causative factors of family disorganization, according to him, are death, natural catastrophes and violent conflicts. Over 30,000 people, mostly families, were displaced in the the Yelwa and Kano ethno-religious mayhems of May 2004 (Shobayo, 2004; Abuh, 2004; *The Punch* Editorial, 2004; Ayinla 2004).

There is no gainsaying the fact that the effect of family disorganization manifests in other social problems such as child abuse and youth violence. Because of the death of parents in ethno-religious violence, most of the orphans enjoy no proper care and are vulnerable to all forms of abuse in the hands of their guardians. Besides, family disorganization tends to promote juvenile delinquency and youth violence. It is widely believed that children and young ones who grow up under such conditions tend to adopt violence as an instrument of inter-group relations.

Another effect of ethno-religious uprising on the family institution is the loss of psychological support, which family life provides for its members. In other words, the traditional family structure guarantees its members adequate emotional and psychological protection; that is, grief, sorrow, joy, achievement as well as failure were shared by members. No

individual was left to cope with his personal problem alone. But the eruption of violent ethno-religious conflicts tends to destroy this good family relationship and other interests.

### Measures for Controlling Ethno-Religious Violence

Several solutions have, and can be proffered as a way of controlling ethno-religious violence in Nigeria. First and foremost, there is the need to mobilize Nigerians who are divided along ethnic, cultural, economic and religious lines in the task of national development. In his contribution to eliminating ethno-religious violence in Nigeria, Okejide (quoted by Egwu, 2001) calls for the establishment of a more humane social order. This, according to him, can be achieved through increased utilization of the intellectual resources of the land by encouraging social research and using the results to solve social problems

In confronting the problems associated with the political mobilization of religious identities, Mohammed (1990) recommends a political engineering which, according to him, is a fine-tuning of constitutional reforms and structures through a deliberate and well-considered constitutional choice in the search for new, and, by implication, more viable and durable structures and institutions that can withstand the stress of the competitive demands of our national life. Another measure that deserves to be mentioned includes a state-sponsored programme of mass education and enlightenment and the effort to enthrone what Hackett and Olupona (1991) describe as "civil religion." Towards this end, there is need for the re-establishment and sustenance of mass mobilization agencies like MAMSER to educate the populace on the dangers posed by ethnic and religious conflicts.

As a further measure to end ethno-religious violence in Nigeria, there is need for regular convocation of inter-ethnic and inter-religious dialogue. Such a dialogue should always be facilitated through positive mobilization of various religious and ethnic groups on a regular basis (Ayinla, 2004:13). Besides, there is need for the establishment of an ethnic and religious council at

all levels of government. Such a council will provide the forum for discussion with a view to resolving many ethnic and religious issues instead of resorting to violent conflicts. In addition, a centre for the study of inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations should be established in all states of the federation. The centre, when established, should be charged with the responsibility of organizing courses periodically for traditional and religious leaders, government functionaries and the general public for the promotion of peace and harmonious co-existence.

The implementation of the poverty alleviation programme is another practical measure towards eliminating the problem of ethno-religious violence in Nigeria. According to Diamond (1992), mass poverty helps to breed ethnic and religious thugs that are often used for these ethno-religious conflicts. For this reason, the economy should be strengthened to take care of the unemployed and poverty-ridden populace, who, as mentioned above, serve as ready tools in the prosecution of ethno-religious war in Nigeria.

As a way of preventing violent ethno-religious conflicts, there is also the need for the security network to be beefed up with effective policing. The police personnel should be well equipped and properly trained for the task of ensuring security of lives and property of the people (Azeez, 2005).

### Conclusion

In summary, this chapter has discussed the issue of ethno-religious violence in the geo-political entity called Nigeria. The various factors responsible for the promotion of the problem in the country have equally been discussed. In this chapter, it has been observed that the menace of ethnic and religious violence poses devastating consequences to the family institution. Among these consequences are the untimely death of parents and displacement of families. Violent ethno-religious conflicts disrupt family life as husbands become widowers, wives turn to widows and children are orphaned. All these may further worsen the grave social problems in the Nigerian society.

Towards solving the problem of ethno-religious violence in Nigeria, various practical measures have been proffered and discussed in this chapter. These measures centre on education, dialogue, poverty alleviation and effective policing. If pursued, they will go a long way in helping the nation out of her ever present ethno-religious conflicts and the attendant problems.

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## Chapter 25

### Narcotic Drug Abuse Among Rural Farmers

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#### Introduction

THE problem of drug abuse in Nigeria, which includes the production, cultivation, processing, trafficking and narco-laundering, is alarming (Alemika, 1993; Odejide, 1993; Danbazau, 1991 and Lame and Odekunle, 2001). Reports of the involvement of the rural dwellers in drug abuse abound (Odejide, 1993; NDLEA, 2000). Yet, most of the drug prevention efforts are located within the urban centres of Nigeria. This situation is not restricted to Nigeria alone. Leukefeld and Godlaski (1997) observe that facilities for the treatment and prevention of substance abuse are more in urban than in the rural areas of the United States of America. This situation, they argue, is consequent upon the perception of policy-makers and interventionists that drug abuse is essentially an urban phenomenon and not a rural issue. Thus, this paper attempts to demonstrate that rural drug abuse in Nigeria is real, and to highlight the possible roles agricultural extension officers can play in preventing drug abuse among rural dwellers (most especially farmers). The questions that need to be answered are: What are narcotic drugs? And what is drug abuse? To what extent is drug abuse prevalent among rural farmers? And what role can agricultural extension officers play?

The term "Narcotic Drug" can be used in a strict sense to refer to heroin, cocaine and cannabis (Alemika, 1993). Furthermore, according to Smah, drug abuse includes the cultivation,

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