

Ethno-Religious Conflict in Nigeria: Implications on Science Education

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Abstract

This paper examined ethno-religious conflict in Nigeria and its implications on science education. The purpose was to examine the crises that have engulfed Nigeria; looks at the causes and effects on the development of Nigeria as a nation and identify its implications on the teaching and learning of science. The study employed desk research which made up of literature explored to make conclusion on the study. The findings revealed that factors such as prolonged military rule, poverty, economic marginalization of some ethnic groups, high rate of unemployment, struggle for land resources, neglect and failure of the government to pay adequate attention on the needs of the people breeds ethno-religious conflict in Nigeria. It was also revealed that these conflicts affects social, political and educational development leading to poor school attendance and enrolment, destruction of educational facilities, prolonged years of graduation, scourge of unemployment as well as household wealth thereby affecting effective teaching and learning of science. It is recommended that government be sensitive to plight of youths and citizenry while religious leaders should form the mind of Nigerians with the teaching of love and peace as proclaimed in their various religious books and beliefs.

Key words: *Ethno-Religious, Conflict, Implications, Science Education*

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I. Introduction

Conflict, as generally known, breaks out from a disagreement, controversy or quarrel between two or more people or groups of people. When such a disagreement, controversy or quarrel is not resolved or managed, it escalates to a disordered state where violent actions manifest (Ngwoke *et al.*, 2020). Alegbeleye (2014), in his work, describes conflict as ‘a situation or condition of disharmony in an interactional process’. Nigeria is presently witnessing conflicts of varying scales and intensities in different parts of the country. This has led to much social unrest on humanity, which has taken a toll in terms of deaths, displacements, destruction of lives and property, disruption of economic and social activities, poverty, insecurity and so on.

By ethno-religious conflict, it means a situation in which the relationship between members of one ethnic or religious group and another of such group in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society is characterized by lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion and fear, and a tendency towards violent confrontation. Just like the Noah’s ark, which contained all species of animals; the cockroach was living peacefully with the hen, the rat was moving about without any molestation from the cat, and the dog was accommodated by the lion, different ethnic groups in Nigeria were living peacefully, not minding their differences under the hegemonial suzerainty of colonial masters. No sooner that they alighted from the ark than they faced one another with serious enmity, hatred, and they did not want to see one another again, as if they were not the one who once lived peacefully under one roof. (Ali, 2004)

With over four hundred (400) ethnic groups, belonging to several religious sects, Nigeria since independence has remained a multi-ethnic nation state, which has been grappling and trying to cope with the problem of ethnicity on the one hand, and the problem of ethno-religious conflicts on the other. This is because over the years the phenomena of ethnicity and religious intolerance have led to incessant recurrence of ethno-religious conflicts, which have given birth to many ethnic militias like the O’dua People Congress (OPC); the Bakassi Boys; the Egbesu Boys; the Ijaw Youth Congress (IYC); the Igbo People Congress (IPC) and Boko Haram. Others include the Arewa Peoples Congress (APC), the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB); and the Ohanaeze N’digbo (Ideyi, 2008).

The Global Terrorism Index (2019) shows that, in 2018 alone, more than 2000 people lost their lives, whilst 300 000 people were displaced through the insurgence of Fulani herdsmen and Boko Haram in Nigeria. It is worrisome to note that the rate of killings through various insurgency attacks has been on the rise. This is evident in the Global Terrorism Index (2019) report, which reveals that Nigeria’s terrorism index rose from 36th to 3rd from 2002 to 2018, with total recorded deaths of 22 415 people. The terrorist attacks also involved the

destruction of property and displacement of people, which goes a long way in destabilising the economy of the nation, as money that is meant for the development of the country is channelled to rebuilding the destroyed environments and property and the rehabilitation of displaced people. As a result of all these conflicts, sustainable development in Nigeria appears to be an unachievable goal.

Based on the attacks reported in *Education under Attack 2014* (GCPEA, 2014) and by Amnesty International (2018), it is estimated that during 2012 and 2013, around 100 schools were totally or partially destroyed, and around 70 teachers and 100 students killed. The deadliest and most high profile attacks were carried out at the upper secondary level, including an attack on Yobe state college of agriculture (around 50 students killed; see GCPEA, 2014) and Buni Yadi school, Yobe; around 50 students killed (Amnesty International, 2014).

The fact that there is a recent increase in the number of ethno-religious conflicts in the country and the violent nature of ethno-religious conflicts, which often take the form of riots, sabotage, assassination, armed struggles, guerilla warfare and secession no doubt have implications for political, economic and educational development of the country and thus making it an important issue for discussion especially as it relates to science education. It is against this background that this seminar examines the manifestations of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria, their causes, effects and impact on science education.

Glimpse on ethno-religious Conflicts in Nigeria

It is important to state from the beginning that the various ethno-religious conflicts that have swept across this country in the past three decades are too numerous to outline and analyse in one study. Thus, this paper highlights some of the major conflicts in Nigeria as reported by Ngwoke *et al.*, 2020.

The Maitatsine crises broke out in the northern part of Nigeria in 1980 and lasted until 1985, when they were suppressed by the Nigerian military forces. The crises were one of the major religious crises in Nigeria that claimed over 10 000 lives (Falola cited in Aghedo 2014). Their main goal was to promote the Islamic religion within Northern Nigeria and preach against modernisation, such as the use of television, radio and car; Western education and so on.

The religious crises in Kano State started with the Maitatsine religious violence, which included burning of mosques and churches and killing Christians. Shortly after the menace of the Maitatsine riots from 1980 to 1985, this uprising was occasioned by the violent reaction of Muslim youth against the hosting of a Christian crusade, where a notable German Evangelist, Reinhard Bonnke, and some American preachers were to visit Kano. It started as a protest by the Muslims against the hosting of the planned crusade, to stop the crusade from being held, but finally led to attacks on the churches, businesses and houses in Sabon Gari town, Kano State (Best & Rakodi, 2011). The attack claimed many lives and properties.

The Boko Haram group emerged as an Islamic group and ignited ethno-religious conflict in Nigeria with its ideology and advocacy against Western education and culture. According to Idowu (2015), the Boko Haram group has claimed responsibility for many killings, kidnappings and multiple bombings in Nigeria, such as the Christmas bombing of a Catholic church in Madala, Niger State in 2010 and the bombing of the United Nations House in Abuja, attacks on prisons, police stations and military formation in Jaji, Kaduna State, the kidnapping of a French family of seven, the Shettima of Borno. (Alegbeleye, 2014)

In recent times, Boko Haram has focused most of its insurgent attacks on the Christian religious group in Nigeria. One of the recent attacks by Boko Haram on the Christian religious group included the killing of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) chairman, Reverend Lawan Andimi, in Michika Local Government Area, Adamawa State, whom they abducted when they attacked the city on Thursday, 02 January 2020 (Odunsi, 2020). The report from the Global Terrorism Index (2019) reveals that 22 415 people have been killed by Boko Haram since 2002.

The Fulani herdsmen's clash with their host community has been recorded in all strata of the country. According to Aliyu, Ikedinma and Akinwande (2018), the clash of Fulani herdsmen with farmers in their host community date back to 2012 with the killing of one Mr Benjamin Chegue, Director of Personnel Management in Isoko North Local Government Area, Delta State. Since then, the spate of killings linked to these clashes has continued across the entire northern and southern zones of the country.

Most of these clashes started in the northern part of the country. In the north-central part of the country, some of the incidents included a Fulani herdsmen attack in Agatu, in which they burned the Inoli, Ologba, Olegeje, Olegogboche, Olegede, Adana, Inminy and Abugbe communities on 29 February 2013. Others include the attack on civilians in Aguta Local Government Area on 20 February 2016, killing 500 and displacing 7000 people (Ndujihe, 2018).

In the north-east states, one recent incident is the attack on the people of Jalingo, the state capital of Taraba, by the Fulani herdsmen on 15 June 2019 as reported by a resident of Kasuwan Bera, who stated that Jalingo was on fire and that the Fulani herdsmen were on the rampage firing gunshots randomly in the village (Vanguard, 2019). The following week, there was another attack by the same Fulani herdsmen on the residents

of Tudiri and Janibanibu communities in Ardo Kola Local Government Area in Taraba State on 16 and 17 June, killing 10 people (Femi, 2019).

In the north-west states, in one recent attack, over 10 communities in the Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State were invaded on 06 January 2020 by the Fulani herdsmen, who killed not less than 35 persons and abducted over 58 persons; another attack in the early days of March 2020 led to the death of 51 persons (Hassan, 2020).

The southern region of the nation has not been left out, as they have also received their share of attacks from the Fulani herdsmen. In the south-west states, one current conflict between the Fulani herdsmen and their host community resulted in an attack by the Fulani herdsmen in March 2020. In the attack, the Fulani herdsmen killed three persons, including a rice farmer and his son, who were reportedly murdered on their farm by herdsmen in the community of Arimogija, Ose Council Area, Ondo State (Johnson, 2020).

In the south-south states, a recent incident in Delta State claimed 14 lives. According to Okafor and Neme (2020), the crisis began on Thursday, 13 February 2020, when herdsmen arrived at Uwheru community, in Ughelli North Local Council, Delta State, with a large number of cows and destroyed farms; the youth mobilised and warded them off their farms, but the herdsmen regrouped, armed themselves and returned to the community and started attacking them.

In the south-east states, an incident occurred in the Nimbo community in Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area, Enugu State, in the early hours of Monday, 25 April 2016, resulting in the death of over 40 persons, burning of 11 houses including a Catholic church, destruction of vehicles and motorcycles and slaughter of domestic animals (Mamah *et al.*, 2016).

Causes of Ethno-Religious conflict in Nigeria

Poverty has been considered one of the major causes of ethno-religious crises in Nigeria. In his statistical analysis, Ogbulafor (2000) claimed that in 1996, the number of people bitten by excessive poverty in Nigeria was 39.2 million representing 65.6 percent of the population, as against 17.7 million representing 28.1 percent of the Nigerian population in 1980. Ibrahim (2008) also carried out a research on causes of ethno-religious crises in Kano State and she discovered that poor economic base of the populace carried the highest percentage of 34.9%, while religious fundamentalism followed with 31.8%. The frequent occurrence of ethno-religious crises in Nigeria has, therefore, been attributed to the level of poverty in the country (Omoregbe & Omohan, 2005).

One cannot rule out the assumed economic marginalization of some ethnic groups as a cause of ethno-religious conflicts. This is true of the reactions of the Ijaws and the Ogonis in the Niger-Delta to the economic exploitation of the foreign multi-national oil companies in the area with little or no compensation to the environmental degradation of the area. In spite of the hanging of the leader of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), Ken-Saro Wiwa in 1995, the Ogoni people continued with their request through violence means by kidnapping of many expatriates of the Shell Company. (Ibrahim, 2010)

The high rate of unemployment in the country coupled with social injustice and inequality are also causes of these conflicts. A situation where more than 65% of the population are youth that are idle and unemployed/underemployed, seem to potent grave consequence in the country. This social ill the country is bedevilled with is highly prevalent in the Northern part of the country which could be linked to educational backwardness. (Weidmann, 2002)

Prolong military rule in the country has deeply affected the psyche of both politicians and the masses who have been so militarized. Politics today in Nigeria is a “do or die” affair. The struggle for political power and control at the centre has over-heated the nation’s polity and created unnecessary tension which has resulted to bigotry between and among regions. Political thugs are recruited and armed by these same politicians who at the end of the day loose grip of these thugs and these arms are used on defenceless citizens. (Alegbeleye, 2014)

The Nigerian state is endowed with abundant human and natural resources which are spread all over the six geo-political zones in the country. The over dependence on oil has led to the neglect of other viable sectors of the economy (Akhape, 2007). It is amazing that Nigeria as the largest economy in Africa through the rebasing of its Gross Domestic Output by Federal Bureau of Statistics is plagued with mass illiteracy, unemployment, poverty, insecurity, infrastructural decay and bureaucratic corruption (Omole and Omotosho, 2010).

Also, a major cause of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria has to do with the allegations of neglect, oppression, domination, exploitation, victimization, discrimination, marginalization, nepotism and bigotry. This is so because there is no complete agreement on how wealth, power and status are to be shared among individuals and groups. There is also no agreement on how to effect necessary changes and reforms because different groups and individuals have diverse interests in which case, some groups will have their aims met, while others will not. These naturally leads to conflicts when deprived groups and individuals attempt to

increase their share of power and wealth or to modify the dominant values, norms, beliefs or ideology (Okolie-Osemene, 2015).

Effects of Ethno-Religious Crises in Nigeria

Dele & Mike, (2015) asserted that ethno-religious conflict may have a lot of implications on the development of the country such as the following:

Political implications

The people are forced to inherit lots of ethnic and religious conflict, socio-structural deformities and disharmonies. This has impacted negatively on the growth and development of the people in the state. The frequent occurrence of conflicts, the weak position of the political class to handle the conflicts and the perpetual struggles for political power have continuously put the people on the disadvantaged position and makes their future to be in jeopardy. (Umana, 2019)

Socio-economic implications

Ethno-religious crisis causes the people lots of deprivations due to flaws in the social organizations, social institutions and structural deficiencies in forming enabling environment for the society and economy to grow and retards all economic and social progress. Charles, Andeshi & Daniel (2014) for example, claimed that, whenever there is a conflict, there will be a waning in the level of agricultural investment/yield, decline in income levels of the people of the area, and increased level of social and residential segregation and damages to lives and property worth millions. The resultant effects of these are high level of poverty and unemployment particularly to the people involved.

Educational implications

The incessant spates of ethno-religious crisis may lead to the shift of the government attention to restore security at the expense of developing a key sector like education. This may lead to crisis on that sector and persistent strikes by the teachers at all levels and will cripple the educational development in the area. Also, in order to re-establish peace in the affected areas of conflict, government may impose curfew and restrict movement to restore normalcy, peace, law and order. The resultant effect is that people spend less time in school and may lead to some being dropped out of school and perhaps ventures into unproductive activities that can affect their future career development. In deed many of them are now actively involved in the spate of ethnic and religious violent and become available to be used by politicians as thugs, hired killers and assassins. (Umana, 2019)

Impact of Ethno-religious conflict on Science Education

Jones and Naylor (2016) have noted several ways in which armed conflict can affect education. These include among others, school closure due to targeted attacks; collateral damage and the military use of school buildings; death and injury to teachers and students; the fear of sending children to school and teachers' fear of attending school due to their being threatened with targeted attacks; general insecurity reducing the freedom of movement; the forced recruitment of teachers and students by armed forces (state and non-state); forced population displacement interrupting education; and the public health impacts of conflict, which reduce the possibility of access and learning. These disruptions have the effect of preventing access to education and diminishing the quality of the learning experience (O'Mally, 2011).

Also, O'Mally has noted the longer term impacts of armed conflict on science education as a result of the occurrence of persistent attacks over a number of years and the use of force to prevent recovery from such attacks. Such long-term effects include the reduced enrolment and permanent drop-out of students and the withdrawal of educational personnel leading to a shortage of teachers especially in the sciences; and the general impact of armed conflict on the government's resources reduces the government's capacity to manage or deliver education (O'Mally, 2011). As a result, conflict-affected areas have some of the world's worst indicators for education, as millions of children are deprived of their only chance of the schooling or reading sciences that could transform their lives (UNESCO, 2015).

The exposure of children to traumatic events such as the loss of loved ones, displacement, a lack of food, and the interruption of school associated with armed conflict has detrimental consequences for their mental health and psychological well-being (Barenbaum, Ruchkin and Schwab-Stone, 2004). Children are affected by Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD) such as irritability, insomnia, sleeping disorders, fear, aggression, confusion and an inability to concentrate, (Thabet, 2004) which greatly affects their ability to have a loving relationship with their family and friends and to perform well in school. In a study conducted on 796 children living in the occupied West Bank and Gaza, an area affected by armed conflict, they were found to

have behavioural and psychological problems such as depression and fears, to have a tendency to be disobedient and to engage in fighting, and to suffer from sleep disturbances, nightmares and low self-esteem (Baker, 1990).

Given that the environment has an influence on development, on learning and other aspects of behaviour, a society characterized by any form of violence will not be conducive for social interaction in the form of teaching and learning (Joda and Abdurashed, 2015). Violence can affect students' performance in school as insecurity constitutes a negative reinforcement due to the obvious fact that teaching and learning cannot successfully occur in an environment of fear (Umar and Manabete, 2016). Also, war not only destroys lives and schools, but it also diverts resources from education to the military (UNESCO, 2015). These effects are categorized as follows;

Effect on school attendance

According to Oladunjoye and Omemu (2013), attendance at school is dependent on the readiness of the child, encouragement from parents, the provision of school materials, the distance to school and, very importantly, the security of the child. The present state of insecurity in the North Eastern region of Nigeria has been traumatic for children as they are forced to flee from their homes in fear, to witness killings, or to live as displaced persons or refugees thereby resulting in poor performance of particularly science students in most secondary schools. UNICEF reports that as a result of the incessant attacks on schools, school children and teachers, over one million children have been forced out of school, (UNICEF, 2015) while their teachers have also been forced to stay away from school (Some schools have been forced to shut down and the deserted school buildings have been converted into shelters for internally displaced persons (Protection Sector Working Group, 2015).

The attacks by the insurgents have led to the deaths of many children. In July 2013 the insurgents invaded a government-owned boarding school in Mamudo village in Yobe state, killed 42 students and teachers and burnt down the school (Agba *et al.*, 2013). Government College, Buni Yadi, Yobe State and gruesomely murdered about 59 students and burnt several buildings in the school. In November 2014 a suicide bomber entered a secondary school by disguising himself as a member of the school and killed about 47 school pupils and injured many others during their morning assembly (Anon, 2014). Also in April 2014 over 200 Chibok girls were abducted from their school dormitory and to date they have not been found except for some that are reported to have escaped (Oke and Leeodan, 2016). The Chibok girls' abduction represented the largest single incident of abduction attributable to the Boko Haram.

The north-eastern part of Nigeria, which is being ravaged by Boko Haram, has ordinarily recorded a low literacy level, as it has the highest proportion of out-of-school Children (Fabunmi, 2005). The Nigerian Demographic and Health Survey 2013 (NDHS) showed that the north east had the lowest rate of school attendance in Nigeria, as against the south-eastern region, which had the highest. Yobe State in particular had the worst rate among all the states in Nigeria in terms of school attendance for both male and female children in primary and secondary school, with just 12 per cent attendance, compared to 75 per cent in Imo State in the south east (NPC and ICF, 2013). A recent study conducted in some schools in Damaturu, the capital city of Yobe State, revealed that the insecurity in the region has caused a reduction in school attendance (Abdullahi and Terhemba, 2014).

The study carried out by Oladunjoye and Omemu (2013) shows that school attendance has been affected mostly in rural areas as they are usually neglected, unlike school attendance urban areas, where the schools enjoy a measure of protection afforded by the security forces. The constant attacks by the sect undermine the effort of government to improve education in the northern region, and no right-thinking parents would want to send their wards to school for fear that they would become victims of the attacks. (Ohiwerei, 2014)

Education facilities

The physical condition of a school has a direct positive or negative effect on a teacher's morale and effectiveness, and on the general learning environment (Owoeye and Yara, 2011). Inadequate educational facilities pose a threat to the right to education. Nigerian schools are ordinarily ill equipped and not conducive to learning and the destruction of the available school facilities by the insurgents leaves basic education in a dire situation. Access to basic education in the north-eastern states has been badly affected by the targeted attacks on school facilities by Boko Haram (Human Rights Watch, 2014). According to UNICEF (2015), over 300 schools were destroyed and 314 children killed between 2012 and 2014 and laboratories for student practicals were destroyed.

In Borno, which is the worst hit of all the states, the Executive Chairman of the Borno State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), Bukarkullima, (Amnesty International, 2018) stated that over 512 schools have been destroyed over the years. When this is done not only the building but also the teaching materials, science laboratories and children's school records are destroyed.

Conflict impacts on education in ways that have a direct cost to the sector, as well as more indirectly through reducing demand for and/or supply of education. Taking descriptions of attacks to education from *Education under Attack 2014* (GCPEA, 2014) as a starting point, the monetary cost of direct attacks and collateral damage to education for the period 2009–2012 was very high.

Enrolment/Access to Education

One of the gravest consequences of the Boko Haram insurgency is the large number of people that have been displaced. The International Organisation for Migration set up a Displacement Tracking Matrix in July 2014 to support the government in collecting and disseminating data on IDPs. As of December 2015 the total number of IDPs in Nigeria was 2,151,979 individuals, identified in Adamawa, Bauchi, Benue, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, Yobe, Nasarawa, Plateau, Kaduna, Kano, Zamfara and Abuja. The report also states that 84 per cent of these had been displaced by the insurgency, while others were the victims of communal clashes in the northern region. The majority of the IDPs were identified in Borno (64 per cent), Adamawa (6.32 per cent) and Yobe (6.1 per cent). 92 percent of them live in host communities, while 8 per cent live in the camps. Children constitute 55.7 per cent of the IDP population and more than half of them are 5 years old or younger. (IOM, 2015)

As many IDPs are sheltered in schools and humanitarian assistance is limited to life-saving interventions, displaced children are generally unable to pursue their education. The occupation of the schools by the IDPs and security forces has damaged and destroyed some infrastructure and denied children access to the schools so occupied. An increase in the number of IDPs in Adamawa during the school holidays in September 2014 led to the use of schools as shelters, preventing classes from resuming at the start of the academic year. Given that education planning does not take account of situations of population increase due to displacement, children are refused attendance at host community schools that do not have the facilities or staff to take on more students. In cases where they are accepted, the overstretching of the resources has reduced the quality of education (IDMC, 2014). Due to their fear of attack or abduction, some parents refuse to allow their children go to school, and they tend to prioritize basic needs such as food and shelter over education. The children's lack of an occupation could lead them into juvenile delinquency, drug addiction, prostitution and continued destitution. (IDMC, 2014)

Years of Education

Research conducted by Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, 2014 showed that treated cohorts in conflict affected areas suffer a loss in terms of average numbers of years of education completed. More specifically, the results suggest that a one standard deviation increase in the number of fatalities in the 5km radius of each household (which corresponds to 97 fatalities) leads to a reduction of 0.6 years of completed education. Given that the average number of years of education is about 5.4, this translates into 11 percent drop relative to the average educational attainment especially in science disciplines as reported in conflict prone areas. (Eleonora *et al.*, 2019).

Scourge of Unemployment

The scourge of unemployment has been a monster plaguing educational development especially in science subjects from the inception of independence. The increase in the number of students in schools does not correspond to the available employment opportunities of teachers. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2020), in their 2018 third-quarter labour report, 23.1% of Nigerians were unemployed. This report indicates that unemployment is increasing in Nigeria. There is no doubt that the various ethno-religious conflicts have contributed to the unemployed state of some Nigerians, as people whose place of work has been destroyed join the unemployed. Supporting this point, Onuoha (2012) posits that poverty and unemployment have forced some of them into secret cults, armed robbery gangs, prostitution and infant soldiers.

Household wealth/poverty effect

Household wealth Conflict may reduce school enrolment and lead to child work for different reasons. For instance, the more a household is affected by adverse economic consequences of the conflict, the more likely that the child will start working to provide additional support (Akresh and de Walque (2014). To test for the presence of this motive behind the conflict-induced increase in child work in North-East Nigeria, results indicated that direct impact of the Boko Haram and other ethno-religious conflict on household wealth is ambiguous and it is likely to be the main reason for an increase in child labour. This could also lead to lots of students opting for art and science courses as against science related disciplines.

Management Strategies of Ethno-Religious crises: The way forward

Through proper education and knowledge of the plight of each ethno religious groups, amicable settlement of the differences could be facilitated. It is a pity to say that an average Idoma, Igbo, Hausa Tiv or

Yoruba man knows nothing about the culture of other tribes in the same country, while Muslims look at Christians with suspicion and contempt and vice-versa. It is important to note that no tribe can operate in isolation, nor can it be all self sufficient. Nigeria is a nation blessed with land and mineral resources with high potentiality of industrial and economic development. In addition to the discovery of crude oil, such other mineral resources, like limestone, tin, gold, silver, iron ore, coals, lead-zinc, gravels, bauxite, sand marble, graphite, stone- zircon, feldspar, and kaolin, to mention a few, are means through which the country could explore her revenue for sustainable economic development. Exclusive dependence of oil, as the only source of income for the nation, is a sign of ungratefulness to God, who endowed them with these resources. It also gives the oil area the opportunity to feel too big as if others are not also blessed with any resources. It will be wise for the government to explore other resources with which the nation is endowed, and this will help in keeping idle hands busy and as well create job opportunities for thousands of Nigerians. This, in turn, will reduce poverty, which is one of the key factors for ethno-religious crises.

There is also the need to revamp the educational policy of the country in such a way that the traditional *Al-Manjiri* education be integrated into the mainstream of education. Experience has shown that the products of the schools have largely been involved in many of the ethno-religious crises in the northern part of the country. This system of education was well flourished in the pre-colonial period of northern Nigeria and had produced great scholars. To find a permanent solution to the social scourge of the *Al-Manjiri*, it is pertinent that the federal government takes a step at giving due attention to this age-long system of education just as it does to the western system of education.

The establishment of the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) by the federal government, for the purpose of stamping out bribery and corruption in the country, is a right step in the right direction as it helps in breaking the monopoly of power in the hands of public officials and the more discretion they are given in the decision making process with little or no accountability. Similar commission needs to be established to deal decisively with those who ignite, or fuel, crises in the community.

One fact still remains that no religion teaches violence and shedding of blood. Rather, every religion teaches endurance, neighbourliness, sanctity of life, and protection of property. Government should create an enabling environment for the leadership of these religions to meet and come up with recommendations and suggestions for adequate penalty for culprits who decide to disrupt the peaceful co-existence of the country.

All over the world the youths are vital and important segment of the society, the youths in Nigeria constitutes over 65% of the population. If these youths are not productively engaged, they could be used as instrument for ethno-religious crisis. Therefore, government at all levels should meaningfully engage them and bring out the best in them. A disciplined and law-abiding youth can create a brighter future for Nigeria, while a lawless, violent and indulgent youth potent grave threat to national security and socio-economic and educational development.

In addition, the Nigerian press can play a big role towards averting religious violence and promoting national peace and stability order. The objectivity of the press in reporting religious matters, will promote religious harmony and peaceful co-existence. It is expected that the mass media practitioners should always imbibe the ethics of professional journalism whenever they are reporting or making news analysis and features.

Furthermore, at the levels of education in Nigeria, Students and their Lecturers should constantly reflect on the value of religious tolerance in a mixed community of religious believers. In all tertiary institutions; symposia, lectures and conferences should be frequently organized on this topic.

II. Conclusion

It has been established from this paper that ethno-religious conflict thrives in Nigeria and have resultant effect and implications on education such as; closure and longer years of stay in school, damage to educational facilities as well as injury to teachers and students thereby reducing the possibility of access to teaching and learning of science education. It is therefore important that priority be given to all stake holders for measures that will foster peaceful co-existence among the different ethnic and religious groups.

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