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<td>Description:</td>
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<td>Category:</td>
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Nigeria is a pluralistic society with multi-ethnic and multi-cultural status. Furthermore, the practice of religion is also pluralistic in nature with three religious as the accepted and recognized ones. They are Islam, Christianity and African Traditional Religion. These religions have elements that unite them and those that divide them. These religions co-exist in the same entity called Nigeria. One daily basis adherents of these religions interact and mingle with one another. This to a good extent makes disagreements and even clashes inevitable. According to Okwueze (2003) it is unfortunate that the history of religious pluralism in Nigeria is replete with all kinds of sad experiences as religion became the step which has facilitated the country’s movement from one crisis to another. The crisis usually threaten he enthronement of democratic governance or its sustainability where it is already in existence. In a pluralist Nigerian society religion has been a source of peace, progress and in many instances a source of crisis. It is seen in some quarters as a means of acquiring political legitimacy in
which case religion dictated the pace of the political democratization, process which hitherto nurtured consciousness in the country.

According to Anugom (2004) there has been an asymmetric of an opposing relationship between the two dominant religions of Islam and Christianity in socio-political affairs of the country without any doubt. Ethnicity arises when social relations antithetical to a group functioning and when social groups are competitive rather than co-operative. They are characterized by cultural prejudices varying degree of socio-economic backwardness and political discrimination.

According to Asogwa (2012) a major advantage of religious pluralism is that it makes for the building of a healthy and vibrant nation if opportunity of relationship and exchange of ideas of varying aspects of societal living are well harnessed and utilized. Such areas include the political, social, economic, cultural, religious as well as educational aspects of human endeavour. It has to be noted however that religion being a two edged sword can be as destructive as it is constructive if not properly handled especially in a multi-religious and multi-cultural nation as Nigeria.

The advantage of multiplicity of religion is further seen in making the society religious to the extent that the people will have the fear of God in
them. The consequence is that the society will be better for it. The manipulation of religion for selfish purposes by some individuals have presented obstacles to democracy in Nigeria. This has often generated conflict and tension among people of different religions especially between adherents of Christianity and Islam (Nkechinyere, 2012). The popular practice of Nigerians is that it is proper to favour people of the same faith with you when you are in a position of authority. As a pluralistic society there is every tendency that every leader that comes must be approached by members of his faith and reminded that they have been neglected over the years by people of other faiths who were previously in power.

It has been observed, and rightly too that political systems may only gain stability in an intensely religious, social, environment when they are in agreement with political norms (Harnischefeger, 2008). Those who subscribe to this school of thought are of the opinion that a decadent and disoriented society can only find a way out of its crisis if it turns to a transcendent authority that is not contaminated by the general decline.

The condition of every society is determined by the status of its religious practice. Many countries in the world today are enjoying peace because they have peaceful religious atmosphere and other in inturmoil because the practice of religion there is being manipulated badly. In a
pluralistic society like Nigeria every religion should be given the right to exist and no one should be preferred to the other thing will make for peaceful co-existence and ultimately peaceful nation. On the other hand, when the leaders decide to manipulate religion it will be discovered that every religion has its good and bad sides. The bad sides are usually not the making of the religion itself but are rather the result of doctrinal misinterpretations by its over zealous and extremist adherents. For instance, the Holy Bible and the Quran (of the Christian and Islamic religions) have rich values that could be harnessed for the enthronement of a peaceful and sustainable development in a country. This observation does not in any way deny the fact that these scriptures contain some portions that are subject to multiple controversial and deadly interpretations especially when read and interpreted in isolation with other relevant portions. Virtually every religion contains some elements which point to it as the only authentic religion founded by God. For the layman with unsophisticated reasoning ability this means that all other religions with their attendant practices are fake ones. It is in this light that religion becomes a divisive, explosive and destructive force or phenomenon in the hands of its over zealous and sometimes selfish adherents. (Asogwa, 2012).
A good observer of political activities in Nigeria in all the republics up to the fourth republic it is obvious that it is organized along religious line. The interest of the people vis-à-vis the person that emerged or will emerge as the president governor or even a senator of a senatorial zone of a given party is to be determined according to religious understanding. It will not be over statement to say that President Goodluck Jonathan is having the kind of in security problem he has today because he is a Christian.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The practice of religion in a pluralistic society is a two edged sword. It can bring about overall peace in that every body will be involved in one religion or the other and for the fact that all religions teach and worship of God and acceptable moral values and the society will be better for it. One the other hand if there is element of manipulation it can portend a lot of trouble for the country. This is so because favouring a particular religion in a pluralistic society means marginalizing others. A situation of this nature does not guarantee peaceful co-existence. According to Okwueze (2002), one of the most fallacious arguments people make is that religion belongs to one world and politics to another. Incidentally such arguments are invariably found in contexts where politicians or their apologists seek unsuccessfully to save themselves from the painful experience of facing issues raised by
religious leaders about their roles (the politicians) in government. They use religion to achieve their goals when it suits them and argue that religion should not be brought into politics when religion or religious leader appear to stand on their way to corrupt, discriminating, inhuman, unacceptable and uncomplimentary attitudes to governance. The fact that religion is sacred makes it necessary for it to be handled with care especially in a pluralistic society like Nigeria. Normally in this kind of society there is a pluralism of religion also.

The aim of the author in this work is to examine how religion is practiced in this kind of society and how it fares in the political life of the people of Nigeria. In the Nigerian experience, it is obvious that religion plays dominant role in the politic of the country even at party level. This was captured correctly by Okwueze (2002) when he observed thus:

“Religion has been part and parcel of politics in a largely negatives sense. The Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) was formed to represent the interest of the Muslim north. The National Council of Nigeria Citizens (NCNC) as well as Action Group (AG) represented also the interest of the Christians, infact for the NPC  the religious factor was so deeply entrenched that one of the foundation members of the party Dr. R. Dikko who ordinarily would have emerged as the leader was dumped because he was a non-Muslim”.
It is fashionable for politicians to proudly identify himself as a staunch muslim when talking to Muslim audience. He also does so when talking to Christians if he is a Christian. In this work it will be examined the extent which this attitude has aided politicians to power and what the nation has gained or otherwise from such attitude.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study is to examine religion in a pluralistic society in a country like Nigeria with emphasis on its political experience. The specific objectives are:

- To examine the nature of religion in such a pluralistic society
- To examine how religion is practiced in such a pluralistic society
- The study will also look at the involvement of religion in the politics of the country.
- The study will also examine the extent religion has been used by politicians over the years.
- The study will examine to what extent religion is abused or manipulated for selfish political reasons.
- The study will attempt to strike balance between religion and politics in the Nigerian polity

- The study will also ascertain to what extent the practice of religion has been affected by its involvement in politics.

1.4 Research Methodology

For the purpose of this study, the researcher adopted narrative, analytical and historical approach in his effort to arrive at reliable and acceptable information and to achieve maximum result. The process of gathering information on contemporary issues was through the use of secondary and primary sources of data collection. This secondary source of data collection was derived from existing textbooks on the related topic being researched. These materials included published and unpublished works, previous projects, dissertations, class notes, Newspaper articles, oral interviews and thesis reports. The information gathered were carefully sieved and presented descriptively and analytically for easy comprehension. The nature of the topic also demanded that, the author should make use of current and past newspaper and magazine reports on issues at state. This is so because religion and society touch so much on contemporary issues which form research materials for scholars in the field. In some cases the
researcher had to browse in order to arrive at information that the cannot reach through research. Therefore it is through these procedures that the analysis of the study were arrived at.

### 1.5 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is on the examination of the nature of a pluralistic society with Nigeria as a case in point. The work also tries to examine the extent to which religion is used in political activities in the country. It also includes the manipulation of religion by various governments in the past and in the contemporary time. The whole is limited on issues that are obtainable in Nigeria.

### 1.6 Significance of the Study

This research is significant to the extent that any one that comes in contact with it will be enriched in the practice of religion in a pluralistic society. The research reveals also that religion can be put into good use or otherwise in a pluralistic society.

The work shows that religion is capable of making a society habitable or hell on earth depending on how the government of the day handles it.
The study to a good extent reveals that religion continues to play a role in the public and political life of the people of Nigeria. However, the work reveals that the problem of Nigeria is not with Islam or Christianity but with Nigerians who from the very beginning of the nation will want to use religion to achieve what they cannot get through fair competition in the ballot box. That is why it has appeared as if religion has been playing a negative role in the affairs of the nation.

The study is of significance in that it calls on all great citizens of this great nation to rise to the task of rebuilding and consolidation.

It also tries to extol the values entrenched in both Islam and Christianity which should be used to galvanize the people into a worth while society.

Furthermore, the study of significance because it still emphasize the positive dimensions of religion for instance according to Asogwa (2012) every known religion preaches and promotes (even by way of camouflage) such moral values as humility honesty justice tolerance etc virtually all religious prohibit killing, discrimination lying cheating etc.

One of the need for the research is also to showcase religion as a promoter of peaceful co-existence. Even in the face of religious pluralism
with its attendant problem, religion still serves as a veritable instrument for engineering peaceful co-existence in society.

Religious leaders of different religions will find the work useful in that it will open their eyes to the fact that in a pluralistic society every one has a right to practice his religion without let or hindrance.

Politicians will find it useful in that they will learn that it is wrong to use religion as campaign strategy and how wrong it is to mix religion and politics.

The findings of this study will further stimulate research in this direction and as well contribute to the number of literatures available on the subject matter.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Emergence of the Nigerian State

Nigeria is reputed to be the most populous country in Africa and the
tenth largest country in terms of population in the world. It is located at the
eastern terminus of the bulge of West Africa. As it is the case with many of
other nations of Africa, Nigeria’s national boundaries results from its
colonial history and cut across a number of cultural and physical boundaries,
Nigeria has a total area of 923,768 square kilometers.

The country is bounded on the west by Benin Republic, it is bounded
on the north east by Chad and to the east and south east by Cameroun.
According to 2002 census Nigerian’s population is over 149,000,000.
Nigerian population is extremely diverse with over 250 ethnic groups. The
pluralistic nature of the country actually accounts for multiple religious
affiliations. According to Anyanwu. etal (2010) Nigeria seem to be the
epitome of its religiosity, piety and Spirituality as manifested in various
forms and modes. There are moderates and extremist fanatics and realists,
simple minded believers and complex adherents, liberals and conservation
etc. They all contribute to the multi religious nature of Nigeria.
In 1914 the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria and the Colony and the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria were merged by Sir Fredrick Lugard. The whole country then became known as the colony and protectorate of Nigeria. Lugard became its first Governor General and he ruled till 1910 when Nigeria voted for independence in 1959 and federal elections were held. On October 1 1960 Nigeria gained independence from Britain An all Nigeria executive council was headed by a Prime Minister Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. On November 16 1960 Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe a pioneer of West African nationalist movement became the first Governor General of a Federation of three of the north, East and West with Lagos as the federal capital. Each of the regions was headed by a premier with a governor as the ceremonial head. On October 1 1963 Nigeria became a federal republic and severed ties with the British government. The country however remained in the common wealth of nations. The governor General position was therefore re-designated as president.

Due to coups and counter coups the country witnessed a prolonged military regime and even a three year civil war (1967-70). The last military government ended in 1999 under General Abdulsalami Abubakar who handed over to General Obasanjo retired. The new president took over a country that faced many problems including a dysfunctional bureaucracy,
collapsed infrastructure and a military that wanted a reward for returning quietly to the Barracks. The president moved fast to retire many of them who have held political positions in the past. The regime tried to put certain things in place aimed at improving the standard of living of all Nigerians. There were problems arising from, introduction of sharia legal system in core northern states, there were ethnic clashes in different states. After two tenures of eight years Obasanjo handed over to Umar Yaradua. He proposed a government of national unity after assuming office on 29th May, 2007. Yaradua died in office on 5th May, 2010 and the Vice president Good Luck Jonathan took over the Mantle of leadership. He went ahead to contest the 2011 presidential election and assumed office as the president of Nigeria. The government of Good Luck Jonathan is on course but so far the government has not achieved much.

According to Echeta (2012), Nigeria is a developing nation that though in recent times has made some stride in development, there are obstacles to these giant strides which makes the improvement on what is on the ground very slow. The size of Nigeria poses a big threat to effective governance. There is ethnic diversity, political complexity and manifestation of religious intolerance in some states of the federation. The democracy run in Nigeria has set backs especially in the area of governance. Democratic
governance is a key aspect of democracy because it is the leadership that pivots the affairs of every other structure in a community and brings other phenomena into a cohesive whole. Leadership determines the extent the principles of democracy are incorporated into the system. Commenting further on the practice of democracy in Nigeria Echeta posited thus. To place Nigerian democratic governance on an evaluation scale must include both the positive and the negative sides. Democracy in Nigeria has not been realized but Nigerians appears to have come to a consensus that democracy is the only acceptable political alternative. The obvious fact about Nigeria’s democracy is that the basic principles of democracy are lacking. This casts doubt on our model of democracy. The leader does not care when the rights of individuals are trampled upon or even when there is obvious insecurity in the land. This has made people to even advocate a return to military government.

As a pluralistic society, Nigeria is always witness one form of crisis or the other. Most of them are as a result of the purposeless administrators that pilot the affairs of the country at onetime or the their. As already noted above various governments have been indifferent to the plight of the masses. The resultant effect of this is ethnic rivalries, religious riots and other riots that normally break out on very flimsy reasons. Ethylene E etal (2004).
Outlined a catalogue of the crises that has befallen the nation in the recent past. They posited, the build ups and tensions of ethno-religious crises in Nigeria from past administration’s mistakes and years rebounded on the first and second tenure of Obasanjo in terms of the frequency, intensity and level of destruction of lives and property in the country. A crises erupted in Lagos in Shagamu on July 17 1999 in reaction to the death of Yoruba indigenes killed in Kano by Hausa Fulani youths during one of the violent inter-religious and ethnic clashes. This is a consequence of the plural nature of the country because in a monolithic society such problems are not very common.

Furthermore, the activities of the Odua people’s congress OPC in Lagos state the same 1999 held residents of Lagos to ransom because it had ethnic coloration. Thus crisis were felt in most areas like Kelu, Mile 12 Mushin, Idi Araba and Ajegunle and residence of these places did not know peace each time members of this group decide to go on rampage. The activities of this group which often resulted in many, deaths forced the federal government to ban ethnic militia. The mutual distrust between the Urhobos, itsekiri and Ijaw ethnic groups snow balled into violent clashes over very minor issues for instance the location of Local government Headquarter. This also claimed lives of innocent citizens. The plural nature
of Nigeria and the hatred for a group as a result of one thing or the other made the Hausas to pounce and kill their Christian neighbours over the sharia implementation and consequently there were reprisal attacks in Owerri, Aba and Onitsha and these actions led to serious human casualties. The intolerant nature of Christianity over traditional religion was responsible for the annihilation of Efuru deity at Ukehe in Enugu State the demolition of Ikenga statue at Owerri by agents suspected to be sponsored by the then military governor of Imo state col. Tanko Zubairu (Ekwunife 2003).

Furthermore, due to the pluralism in both religions and tribes Onwuka (2002) reported there was demolition of shrines and deities in Ogidi, Anambra state on September 1 2000 by angry Christian youths of the Town as well as those of Ezekwe community in Yala Local Government Area of Cross River State. The Ezekwe community incidence followed the failure of an entreaty by the traditional worshippers on the Christians to allow peace to reign during the peace week for the atonement of the deities. The boundary dispute between the Jukuns and the TIV claimed lots of innocent lives. The tribal and religions crisis in plateau state broke out in September 2001 and it was described by Boatmang (2001) as “hell fire” this incident claimed the lives of about 168 persons and about 658 people wounded. This crisis in plateau became so serious that on Tuesday may 18,
2004 the president Olusegun Obasanjo decided to declare a state of emergency in the state. According to Source magazine (2004)

The president Olusegun Obasanjo opined that the situation in plateau state to say the least constitutes a challenge to our democracy negates the norms of national human interaction contradicts the level of civil society and devalues opportunities for peace stability co-existence and social justice. It constitutes a grave threat to law and order and a great danger to security in plateau state and neighbouring states of Bauchi, Nassarawa, Taraba and Benue.

Furthermore, there were allegations of cattle theft by predominantly Hausa/ Fulani herdsmen against certain indigenous villagers and counter allegation of despoliation of farmland against cattle grazers were recorded as the immediate reasons for the violence.

The pluralism that exists especially in one state or the other breeds bad blood easily among the people. For instance it was reported that a crisis took place in Benue state when armed militia suspected to be Tivs attacked Jato-Aka town and Unongo village killing ten persons and injuring several others (Uja, 2004). The country of the former gubernatorial candidate in the state Paul Unwnge was completely razed down and the Tome of Unongo’s father destroyed while property worth millions of naira were lost during the incident.
These are the political implications of the plural nature of the Nigerian state. The complex nature makes it possible for crisis to erupt even with the smallest provocation. The sitting of certain infrastructures and resources are possible flash point for one riot of the other. The ugly angle is that innocent people end up losing their life’s or being negatively affected for what they knew nothing about.

2.2 Practice of Religion in Nigeria

Nigeria is a multi-religious country with three major religions dominating the religious life of the people. These three religious are African Traditional Religion, Islam and Christianity. The number of Mosques and churches that adorn Nigerian cities, towns and villages are clear evidences that Nigerians are deeply religious. The number of worshippers that turn out for Sunday services on Sundays and those that turn out for Jumat prayers on Fridays further proves the point that Nigerians indeed are religious. According to Arda (Association of Religions and data Archives) the Nigerian population is divided into two great groups. Christians (45.5%) Muslims (45.5%) and other religious (9.1%) mostly ethnic religions. In terms of Nigerians major ethnic groups religious affiliations, the Hausa ethnic group in the North is 95% Muslims and 5% Christians, the West which is Yoruba tribe is 60% Christians and 30% Muslim with 10% going to
adherents of other African Religious. While the Igbos in the East and the Ijaws in the South are 98% Christians and 2% practice traditional religions. The Middle Belt of Nigeria contains the largest number of minority ethnic groups in Nigeria and they are mostly Christians and members of traditional religions with few Muslim converts. According to Onyeidu (2001) of these three main religious beliefs in Nigeria, the African Traditional Religion which is indigenous existed in the society before the arrival of the “imported” religions of Islam and Christianity.

**African Traditional Religion**

Specifically Traditional Religious is an indigenous religious practice which the people inherited from their forefathers. According to Ugwu (2002) it is a religion full of lives and activities through ceremonies, festivals e.t.c. It places emphasis on virtues and morals. The practice of African tradition religion is based on African world view with a hierarchy of the following beings (Metuh, 1987).
The religion is not based on scriptures or chronicled on a founder. It is a community based religion that does so much to instill discipline on the people with lots of dos and don’ts. It is a guide to the life of an African. Whenever an African records success in his life he attributes it to his god and if he experiences problems he will suspect that the gods have been offended and this calls for propitiation. An African is committed to his religion hence Ugwu (2002), citing Mbiti, made the following observations “wherever the African is there is his religion; he carries it” to the field where he is sowing seeds or harvesting a new crop, he takes it with him to beer party or to attend a funeral ceremony. And if he is educated he takes religion with him to the examination room at school or in the university. If he is a politician he takes it to the House of Representatives”. There are religious functionaries that facilitate the practice of African traditional religion. These are priests, diviners, devotees, queens etc. These functionaries are selected
by the deities themselves and when they are called they are duty bound to respond. Despite the attacks launched on it by Christianity and Islam, a handful of Nigerians still practice the religion and its existence is not a secret.

**Christianity**

According to Nweze, (2012), The adoption of Christianity as a way of religious worship among many Nigerians is the result of the long years of contact between the Europeans and Nigerians. The teachings of Christ are the basis of Christianity. It is a scriptural religion that in which its doctrines and teachings are based in the Holy Bible. This document is held in high esteem by the Christians. The charismatic figure in Christianity is Christ whose death and resurrection after three days confirmed the faith of Christians making them very strong followers. The central message of Christianity is love of one another and forgiveness. This is a rare quality of Christians where they have to love their enemies and pray for them. In his own contribution Ugwu (2002) made the following remarks

“Christianity is a missionary religion holding Christ’s message as intended for the whole world is not just for a particular area or people. In Mark 16:15f. Jesus is quoted as saying” Go ye into the world and preach the
gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. Christianity has been not only a religious force but also a social and political one (Barret, 1982).

As a religion Christianity has been responsible for good moral life of Nigerians and also assisted in transforming Nigeria to what it is today. Christianity brought education and education opened the eyes of Nigerians to virtually evening i.e. medicine, fashion, science and technology, democracy, sense of security, law and order and every other thing that makes life worth living. Nigerians owe a lot to Christianity. The mandate that Christ gave to the disciples to spread the good news to all corners of the world is being held in the highest esteem by the followers hence the proliferation of churches in all nooks and crannies of Nigeria. Christianity promises its practitioners life after death. This accounts for seriousness in practicing the faith so that if one is upright even when he dies there will be life for him/her in the next world. Christians have sense of safety when they practice Christianity well. There is a feeling that God will take care of all their needs and nothing can harm them. Christianity for its practitioners gives a sense of individual fulfillment to its adherents and it also gives meaning to life. This is because without Christ in the life of any person the
person is only a temporary being who will pass away with time but when one is in Christ he is assured of eternal life.

**Islam**

Islam is a monotheistic religion founded by Prophet Mohammed. Islam itself means total submission to the will of Allah. The religion was started by the prophet in the 7th century AD. The religion is based on a revealed scripture, the Quran which contains all the doctrines and expected life style of all adherents of the religion. The followers of the prophet and the religion are called Moslems. Islam started in Saudi Arabia and spread rapidly to different parts of the world like Malaysia Bangladesh Morocco, Nigeria etc. Islamic religion believes in Angels and they are seen as being indivisible and immortal. They are heavenly servants of God who surround his throne and worship him daily. According to Anyacho (2005), Moslems also believe that evil spirits demons and Satan exist. The chief of the evil spirit is Satan (Shaitan or Iblis) who disobeyed God by refusing to bow to Adam. He is dangerous, a mischievous being who opposes the power of God and tempts man. The Koran contains the prophet’s revelations which was collected and compiled by his followers after his death. According to Islamic tradition the Koran was originally written on palm, leaves parchment stone and shoulder blades before it was finally compiled. The orthodox version
was established during the rule of Uthman (644-656). The Muslims believe in the sharia as the cannon law which regulates the life of all Moslems and it is believed that they came from Allah.

According to Onah (2012), quoting Ekwunife (1992:8) “Although it has been acknowledged that religion has been abused and used as a source of conflicts in Nigeria, the fruits of religion are: “peace, joy, brotherhood, neighbourliness, life not ethnic prejudice, hatred nor fratricide”(pg 8).

2.3 The Role of Religion in a Pluralistic society

Religious pluralism is an attitude or policy regarding the diversity of religious belief system co- existing in society. It portends that a particular religion is not the sole and exclusive source of truth and thus the acknowledgement that at least some truths and real values exist in other religions. As acceptance of the concept that two or more religions with mutually exclusive truth claims are equally valid. There is the understanding that the exclusive claims of different religions turn out upon closer examination to be variations of universal truths that have been tangent since time immemorial. This provides the conditions for harmonious co-existence between adherents of different religions and religious denomination. Religious pluralism also serves as a social norm and not
merely the synonym for religious diversity. One of the conditions for
religious pluralism is freedom of religion which encompasses all religions
acting within the law in a particular region whether or not an individual
religion accepts that other religions are legitimate or that freedom of
religious choice and religious plurality in general are good things. Many
religious believers believe that religious pluralism should entail not
competition but co-operation.

In a pluralistic society according to scientology answers the most
important function of religions in a pluralistic society is salvation. This
salvation actually has to do with making man “safe” or “whole” in his
present life Religion accomplish this by giving the followers the means to
ward off difficulty or by showing what they must do or believe to have
meaningful existence safe from the major vicissitudes of life. This salvation
can be attained in different ways as the various religions dictate. In a
pluralistic society the many religions that exist have different methods of
worship and the bottom-line is that salvation is sure.

Another important function of religion on the society is the protection
of the doctrinal stance of the various faiths that obtain. Every religious body
preaches the sanctity of life, the need to behave well and the essence of good
relationship. Religions in it’s over all importance tries to sanities the society
for the good of every body. If the society is lacking in the ideal of religions that obtain the world will be an equivalent of hell and injustice will be the order of the day. Right conduct feature prominently in virtually all religions and is expressed in various forms as the ten commandments of Judaism, the Golden rule in Christianity, the noble Eightfold path in Buddhism and the way of dharma in Hinduism. Mircea Eliade noted that while Religion concerns the sacred, it also guides human conduct.

Virtually all religions provide members ways of resolving their interpersonal problems. This takes the form of pastoral counselling, particularly when the parishioner’s problems has to do with marital difficulties, problems at work, school or with a fellow member. Religious bodies suggest ways of solving such problems and some solutions are reading books, listening to recorded lecture’s in the privacy and embarking on prayers, fasting and giving out gifts to, the needy. The methods to be adopted depend on the religious body or denomination.

In a pluralistic society Religion plays dual roles and for the positive roles, religion help to support the government of the day by making sure that the citizen obey rules of the land making it clear that every ruler is appointed and supported by God. Romans12 1-5 states that:
Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities for there is no authority except which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently he who rebels against what God has instituted and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority then do what is right and he will commend you. For me is God’s servant to do good. But if you do wrong be afraid for he does not bear the sward for nothing. He is God’s servant, an agent of wrath to bring on the wrong doe. Therefore it is necessary to submit to authorities not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience:

In pluralistic societies, Religion comes handy in resolution of conflicts. According to Ugwueze (2008) in the midst of Niger Delta crises religious bodies have not been keeping “quiet.

In different occasions the Nigeria supreme council for Islamic affairs and Christian Association of Nigeria have vehemently condemned the activities of the Niger Delta Militants and have also urged the federal government to enforce the theory of political, economic and social libration emancipation and transformation of an oppressed poor and marginalized ethnic group within a multicultural and pluralistic Nigeria society. The call for dialogue between the government and the Niger Delta people in which if sincerely adhered to will bring about an end to the crisis. Religion does not observe boundaries; it works for all groups in a pluralistic setting. All ethnic
groups in a country benefit immensely from the service that religion can offer.

In view of the role of religions in national development it is apparently clear that religions are veritable tools that need not be neglected in achieving enviable national development. It will be a mark of ingratitude of Nigerians fail to acknowledge the fact that religious have been and are still contributing immensely to national development in Nigeria activities and programmes of different religious bodies in Nigeria that are aimed at national development should be promoted and encouraged by all Nigerian citizens irrespective of their religious affiliation social political and cultural background. By so doing the positive roles of religion in various aspects of life and in all tribes and groups that make up the pluralistic society their potentials will be harnessed for the good of all the people.

Not withstanding the good and positive roles that religion play in a pluralistic society, it also plays negative roles. Religion brings disunity in a pluralistic society like Nigeria. Most often people of the same state are in the state of war due to religious differences. The case of Jos plateau state comes to mind very easily. The people of Jos North and Jos South do not see eye to eye. They kill each other at will and have refused to co-exist because they are of different religious leanings. Furthermore according to Ugwueze
one of the major religious crisis ever witnessed in Nigeria on a large scale was the Maltasine riot which took place in Kano in 1980. The Massacre of innocent lives was so unprecedented. A religious sect led by one Mohammed Marwa decided to confront the authorities in Kano and this led to a religious crisis which left in its wake several deaths of toll which rose to over four thousand people. This incident repeated itself in other places like Kaduna, Gombe, Maladuguri, Jimeta and Bauchi.

In Zamfara in 1999 the governor declared the state Sharia state and this act spread to other northern states but that of Kaduna was resisted by Christian indigenes which sparked trouble and claimed the life of over one thousand people.

With the advent of Christianity and Islam in Nigeria, Most of our valuable traditional religious objects are burnt from time to time; at times the adherents of African Traditional religions were persuaded to do so while in some cases Christians and Moslems burn that Shrines and religious objects by force, such objects are worthy of note, they are rich arts and symbolic works of our forefathers which when burnt would be hard to recover and put in our Museums. This makes meaningful and fruitful research practically impossible for scholars (Ugweze, 2008).
2.4 The Nexus between Religion and Politics

As a pluralistic ethnic and multi-religious country, every thing that is to be done in Nigeria has to reflect the various interests. According to Abogunrin (1984), Religion and politics are two inseparable institutions in the human social psyche and structure. He equally asserts that earthly governments are mere agents of God’s theocratic government of the physical and the spiritual world Ababakre (1984), writing from the Islamic perspective suggests that Islam is a way of life which dictates the political ideology and practice in any Islamic society. He however points out that the ideals of Islam is a good guide to political conducts but the practices of such ideals are usually influenced by the socio-cultural institution in the society including politics.

The above positions not withstanding some scholars are of the opinion that there should not be a close relationship between politics and religion especially since according to proponents of this position both phenomena belong to different realms of existence sacred and profane. Those in this group are mostly Christians. However, Balogun (1965) posits that Islam does not discriminate between religion and secular matters. On the contrary Christians always base their argument on the statement of Jesus Christ that “Give on to ceaser what is ceasers ‘ and unto God the things that are
“God” (Matt 22:17-22) this phrase has often been used to exclude clergymen who want to venture into politics. Matthew Hassan Kukah however made the following clarifications “what Jesus really meant was not that religion and politics do not mix nor did he mean that Christians should not participate in politics….. The coin was a representation of the power of ceaser and that was why the coin had ceaser’s sign… in the case of God his authority is over and above the realm of Ceaseris Empire. In that sense both ceaser and his coin are under the aegis of God and the issue of separation is an aberration (Kukah 1998). These arguments come up mainly because of the nature of politics that is obtainable in this country in which people go into dirty things in their quest for power. There is a believe that politics corrupts religion. Political leaders often manipulate religion to their selfish benefits. Be that as it may the fact must be stated in the views of (Danoye) that since the relationship between the sacred and profane is symbiotic there is no reason why religion should not influence political ideologies and vice versa. Where this interaction is possible and allowed the nature of the society and the strata there in quite a lot to do in dictating the mode of such relationship. In a religiously homgenoies society religion and politics can mingle well and there will be absolute peace and smooth governance. In a complex and pluralistic society the divergent religious views will not allow
for cordial relationship between religion and politics. However in the views of Alford (1981), religion and politics can interact in a pluralistic society on some essential correlations is the secularization of politics weakness in religious beliefs and separation of religion from other areas of life. For this relationship to be fruitful the society and its citizenry have a lot to contribute to its success especially based on the practice of their religious beliefs and ideals.

The case of Nigeria has been given various interpretations. In the views of Asaju (1990) there is a politicization of religion in the body polity of the state. He used the position of Theophilus Danjuma as a reference point when he suggested that “religious fanaticism and favoritism have also been politically employed to polarize the people and sustain unhealthy tension in Nigeria. This position shows that it is a fact that religion has affected politics negatively and politics has affected religion negatively also. Politician’s manipulate religion to enable them wins elections and loyalty of their supporters Often times Nigerians go out of their way to kill each other on religious matters because of wrong orientation. The secular nature of Nigeria was a ploy to discourage the use of religion for government official positions and transactions. This has not however deterred Nigerians from using religion to exploit the masses. Yusul Bala Usman captured the
situation appropriately when he posited thus. “That the elite have used
religion as a tool of exploitation to achieve selfish socio-economic ends.

The government of Nigeria in view of the pluralsitic and heterogeneous
nature of Nigeria has decided to play safe and not to adopt any of the three
religions as a state religions at the expanse of others bearing in mind that this
is an invitation to anarchy and disorder. The effect of this is secularization of
political policies parties and values. When a head of state is a Christian the
vice has to be a Muslim) e.g. Obasanjo/ Akuku) ticket, (Jonathan and Sambo)
ticket . From the foregoing, one can safely assert that politics and religion in
Nigeria can not easily be separated because they affect and in fact came to
bear on virtually every thing that is done in the country. However it is clear
that the life and character of our leaders does not show that they practice any
religion at all. The fact remains that in politics issues of religion can not be
neglected and vice versa.

2.5 Ethnic and Religious Pluralism in Nigeria

According to Otite (1990), The ethnic virus has been one of the most
important causes of social crisis and political instability in Nigeria, and
ethnicity has been perceived in general as a major obstacle to the overall
politic-economic development of the country. In another view, it is expected
that a multi ethnic and multi-cultural state like Nigeria will also love a multiplicity of religions. Not withstanding their number these religions have one objective and should be accorded equal recognition. Being a social fact any political system in such society will only gain stability if the two system religion and politics are in terms (Hamischfeger, 2008), In his own view, Asogwa (2012) observe that “religious pluralism makes for the building of a healthy and vibrant nation if the opportunities of relationship and exchange of ideas on varying aspects of societal living are well harassed and utilized such areas include the political social economic, cultural religious as well educational aspects of human enrolvour. It has to be noted however that religion is a two edged sword which can be destructive as well as constructive depending on how it is handled in a multi-religious and multicultural nation like Nigeria.

Nigeria is characterized by a multiplicity of ethnic groups in addition to multiple religions and cultures. According to Nnoli (1994) the content of diverse cultures alone and the ethnocentrism it breeds are not sufficient factors in themselves to generate ethnicity. It is rather the degree of socio-economic competition which characterizes the nature and content of the contact among ethnic groups that either generates or inhibits ethnicity. In this dimension he identifies the subtle socio-political and economic self-
interests of the elites in the factionalization of the communal groups and politicization of ethnicity. For Nnoli it is this politicization of ethnicity that has enthroned the ethnic phenomenon as a prime and perpetual determinant factor in Nigeria’s political and economic forturne”. From the views expressed above it will not be out of place to assert that ethnicity enhanced religious pluralism in Nigeria. The tendency is that people of a particular ethnic group tend to belong to the same religious group. Consequently Nigerians are divided along ethnic lines, religious leanings and cultural boundaries. This problem was however created by the regionalization of Nigeria during the colonial days. These issues that arose as a result of ethnicity has created a lot of instability in the country in its religious afflictions and political arrangement. It can be asserted that this ethnic problem is responsible for constant agitation for states because overtimes some ethnic groups were lumped together with those whom they do not blend with interms of religion and culture.

Religious pluralism in Nigeria has influenced a lot of things along religious likes people tend to associate more with those that belong to the same faith with, them. The voting pattern of Nigerians is according to the religion of the candidate hence people campaign in the churches and in the mosques. According to Asogwa (2012) Apart from some spiritual passages
of the various religions that serves as the basis for exclusive religiosity, the teaching and propagation of fanaticism and dogmatism equally serve as the seed of religious intolerance” This is responsible for wrong orientation given to people by different religious leaders. They are brainwashed and strongly Indoctrinated with false ideas concerning other religions. The activities of over zealous members of various religious groups show that they use religion to achieve other motives like political power and economic compensation. Religious pluralism to a good extent undermines peaceful coexistence in any given country in that one group will want to overshadow the other. It is a fact that where many religious exist religious harmony is a far cry because from time to time one issue or the other will arise to overheat the system.

In a pluralistic society like Nigeria, the various ethnic groups agitate for freedom from the bigger ethnic body. Sometime they allege marginalization both in religious issues and political benefits. This has accounted for both proliferation of religions and constant agitation for local governments and states. They have the believe that when an ethnic group is on its own, they have the freedom to worship the way they like and have a better share of dividend of democracy. The fear of domination is making the middle belt to agitate to be separated from the dominant Hausa Fulani
hegemony. The forceful lumping of incompatible ethnic groups has given rise to ethnic conflicts which is a common place in Nigeria today. Osaghae supports this position by referring to violent clashes among minority groups in Ogoniland over their political and economic marginalization in spite of their being the major source of the nation’s wealth.

From the forgoing this author wants to assert that a relationship exists between religion and ethnicity in a pluralistic society like Nigerians. The two factors each other influence negatively or positively as the case may be. It will be noted that in a particular ethnic group religion plays the role of unifying the people and ensuring their loyalty.
CHAPTER THREE
THE OVERALL INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON NIGERIA AS A NATION

3.1 Influence of Religion on the Cultural Changes in Nigeria

According to Ugwu (2002) the Nigerian society is dynamic just like any other society and consequently susceptible to changes. The new religions of Christianity and Islam that have come into our system brought in a lot of positive changes and infact dealt some damaging blows on the culture of the people of Nigeria. Theses impacts can be felt in our method of worship, political system, eating habits, marriage, social system, the economic lifestyle etc. According to Idowu quoted by Ugwu (2002) one or two things has happened to many religion in any given situation: modification with adaptation or extinction. This is the fate of all cultures that have had contact with theses foreign religious.

Consequent upon the incursion of foreign religion in the cultural life of the people of Nigeria there were many changes in the society. One of the cultural life style of Nigerians that changed as a result of religion is the social life of the people. Socially, the Nigerian lifestyle has been affected by the coming of foreign religion. The level of interaction among men and women changed, the men now regard women as human beings who also
deserve to exist and not regarded as second class citizens. Western education and indeed Christianity opened people’s eyes to know their rights in the society to challenge in human treatments that were meted out to them by the traditional setting. This has made it possible to even challenge certain maltreatments in the court. These days children choose carriers by themselves and not parents imposing carrier on their children. Marriage is now a matter of choice on the side of the girl and boy. The era of parents forcing their children on each other does not rise again. The polygamous lifestyle of many Nigerians no longer obtains. It will be anti-social for a young man to appear in an occasion with two women on his two sides as his wives. This actually portrays him as an irresponsible fellow. This is also the case with the number of children that people bear these days. Christianity talks about family planning in which couples will have as many children as they can possibly cater for. The era of having many children a couple cannot fend for is gone. The awareness is being created everyday that too many children does not make a couple look responsible and tells on them economically. To cap it all, it is a crime not to train any of your children because every child deserves education.

According to Agha (2004) formerly the Nigerian society was awash with cultural bondage and superstitions. There were rampant cases of
witchcraft, ritual murder, human sacrifice, killing of twins and their mother, human sacrifice, witch-hunting and so many other evil cultural practices. Christianity dealt deadly blows on theses in human cultural life of the people. Christianity stopped the killing of twins and their mothers the missionaries even built a home where the twins and their mothers were taken care of. These twins grew up to become national leaders, great politicians, scholars and infact other responsible Nigerians.

The food culture of Nigerians was also changed due to the coming of Christianity according to Agha (2004). About 85% eighty five percent of the food crops we enjoy today were introduced into Nigeria by missionaries when they introduced Christianity. The introduction of foreign food crops, fruits and vegetables has not only enriched Nigeria, but it has also been a source of good health and the growth of the population. As a result of the cultural changes in Nigeria today, there is a reduction in frequent local community fends and bloody clashes that were common place on the past.

Furthermore, the rigorous and irrational discrimination practiced against the victims of the ‘Osu” Caste system is fast losing ground in the Igbo society and in other Nigerian societies where such things were practiced.
According to Iwe (1985), the transformation of our culture which led to the acceptance of science and technology has given birth to the following:

i. Various disease and ailments have been brought under medical and rational control, the health of our people has improved, infant mortality rate has fallen and many child bearing women have continued to have adequate clinical care.

ii. Incipient industrialization is increasingly becoming a feature of our culture now we have industrially produced food items like garri, palm oil, groundnut oil, etc, we also have industries for the production of many households items.

Furthermore, within our reach are mass communication media and telephone networks we have communication gadgets like radio, television and printed newspaper through which information of all that happen worldwide are communicated to us against what obtained in the past.

We are all living witness of the remarkable transformation of our system of transport. This has facilitated travelling with less risk. Our culture has joined the mainstream of world civilization in terms of free flow of men, money ideas and good rendered easily and fairly cheap by modern changes
in transport and communication. Our culture can no longer be insular and isolated.

3.2 Religion as an Agent of Tension Hostility and Violence

Religion in all societies is an instrument of cohesion, unity and progress. It is also used to control the social and spiritual life of the people in a community and in the wider society. Every society has a religion in one form or the other. In the case of Nigeria according to Edlyne et al. (2004):

Religion is a means to perpetuate violence, fueling of ethnic consciousness and solidarity, acquisition of political power and socio-economic gains, massive killings and the wanton destruction and vandalization of property of those considered infidels or who pay allegiance to other religions. As a means of commandeering political legitimacy in Nigeria it has dictated the pace of the political democratization process which hitherto nurtured ethnic consciousness in the country (pg 20).

Being a multi religious country religion is taken into consideration in the formulation of policies, appointment of people to political positions and even giving out job opportunities at federal level. Every political leader in Nigeria is supposed to respect the secular nature of the nation and to be fair to all recognized religions. Be this as it may, often times fanatical religious leaders will deliberately decide to truncate the peaceful nature of the nation and incite their followers to embark on widespread killings and destruction of people’s properties. However according to Nnana (2004)
“religious violence is neither particularly Nigerian phenomenon nor is it a phenomenon of a recent origin. It has wherever it occurred come about either in the form of inter-religious violence, intra religious violence or any possible combination of these two major categories”.

The Nigerian case has always been the case of a fundamentalist Muslims rising up against their Christian neighbours. To demonstrate this position better I will analyse the violent activities of two major Islamic sects i.e. the Maitasine sect and the Boko Haram sect. I will also comment on the crisis that followed the introduction of sharia in the north.

**The Maitasine Disturbances in Nigeria**

According to Eliagwu (1998) cited by Nnanna maitatsine has been identified as being responsible for much of the religious violence that rocked northern Nigeria in the early and middle of 1980s. These mayhem have been the handwork of one Mohammed Marwa Maitasine who is a Cameroonian by origin. He is also referred to as Musa Machaniki.

According to Okwueze (2003) Mohammed Marwa Maitasine had his famous kingdom in the heart of Kano with about 10,000 followers. Towards the end of 1980 Maitasine struck following a two week ultimatum given to him by Kano state government to quit the area said to be illegally occupied
by his followers. In response to this they put Kano under siege for two weeks killing and maiming thousands of innocent people. That riot claimed about 4,177 lives and property worth millions of naira were destroyed. Anyacho (2005). The members of the sect put up a bold front to the extent that they resisted the police and infact killing a good number of them. The police could not contain the crisis and the military had to be drafted to quell the crisis. Eliagwu (1993). The disturbances of this year was a surprise to Nigerians. Many of the perpetrators were arrested jailed including their leader but surprisingly their leader was released after some time and more disturbances were recorded. In 1982 they struck in Kaduna and Bulun Kutu Borno State with attendant loss of lives and properties. As if that was not enough, the group still struck in Jimeta Adamawa state in Feb 27, 1984 according to Anyanwu (2005) 763 people lost their lives in the Jimeta crisis. In April 1985 there was still another Maitasine riot in Gombe former Bauchi state and over one hundred lives were lost and properties worth millions of naira equally wasted. The Maitasine riots were both inter and intra-religious disturbances because their anger was not with other faiths alone but with other Moslems whom they do not agree with. The easily took arms against the main Moslem group due to unresolved differences and non Muslims whom they call unbelievers.
According to Eliagwu (1993) quoted by Nnanna (2004) even though the Maitasine sect was not involved other Islamic fundamentalist sects had been responsible for the Muslim/Christian inter-religious violence which caused so much loss of lives and properly in May 1980 in Zaria that the resultant insecurity forced many Igbos, Yorubas and other southerners to flee Kaduna emasse. The same is true of the Islamist fundamentalist attack on Christian churches, shops and market places on October 30 1980. In 1987 a crisis erupted in College of Education Kafanchan which spread to Zaria, Kaduna and the environs and more than thirty people lost their lives with a lot of injured people houses were burnt and three mosques were also burnt. This led to the banning of all religious activities in all higher institutions in the North them. This crisis was described by the then military president as a “civilian coup”. According to Anyancho (2005) in 1991 Bauchi State still witnessed another riot in which the extremists fought over who controls the abatour and this led to the death of 150 people and 82 were injured and property worth over five million naira were destroyed. In the second part of the same year 1991 Kano recorded another religious riot in which the then governor Col. Idris Garba gave a casualty toll of 15 deaths, 34 wounded, eight burnt houses, 42 burnt shops and fifteen damaged motor vehicles (National Concord of October 18 1991), quoted by Anyacho (2003). The list
is endless and this is what the country has been losing to religious intolerance and the aggression has always come from the Moslem sect with the Christians on the receiving end.

Sharia Crisis

According to Diara (2012), the adoption of Sharia as a state law in Northern Nigeria began in Zamfara state on October 27, 1999 at the instance of the then governor Ahmed Sani Yerima. This action later spread like a wild fire in all the core northern states like, Kaduna, Sokoto, Niger, Yobe, Borno, Katsina, Bauchi, Kano, Jigawa and Gombe. This development did not take into consideration the fact that there existed Christian minorities in these states. The implementation to an extent met with some resistance and led to some unhealthy developments leading to loss of lives. The case of Kaduna was most prominent because the Christian indigenes of the state rose to the occasion and protested violently against the law. This led to confrontation with the Moslems. According to British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) African Service of 22nd Feb, 2000 as many as 25 bodies were picked by police from the streets the previous night. By September 2000 the same station reported that Sharia related violence claimed well over fifteen lives and properties worth millions of naira were destroyed. The story of loss of lives over the issue of Sharia dominated the news between year
2000-2004. However, as rightly predicted by the then president Obasanjo that Sharia will die a natural death gradually came to pass. Besides challenging the secular nature of Nigeria, Sharia compromised the faith of the non-Moslems in these states. This is a clear case of religious intolerance because Sharia assumed that no other religion existed.

**The Boko Haram Challenge**

The sect ‘Boko Haram’ came to be known with this name because of what they were teaching. The Hausa interpretation of their name means that western education is a sin. The sect came into being in 2002 and settled in Maiduguri Borno State. They claimed to hate any thing that has to do with civilization. Their leader Mohammed Yusuf condemned all sorts of foods and drinks and enjoined its members to take only honey and local youghout. The group claims that it wants sharia laws to obtain in twelve core northern states. According to Isidore (2012) Mohammed Yusuf’s first disciples were mainly the poor and highly disadvantaged of the society. “Many poor Muslim families from across northern Nigeria as well as neighbouring countries enrolled their children at the school” (Newswatch 2011:19). The group according to Bulablin Garnam who is one of the leaders was quoted by Newswatch of August 2011 as saying that they were fighting Jihad a holy war against those that are sabotaging their religion. He pointed out that the
saboteurs of Islam include politicians, traditional rulers, security operatives and unbelievers. They vowed to cut down as many of their enemies as they come across. The sect has its base in Maiduguri Boko stage and occupies a compound as large as 4km in size which contains a training ground, living quarters, school, Amory and manufacturing workshop for bomb fabrications. They have in their possession state of the art cars, assault rifles like AK47, GPMG (general purpose machine gun) hand grandees in addition to materials for bomb fabrication. The leader Mohammed Yusuf was said to be stupendously rich and in fact in one of his accounts he had ₦800,000,000. (Eight hundred million naira. According to newswatch August 1, 2011 one Mohammed Manga a Boko Haram adherent was paid four million naira for the suicide bombing of the police headquarters and the mandate actually was to kill the then police inspector general Hafiz Ringin. According to Isdore (2012) with the breeding ground for sectarian violence properly prepared a section of Nigeria became a future thorn on the flesh for its corporate existence. From Maiduguri there was a progressive enlargement and development of Islamic fundamentalist school founded on a falsified doctrine of Islamic religion”. It was in July 2009 that Boko Haram came to limelight as a full blown sectarian school of violence and description of society.
3.3 The Contributions of Religion to the Overall Development of Nigeria

As a matter of fact religion has a lot to contribute to the development of Nigerian in all ramifications. Religion primarily provides spiritual guide to the people in their daily chores but the challenges that the present day societies are facing including Nigeria demands that religion to a good extent should come handy. According to Nweze (2012) religion has served a purpose which belongs to the very fabric of life itself. Religion cuts across every aspect of life, law, philosophy, political, social and economic life of the people. For any society to survive and withstand the challenges of the time, that society must embark on teaching and encouraging high level morality. Religion and morality go together religion provides Nigeria and Nigerians with moral way of life that will guide the lifestyle of the citizens. Without morality crime rate will soar, bribery and corruption will surpass its present level. Without morality the marriage institution will take another dimension in which fathers will marry their daughters and many other crimes will ensure. Religion to a good extent tries to impress it on the people especially the leaders that morality should be their watch word so also the citizenry.
In the view of Anyacho (2005) religion can also influence the law of the society. As soon as a particular society adopts a particular religion, the legal systems of that country is affected by the laws of the religion. With the adoption of Christianity the western legal system was adopted and imposed on the Nigerians. With the adoption of Islamic religion, Muslims agitated and are allowed to operate some legal system in the states where Moslems are predominant. This is the consequences of a multi religious society.

Religion helps to purify the culture of the people. It makes the culture to fit into the prevailing societal standards. It is a general view that religion is a product of the people’s culture. The case of Nigeria is different correct this sentence in that the two major religions obtainable are alien religions that are always at logger heads with the culture of the people in this circumstance religion to a good extent purifies the culture and make them acceptable to the larger world communities. It is in this vein that issues like human sacrifice, killing of twins, relegation of the women folk to the background and all other obnoxious practices were stopped. The cultural practice to a good extent have religious therefore and in the case of Islam the culture of the practicing communities were subsumed because Islam they say is a way of life.
Socially speaking religion binds people together and provokes the sense of social obligations in the society. There is always the spirit of oneness among people of the same religion. Among Christians the spirit of brotherhood exists to the extent that whatever happens to one is the concern of all such is the case among Moslems. This spirit of oneness is expected to extend to the attitude of people to the national cause so that peace will reign in Nigeria as a whole. In the view of Anyacho (2005) the economic environment has its effect on the people’s habit and this also affects their religion. There are go spell truths in these theories as evidenced in both economic and social policies of modern nations in most nations religious values play more important roles than the technical know how. Every religious challenge affects the social order and results in economic change have its religious legitimation. Religion to a good extent has helped the development and growth of democracy in Nigeria. The numerous religious leaders in Nigeria devoted major part of their sermons condemning undemocratic and illegitimate regimes of the military and insisted that democracy in ordained by God and must be embraced by all nations including Nigeria.

According to Acha (1991) quoted by Nweze (2012), he opined that religious people should pray to God and preach to both candidates and
electorates to have the love and fear of God in mind in all their election undertakings. The implication of this is that religious preaching and prayers are vital in the democratic process of any nation like Nigeria Nweze (2012) asserted:

Through the religious preaching, some religious adherents have developed their intentions for different political positions. The religious people indeed have given a new meaning to politics in our society for the past ten years of democracy in Nigeria. They have shown us that the aspiration of Nigerians to see the dividends of democracy should translate in their lives in the form of better living standards for the majority of people beyond the enrichment of individual pockets (pg 139).

Religion plays a role in the education of the citizenry. According to Ugwueze (2008) religion teaches men eternal truths about God and the supernatural world, about man the human destiny and the end time. Furthermore, religious bodies in this country have been involved in the establishment of schools at Nursery primary, secondary and even tertiary levels to help to alleviate the problem of literary. To cap it all the bodies have been agitating for release of mission schools seized by the government in the wake of civil war in 1967. The various state governments have been respecting by releasing the schools for instance Abia State government and Edo State government. The children that pass through these schools are better in terms of morality and even in academics.
Religion plays a role in the development of the health care system of the country. The aim is to save the life of the citizens as much as possible. Christian bodies establish health care centres for carrying various ailments that otherwise will pose health hazard to the people. There are maternity centres, Eye centres, hospitals with sophisticated equipments for diagnosing serious diseases. All these services are available at very low charges. The religious bodies supplement the effort of the government to a good extent in the health sector.

Christianity is responsible for the exposure that Nigerians enjoy today, prior to the advent of Christianity the people wallowed in ignorance and darkness. According to Crother cited by Onyeidu (2001).

We met the people in the deepest state of ignorance and degradation and in a most abominable practices of idolatory and superstition worshipping supposed spirits represented by indispensable shapeless pieces of blocks of wood to which sacrifices are made of animal and human beings to propitiate the supposed gods through them (pg 46).

One of the major change brought by religion to the present age and indeed Nigeria was the abolition of killing of twins and other obnoxious practices which was a common feature in Igbo belief system. According to Onyeidu (2001) like other parts of Igboland the people of Onitsha practiced the killing of twins, human sacrifice, first and second burials, trial by ordeal, the
holding of domestic slaves and polygamy. The Christian agents and their colonial counter parts fought these traditional practices to the point that they are no longer in existence now.

3.4 Influence of Religion on Democracy in Nigeria

According to Onapajo (2012) Nigerians have been observed to be more loyal to religion than the state. Consequently, religion has shaped and heightened the tempo of politics in the early political history of Nigeria. Indeed, several authors like Kukah (1993); Wakili (2009) and others have demonstrated the significance of religion to the formation of political parties, political voting behaviour of the people in previous democratic experiments of this county. Since 1999, when democracy bounced back in Nigeria, religion has been showing up as an issue that cannot be overlooked. The Sharia issue was resurrected far away in Zamfara state putting to question how many laws will obtain in this country? The Sharia issues and other religious matters that came up like no-existence of a Christian worship center in Aso Rock before 1999 were of concern to the government because religion represents a strong social force in the politics of the State given its capacity for effective political mobilization. Fox and Sander quoted by Onapajo (2012) gave six major reasons why this is so:
i. The restriction of religious activities is often difficult for State regimes.

ii. Religious organizations often enjoy good patronage in the Media.

iii. Religious organizations have the capacity to easily unite different social groupings in the society.

iv. Religious organizations have the ready made platform for political meetings.

v. Religious organizations are often strong in weak states.

vi. Religious organizations have strong links and enjoy global solidarity.

The nature of Islamic religion as a way of life for its adherents made the religions to be closely attached to politics. The northern Nigeria which is predominantly Moslems was easily penetrated by the colonial authorities because of the already existing political structure. During the first Republic the NPC (Northern People’s Congress) which emerged in the North was an Islamic arrangement. Dudeley (1968:143) rightly noted that the NPC represented the consensus of the Muslim society- the ‘Ijma’ and an Iota of rejection by any member of the society signified a sinful Islamic act. The non Islamic Northerners on realizing this decided to float parallel political parties that also suited their faith and interest. The political conscious of Christians in Nigeria was provoked buy the challenge of Islamic adherents.
The Christians have the policy of “Sacred and Profane” i.e. trying to stay clear of mundane things like politics and government but with trend of things Christian leaders realized that the country was being dominated and ruled by Moslems who used their positions to make life unbearable for them even to worship their God. According to Sklar (1983)

Christians in the Middle Belt in the north upon their increased perception of discrimination and gross dissatisfaction with the Islamic regime of NPC led government under the leadership of Ahmadu Bello (an ardent of one North of people agenda) mobilized themselves to challenge the rule. The first attempt by the Christians in this direction was the establishment of the northern Nigeria non-Muslim league following a motion raised in 1949 on the floor of the Northern House of Assembly for the restriction of the activities of Christian missionaries (pg 386).

The 1966 coup has been adjudged of having been motivated by hatred for Islam. This coup however, shattered the first Republic of Nigeria.

The involvement of Christians in politics was further influenced by the emergence of the new generation Christians in the (1970s). The emergence of CAN (Christian Association of Nigeria), was of immense help also with this strong foundation, the Christians challenged the declaration of Sharia Law in eleven Northern States. The case of Kaduna state was complex because it was not completely an Islamic state. When the governor declared the state a Sharia state the Kaduna branch of CAN decided to confront the government, of course this was not without the attendant of loss of lives on
both Christian and Muslim sides. At the national level, Christians concluded that this Shaira issue was a calculated attempt to pull down the government of a Christian president (Olusegun Obasanjo) this picture was captured by Archbishop Ola Makinde the then Chairman Abuja Chapter of CAN quoted by Onapajo (2012), he stated:

Part of the aim of the introduction of the political Sharia in Nigeria is to prevent or crush the spread of Christianity in the north. Another aim is to pull down the government of Chief Olunsegun Obasanjo which the political Sharia apostles see as a government headed by an infidel (pg 16).

The tenure of Obasanjo ended in 2007 and Musa Yaradua a Hausa from Kastina state took over. He assumed office in May 2007. He died in May 2010 following terminal heart disease. The Vice President then a Christian Mr GoodLuck Jonathan naturally took over the reins of power. He took over as president and went ahead to contest and win the 2011 general election over and above Atiku Abubakar at primary election level and Muhamendu Buhari of CPC at the general election in April 2011. The north showed disappointment openly. They contented that by PDP zoning formular, they were to produce the president because Yaradua could not complete an eight year tenure that was prepared for him. Buhari of CPC brought in a lot of religious sentiment in the election including: The sending of text messages to people urging them to ignore a non Muslim in the election. He threatened fire
and brimstone if he loses. He eventually lost and violence ensued. However, Jonathan’s grip on power has remained very strong. The last option was the post election violence which claimed many lives including NYSC members and other electoral officers who were accused of facilitating Jonathan’s victory. The final joker now was the Boko Haram challenge in which Christian has remained targets of attacks and at a time they boasted that they will bring down the elected government. This however is a far cry because government is not relenting in its effort to subdue all agents of darkness.

3.5 Secularization: A Policy of Religious Neutrality.

The secular status of Nigeria is provided for in section 10 of the 1999 constitution in which it is stated that Nigeria shall not adopt any religion as a state religion. According to Agberemi 2006, Faiola 1998, Hessanmi 1992 quoted by Omotola (2009)

Nigeria is not only a plural society with several ethnic and religious groups, but also one where ethnic and religious boundaries overlap. Each dominated ethnic group in a geographical area is associated with a particular religion. The ethnic regional cum religious overlaps add troubling twist and turns to the configuration. The need to curtail the threats this poses for nation building informed the constitutional adaptation of secularism in Nigeria (pg 90).

The thinking of government for this policy was to maintain neutrality on issues of religion as they are time bombs that can be detonated even with
one sentence. The government is also out to accord every religious body the opportunity to co-exist along side other religions. The goodwill of the government was put aside by adherents of Islamic religions who advocated and even launched Islamic law to guide them in about twelve states of the federation. By this action the secular non religious status the government wanted to achieve was put aside in these states. Aside the sharia issues, the politicization of religion has limited the effectiveness of secularism. The issue of religion has a prime position in all that is being done in this country over time. The status of being a Christian or a Muslim in Nigeria speaks volumes in any thing one wants to do in this country. Favours or persecution can come your way as a result of this status. According to Ibrahim (1991) despite the constitutional adoption of secularism, the religious question remains problematic. The expanding landscape of religious fundamentalism in Nigeria owing largely to the fact that religions is no longer merely about the control of the theological space, but also an arena of accumulation, underscores, the increasing influence of religion in the political economy of the state come to think of it, a secular government should have no business running Sharia courts. According to Nafata (2009) Sharia is male Muslim bias, cruel, barbaric and inconsistent with constitutional provision on gender equality, religious non-discrimination and prohibition of inhuman
punishment. The judicial divide in which we have penal code in the North and common law in the South is a challenge to secular state which all Nigerians initially accepted as binding law. The divide which exist among Christianity and Islam can only be addressed properly by secularism. It is secularism that can unite the two opposing forces. As a matter of fact government involvement in the propagation of these mutually antagonistic alien religious accentuates our religious divide and encourages the bigotry that sometimes erupts in religious violence.

Nafata (2009).

It is no surprise therefore, that the Islamic north where government is heavily involved in religion frequently erupts in violence. The Boko Haran insurrection for an Islamic state has its root in the invidious agitation for Sharia by northern leaders who should know better than whip up religious sentiments in a multi-religious nation like Nigeria (pg 35).

From the foregoing, it is obvious that secularism has not been able to solve religious problem that crops up in Nigeria from time to time. The reason is because secularism is not rooted in political institutionalization capable of generating sustainable social capital that is a generalized sense of trust among the citizenry.

Muslims regard Nigeria as a multi-cultural and multi-religion society. To them secularism means irreligion. This is the main problem Christians
separate religion from politics, but Muslims combine the two. Christian believe that democracy could be practiced without Sharia Laws. But Muslims try to combine democracy with Sharia Laws. These two are incompatible. Hence our democracy is not working.
CHAPTER FOUR

PROBLEMS ARISING FROM THE PRACTICE OF RELIGION IN NIGERIA

4.1 Factors Responsible for Incessant Religious Conflicts in Nigeria

The religious problems in Nigeria have assumed a dangerous dimension to the extent that other countries of the world are even more disturbed. The relationship that existed between Christians and Muslims in this country even at the period of independence according to Udoidem was characterized by external mutual respect but internal spite and disaffection. The mutual spite stemmed from the fact that none of the religions knew the strength of the other. Thus, the mutual tolerance was out of fear of the other and not a genuine respect.

The distrust of both Christians and Muslims is so deep rooted to the extent that anything that happens in Nigeria was given religious interpretation. According to Ugorie (2009), the 1966 coup did not help matters. The Muslims in the North regarded the coup as an attack against Moslems and Islam. The coup claimed the life of Ahmadu Bello and Alhaji Tafawa Balewa who were strong pillars of Islam. To buttress the allegation no Eastern politician was killed and the actors in the coup were predominantly Igbos. Udoidem remarked thus:
The suspicion of the reason for that coup heightened by the fact not even one easterner (the east is predominantly Christians) was killed or detained. The Muslim North’s anger was more intensified by the fact that an Easterner Major General Ajuyi-Irons was made the Head of State. The Muslim North saw the coup as an assault on Islam (pg 40).

This incident alone to a good extent account for the bad blood in the relationship and can be seen as a remote cause of many other ill feelings that erupts at the least provocation.

According to the report of International Joint Delegation of the World Council of Churches and the Royal Aal Al Bayt Institute of Islamic Thought held in May 2012, the key factors behind the religious tension and crisis are as follows:

**Religious:** The report states that inadequate depth of understanding of both Christianity and Islam within and without accounts for frequent fights. Lack of knowledge and information on a popular level particularly in local language of the scripture based condemnation of violence and terrorism in both Christianity and Islam. The statements and actions of a number of religious leaders, both Muslims and Christians which could be understood as condoning or encouraging violence.
Furthermore, tension could arise from well funded and organised foreign Christian missionary activity and well funded and organised foreign Muslim missionary activity. Furthermore, the present crisis is as a result of the action of Boko Haram and Takfris and the ideological influence upon the genesis of Boko Haram. Revenge killings by some Christians for the deaths caused by Boko Haram. The actions and influence of gangs of Muslim youths carrying out organized killing of innocent Christians and vice versa. The geographic polarization of Muslims and Christians along an imaginary North –South making them to see each other as visitors at one time or the other. Political: Rampant corruption at every level among politicians snowballs into crisis as a reaction from the masses problems arising from President Goodlock Jonathan’s presidency which the North claims is her “quota” by PDP zoning method. Trouble also brews from the statement and actions of political leaders pandering to religious sentiments. Geographical and political interaction between Nigeria and neighbouring countries such as Chad, Niger and Cameroon. There is lackerdestical attitude on the side of the government and police when violence erupts, but this not be followed up until the situation degenerates. The report also in indicts external powers and intelligent agencies as fuelling the crisis in Nigeria.
Furthermore, economic reasons were fingered as having hands in the problems. The neglect and mismanagement in various economic sectors at the highest level of government. The vast disparity between wealth, education, health care and employment levels in the Muslim North versus the Christians South. The underdevelopment of a number of natural resources and sectors, e.g. agriculture, mining due to the focus since independence on Nigeria’s wealth. The problem can also be blamed on poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment. The problem is further aggravated by land disputes and lack of clearly demarcated grazing ground for the nomadic Fulani cattle rearers.

The report further states that sometimes, the crisis can be traced to social and ethnic factors. There is constantly a pervading sense of fear due to insecurity and instability. The undermining and underfunding of traditional, social, tribal and ethnic leaderships by the State and Federal governments. Furthermore, there are still residual tension from the Biafara War particularly between the Hausas and the Igbos. Illiteracy and poor education, drug abuse among youths also fuel the incessant crisis.

There is a legal angle to the crisis especially the case of Plateau State legal tension between the rights of the indigenes and those of settlers. The current Nigerian Constitution refers in passing to indigenes of states.
This cause has been used to exclude settlers of the state from many social amenities like job, education, health care etc. This is inspite of evidence that some of the settlers have documents to show that they have resided in the area for over one hundred years. To worsen matters, there are rampant cases of extra judicial killings suppression and torture by the police and the military which are not addressed or investigated by the government. In as much as the above issues are not properly addressed, the ugly incident will always rear up its head.

The violent agitation for Sharia Law in the North according to Ugorie (2010) necessitated crisis because the Muslims wanted the law at all cost. A country having two laws is not the best because in many cases Christians are subjected to Sharia law which he/she knows nothing about. By this arrangement the right of the minority Christians will be compromised. Finally, the attitude of the Muslims in taking law into their hands in a very flimsy issue and the “Siddon look” attitude of the law enforcement agents. The case of Gideon Akaluka who was beheaded for alleged desecration of Koran. This was in December 26, 1994. The Muslim fanatic broke into the prison in Kano where he was being detained and brought him out and beheaded him. From the forgoing, it is obvious and clear that religious
conflicts are caused by religious practitioners on issues that can be easily over looked.

Religious Intolerance: is also a factor, according to Iwe (2000) “Religious intolerance is conterminous with religious extremism and may be descriptively defined as (pg 11).

Beyond the bounds of reason the therefore without moderation. Those who perpetuate intolerance in the practice of religion are fundamentalists and they come as sects and fashion out extreme literal myopic and selfish interpretation of their scriptures to justify or give credence to their radical and often violent religious activities.

In their quest to attain their selfish goals, the extremists are intolerant of other faiths and movements as the case maybe.

4.2 Religious Pluralism and High Corruption Index in Nigeria

The fact that Nigeria is a religious country cannot be disputed. The practice of religion in Nigeria is highly pronounced. Nigerians do not compromise their times of worship. The Moslems maintain their hours of worship not withstanding their official or private engagements so also the Christians. The level of religious practice in Nigeria has been acknowledged by British Broadcasting Services (BBC, 2004) when it rated Nigeria as the most religious nation in the world. This is attested to by the number of mosques and churches that adorn streets in Nigeria. The Jummat service on
Fridays makes the nations high ways no go area because they are blocked by worshipers who are adherents of Islamic religion. The Christians observe night vigil virtually every Friday night showing their devotion to their God.

The Sunday services takes the better part of the day and they are well attended. The conclusion of any visitor to this country on these days of worship will be that Nigerian people are deeply religious and spiritual. As a pluralistic society many other religious exist and worship is the order of the day in line with the ordinances of these religious. The government on its part encourage religious activities, when Abuja became the nations capital, the Federal Government allocated a sizable piece of land to the Moslems and also to the Christians to erect places of worship.

The government also went ahead to give them Ten million naira each to the two bodies for the development of the plots. As if that has not enough the government both at the federal state and local government levels sponsor Moslem and Christianity the Holy Lands of Jerusalem and Mecca on yearly basis showing how much the government encourages religious activities. Furthermore, government used to declare public holidays during Sallah and Easter and Christmas celebrations.
With all these obvious signs of being close to God, the reverse is the case. The level of corruption in Nigeria is unimaginable because everything bad is possible in Nigeria.

According to Okelaja (2010) cited by Onah (2012) in the global ranking of countries listed on the corruption perception index (CPI) by Transparency International in 2010, Nigeria is ranked 134 out of 178 countries surveyed dropping from its 130 position in 2009 and 121 in 2008. This is inspite of all efforts that had been put in place so far to address the issue of corruption. The truth of the matter is that there is hypocrisy in the lifestyle of Nigerians because the same man who was leading prayers in the mosque and the man who is the Chairman of the church council in the church is the same person that will embezzle money if he has the opportunity. The issue of corruption has affected many development efforts of the government because people due to greed sabotage most government efforts. On assumption of office as a civilian president Obasanjo felt highly concerned about this shameful aspect of our life. On 13th June 2000, while signing into law the Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Act 2000 Obasanjo (2000) remarked as follows:
As we all know corruption is a canker worm that has eaten into the fabrics of our society at all levels. It has caused decay and dereliction within the infrastructure of government and society at all levels. It has caused decay and dereliction in physical, social and human terms. Corruption has been responsible for the instability of successive government to succeed since the first republic. Every coup since then has been in the name of stamping out the disease called “corruption”. Unfortunately, the case often turns out to be worse than the disease and Nigeria has been worse for it. Nigeria’s external image took a serious bashing and our country began to feature on top of every corruption index (pg 7).

Nigerians do not have good image at home and abroad. The advance fee fraud is a common thing among Nigerian home and abroad. In International Airport all over the world, Nigerians are hour ugly searched and suspected because they are noted for anything bad.

Nigerian girls out number other girls from other countries in international prostitution in places like Italy, Spain, China and other places. They are not taken for anything. It was in the news sometimes ago that Nigerian girls accepted money and allotted dogs to make love to them, of course three girls involved died later and this is was financed and filmed by a white man. The level of worship and other religious activities that take place in Nigeria makes one wonder who are behind the violent crimes that are reported in the media on daily basis.
According to Adeye (2009)” corruption is evident in our academic environment, public institution, the armed forces, the judiciary, the business spheres, political settings, business outfits and even within religious establishments. For instance, the judiciary is fraught with allegation of corruption. Vanguard of Thursday July 2006 reported thus:

Magistrate, 2 other arraigned for receiving ₦45,000. They had demanded the sum of ₦125,000 from the detainees to effect their release from jail. But ran out of luck when the suspects delivered marked currency to the magistrate promising to come back with the balance within a short time (pg 11).

As a result of what goes on daily basis in Nigeria, one is tempted to believe and even conclude that Nigerians are merely superficially religious. This is because the same people who purport to be religious at the hours of worship are the same people that will get involved in one crime of the other later. The case of Faruk Lawan who was heading a committee that was probing the oil subsidy scam only to receive bribe from Otedola one of those whose case were being investigated. The case of Nigerian police is obvious because police can take bribe of even 10 kobo and allow an anomaly to sale through. They are reputed to be bankrupted on issues of conscience because often time they have been alleged to have stolen money of accident victim or killed people and disposes them of their money. Police have killed people several time over ₦ 20 naira bribe police receive
settlement and allow arms to be smuggled into the country and equally comprise other heinous crimes.

The religious establishments are also deep neck in corruption. Pastors are known to have taken over people’s wives on the pretence of counseling them on marriage issues. Some clergy men cajol their congregations to buy vehicles for them claiming that they were directed by the Holy Spirit to make such demand of them. Furthermore, Pastors and other men of God commit several crimes without any remorse. According to Celestina (2010), one Pastor Innocent Ihizuaka was arrested for stealing musical instrument worth three million naira which he sold at Alaba International Market, Lagos. When arrested he pleaded for leniency claiming that he acted under the influence of the devil.

Among the Islamic adherents some respected Alhajis and Clerics have been found with human parts which they use for ritual purposes. Some of them make use of charms for many nefarious acts such a duping, aiding robbery and even to win the love of different categories of women. Some even get involved in minting fake currencies. Traditional native doctors are involved in preparing charms used by robbers for robbing activities. Chief priest prepare charms for politicians to enable them have their way in politics and for other selfish ends.
Government officials mostly are guilty of betraying the trust respond on them for one selfish reason or the other. To embezzle imprest money meant for imprest account is not a difficult thing for a cashier. Chief executives forge documents to cover up huge embezzlements. The case of police pension fund is still lingering. The clerk in the office cannot move files of contractors and staff if he is not settled. Many governors have ended up answering for one crime or the other after their tenure in office.

The case of James Ibori who is cooling off in London prison easily comes to mind. The case of Bode George is also fresh in our mind after their time in ports authority. Contractors collect mobilization money on the contracts and abscond from site for good. The academic institutions are not left out on the corruption table. There is certificate forgery and exam leakage in many higher institutions. The conclusion here is that ours is a country of religious zealots who found it difficult to put into practice what our religions teach us. The problem we experience in Nigeria from time to time are punishments from God for not practicing religions well. We worship God with one hand and commit crime with the other hand. The clergy men who are supposed to live by examples are sometimes the worst offenders. The man who impregnates or maries a girl of twelve years will not have any moral ground to challenge similar cases by a member of his religion.
Similarly, when a Pastor or a Rev father is guilty of adultery or commits sin of fornication he cannot be in a position to pontificate on that at anytime. The earlier the religion we practice makes impact on our life both in private and in public the earlier the society becomes a better place for us all.

4.3 Religion and Value of Human Life in Nigeria

The wanton destruction of life in Nigeria has caste doubts on whether life is of any value at all. The lives lost in Nigeria on daily basis gives our value system a very poor image. In our society today, there is unmitigated suffering, persistent violation of principles of justice and rights to life even by the government of the day. Religion shows priority to human life.

In African traditional religion, the life of an African is safeguarded from cradle to grave. The religion emphasize the value of life, hence, every thing is done through propitiation to safeguard it

In Islam, according to Imaekhai (2010) the life of animals and birds are held as sacrosanct and worthy of respect. In the same token, humans are treated as the most exalted of all Allah’s creatures. Allah tells us that He created sons of Adam as different nations and tribes only so that they are easily identified. It is the deeds and intensions of man alone that make him superior in the sight of Allah. Allah is of the position that killing one person
is tantamount to killing the whole human race and one who saves one person from death is like one who saves the whole human race. Furthermore, Allah says that social peace and tranquility are very important goals of life and human society. A person loses his right to life if he is proved to be responsible for engineering serious dissension and turmoil in society.

According to Christianity, the design of God from the beginning is that life should be sacred and highly prized. In Gen. 1:26 God said “Let us make man in our image after our likeness”. This shows how God valued the life of human beings. God’s purpose for creating man was for him to dominate the world and populate it if along the line the life of man is terminated, the desire of God has been tempered with. In the 1999 constitution chapter iv section 33(10 it provides that every citizen has a right to life. This also shows that every recognize the value of life and as it is whoever that takes the life of any person will definitely pay with his own. It is in these circumstances that one’s life can be taken. Also in the Decalogue which was given to Moses at the foot of Mount Sinia the sixth law has it that” Thou shall not kill”. This goes further to affirm the sanctity of life. Every life is respected even the life of the embryo in the womb hence the illegality of abortion. If we as Nigerian recognize and respect the value of life, Nigeria, will be better for it. However, the value of human life in
Nigeria seem to be diminishing with the passage of time due to dangers posed to life on daily basis. There is nothing with which life can be compared. The precious and priceless nature of life is very obvious. The moment life is lost everything is lost. Human life is irreplaceable. If Mr. Ango is removed from the face of world there will be no Mr. Ango again. This is precarious nature of life.

According to Makiwe (2012) there is no standard concept for the value of a specific human life in economics. However, when looking at risk or reward trade offs that people make with regard to their health, economists often consider the value of a statistical life. In industrial nation according to Kevin (2006) the justice system considers a human life “priceless” thus, illegalizing any form of slavery i.e. humans cannot be bought for any price. However, with limited resources or infrastructural capital or skill at hand it is impossible to save every life, so some trade off must be made in order to save life. In every circumstance, no life should be considered more useful than the other. Every life matters a lot and God recognizes the existence of all lives.

The value of life faces a big threat as many people in Nigeria get involved in abortion. It is a common place in Nigerian society today. The high level of promiscuity in the society gives rise to numerous cases of
unwanted and teenage pregnancies. In order to cover up this shameful condition the tendency is to take to criminal abortions which in many cases even take the life of the mother also. The unborn child whose future no body knows is terminated on daily basis. For criminal minded doctors abortion is a lucrative business because as on girl/ woman is going another one is entering the theater. The blood of innocent kids flow and cry to heaven for vengeance which will come at the appointed time. The rate of abortion became so much that one time Health minister moved to legalize it but this was resisted and he Olikoye Ransome Kuti was antagonized for this.

Value of life is further violated by violence which is the order of the day in Nigeria. According to Anyacho (2005) violence has become topical issue in modern society.

Every society grapples with one type of violence or the other i.e. armed robberies, rape, inter/intra ethnic conflicts, political and religious conflicts, cultism and terrorism are different manifestations of violence. These violence results in the loss of life which negates the value placed on life. The type of politics played in Nigeria exposes life to a lot of danger people see the struggle for political power as a do or die affair and go to any length in order to attain it.
In his observation, Anyacho (2005) posited that political violence is seen during political campaign. Political parties want their candidates to win at all costs whether through fair or foul means. The dogged determination to win by all means makes political parties and politicians to engage the services of political thugs. These thugs are mostly unemployed youths, students and hoodlums who take pleasures in political mischief. Political violence is a current picture in Nigerian politics. Thugs are used to burn vehicles belonging to other political parties, tear their posters and in extreme cases abduct, kidnap and assassinate a powerful political opponent. All these are violations of value attached to life. Talking of political violence the case of Anambra State stands out during the tenure of Chris Ngige whom his God father master-minded the burning of the state radio house, the state assembly complex and state owned Ikenga hotel. At the end of the day the governor was kidnapped and forced to resign at gun point. The violation of right to life of the people of Nigeria is on the increase on daily basis. The most serious threat to life is in the activities of Boko Haram.

According to Okwueze (2012), the Boko Haram sect initially focused its attacks mostly on the police, military and government, but has now increased its attacks on Christian institutions. It says it is fighting enemies who have wronged its members through violence arrests or economic
neglect and corruption. The Boko Haram has killed at least 935 people since it launched an uprising in 2009 including more than 250 in the first week of 2012.

The sect adopted the most dangerous method of attack which is bombing. This is capable of killing people in about 100m radius. The value of life is highly threatened in so many of other ways order than through religious intolerance. In inter ethnic crisis lost of lives are lost as if there is no solution to the reason behind the crisis. For instance, the Tiv-Jukun crisis is as a result of political interest. There is a agitation for political participation, entitlements relevance, access and political control. The two groups rather than collaborate they chose to compete with each other. There existed concerns about who controls Wukari who represents this area in the state and federal levels, who benefits from the quota of Wukari (Best and Idaorugh, 2003). In the fight that ensued later, there were loss of lives and property running into billions of naira.

According to (Jooji, 2003) between 1992 and 2002 the number of deaths was put at over 6000. Philips (2001) reported that some of those killed were gruesomely beheaded. The people were deprived of food, jobs, health, shelter and dignity. Similarly, the people were displaced. As at 1999,
the number of displaced Tiv alone was put at 42,000 (Best and Idaorough 2003).

According to the report of Human Rights Watch despite the protection for the night to life provided for by National, Regional and International instruments cases of extra-judicial summary and arbitrary executions by the police and other law enforcement agencies are still prevalent in Nigeria. According to the Guardian Newspaper of April 12, 2006, Seun Adepoju a 23 year old student of Moshood Abiola Polytechnic Abeokuta, Ogun State was killed as Shasha Akonwono Lagos by police men attached to Odebumi Afonka police station, Akowonjo on the 8th April, 2006 on the allegation that they received an anonymous distress call that armed robbers were operating around the area. The police claimed that upon getting to the area they found the suspected armed robbers in an uncompleted building. They started to run away and the deceased who tried to jump over the fence was short dead. The corpse was taken to the police station and eventually to the General Hospital in Lagos. However, the account of the incident by the deceased family, friends and eye witness contradicted the account by the police. The alleged that the police laid siege in the house where the victim was visiting friends and started shooting sporadically which scared the deceased and his friends making them to run away and in the process he fell down and sustained
injuries and when the police caught him they subjected him to further beating leading to his death.

Another case of extra-judicial killing was reported on 7th February 2006 by National Human Rights Watch Report (2006) at about 8.00am, 28 year old Adewuyi Daniel Fella Flat 12 Block 1No.22 Road G. close Festac town Lagos was arrested by policemen attached to the Festal Police Division on his way to visit his sick brother at 22 Road 1 close Festac on arrest he was not told the reason for it. The following day his family was asked to come to the police station and identify his corpse. The police alleged that he had jumped down from a moving police vehicle.

Furthermore, the body reported that in the early hours of July 28, 2006 Officers of the Special Anti Robbery Squad from the Federal Capital Territory Abuja, went to the compound of Abdulkadir Azeez, 70 years old man, where he lives with his extended family in the village of Ganin Kurama Lere Local Government Area of Kaduna State. The sound of gunshot woke him up and he went out to find out the cause immediately he stepped out of his house, he was shot dead. The police then went out to his son’s house forced open the door and shot him dead too. The second son of the old man later came out to know what was amiss, he was also shot dead. The incident as witnessed by the two wives of the old man and one of his
sons who survived. The Kaduna State police command confirmed that the Federal Anti Robbery Squad Abuja came around but their aim was to recover arms and ammunition and were shot by the villagers which gave rise to this incident.

One of the worst violators of value of life is campus cultism. This is a secrete organization in the campus which unleashes violence on the campus community i.e. on fellow students and lectures. A number of people have lost their lives in several universities due to the activities of cult members. According to Anyacho (2009) a cult normally refers to a small group of people whose membership is exclusive and who share certain benefits and engage in practice particular to itself. In his own view, Igbo (2009) quoted by Anyacho defines cult as an assemblage of people who share unconventional ideas and beliefs and involve themselves in eccentric conduct and manifestations mostly shrouded in secrecy.

Thus, one sees a secrete cult as any organization that is not open to the public and where members bind themselves together with a strong bond or oath of allegiance to the main cause of the association and more often than not engage in traumatizing acts. No activity of campus cult has received public oration. They include stealing, robbery, arson maiming, rape, extortion, vindictive bloody retaliation, use of drugs, examination
malpractice, black magic, fighting, nocturnal initiation and spiritism killing and maiming have terrible consequences. Blood letting even in war time have some negative implications.

These cultists violate life value for their selfish ends. For instance, lecturers are killed by cult members when they could not bend his/hr to dash them marks in examinations. Lectures are equally killed when cult members suspect or even confirm that they are dating a girl they are interested in. Lives are also lost when rival cult members clash in campuses. The right to life of innocent students are also violated due to the activities of cult members. Commenting on cult activities Anyacho (2009) is of the opinion that:

From whatever angle one looks at it, killings by cult groups offends God and humanly and desecrates the land. Besides, a cultist can lose his life while in action. For example on May 4, 1996, 30 students who were members of the vickings were drown in Ikom River where they went for initiation (pg 94).

Generally speaking, the cultists disrupt academic activities and create atmosphere of fear in the university and this situation does not give room for teaching, learning and research for which the academic institutions are meant.
It is sad that the life of a Nigerian does not worth the life of a fowl in other countries. The government should step up campaign for respect to life. People should be properly taught that life is a precious gift which cannot be duplicated. We should also as citizens realize that because we cannot create life we have no right over it. From the fore-going, it is obvious that religion and the value of life are inseparable Imaekhai (2010) affirms also that the disintegrating use of religion is an anomaly for human existence. Nigerians are expected to tow the line of justice and respect God given life.

4.4. The Quest for Peaceful Co-Existence of Adherents of all Religions in Nigeria

The design of the Nigerian government is that every religion deserve to exist in as much as the activity of its adherents does not undermine the peace and stability of the country. Nigeria is a multi-religion state in which no religion has been established for her citizens. The incessant disturbances that occur from time to time is an ill wind that blows no one no good. To curb this anomaly, all hands must on deck for the efforts to be succeeded. Members of all religious groups must subscribe to peaceful co-existence.

Celestina (2010) in her opinion suggested that something positive and drastic has to be done at all level of government and by Nigeria people
themselves to put an end to this madness which to a good extent has hampered positive development of human beings, property and infrastructure. Furthermore, this crisis has portrayed Nigeria in very bad light in the committee of nations. It has also scared away investors rendering Nigeria a perpetual importer nation which is not good for the economy. This problem has to be addressed headlong.

According to Jega (2010):

Clearly, we are making too little effort, hopefully not too late to address problems associated with ethnic tension and conflicts. We need to pay serious attention to these so that our nation and people can peacefully progress in this country (pg 6).

The onus is on religious leaders in Nigeria to make frantic efforts to put into practice the ethical values enshrined in their respective scriptures. The need to initiate policies that will keep their adherents away from all sorts of crimes like armed banditry, prostitution, cheating, forgery, arson, assassination, nepotism and tribalism. Most importantly they should learn to forgive each other because revenge or reprisal attacks are things that worsen the crisis situation.
Celestina (2010) made the following recommendations:

We need law abiding citizens that is people who neither steal nor kill even though they could get away with it, not judges but incorruptible judges not policemen but policemen who do not draw salary from the very gangster they are to catch, not soldiers but soldiers who are willing to lay down their lives for the defence of the country (pg 89).

Every religion has a way of regulating the lifestyles of its adherents when religious people shed blood rather than think of how to enthrone law and order in the society, wipe away corruption and pursue development it becomes obvious that they are chasing shadows rather than the substance. It is retrogressive for people to shed blood or destroy lives and property in the name of Allah or God. Religion is meant to correct the ills of the society and enthrone peace not to destroy it.

Religion is meant to preserve life, not to destroy it. Any religion that is manipulated to shed blood is dangerous for humanity.

In order to guarantee religious harmony and peaceful co-existence of adherents of all religious, the Federal Government should provide employment opportunities for the youths of this country because the idle mind is the devil's workshop. There should be an orientation programme in which the youths will be admonished on good aspects of peaceful lifestyles and the need to preserve their energy for something positive. Among other
things, the government should encourage programmes like inter faith mediation centre of the Muslim-Christian dialogue that can bring Christians and Muslims groups together towards the creation of mutual understanding and respect. Religious bodies and associations should be more proactive and pragmatic and alive to its established responsibilities.

This task of peaceful resolution of religious impasse is not only the government concern but also every body’s burden. For instance; Okeafor (1989) made the following assertion:

Following the religious climate of the Nigerian nation today, one could say that the survival of our nation is in doubt. Nigeria can be saved from this if Muslims and Christians close ranks by entering into mutual dialogue and strive to understand each other (11).

In a multi-religious nation like Nigeria, no religious law can take the constitutional provision of “freedom of religion” to be a license for each religious sect to promulgate and enforce its unique religious laws over and above the laws of the land. Tolerance, dialogue, and mutual co-existence should be the ultimate thoughts of all Nigerian citizens.

In his own contribution to peaceful co-existence of all religious, Arinze (1999) is of the opinion that dialogue of religions can promote mutual enrichment from the religious point of view. We understand
ourselves better when we see ourselves through the eyes of another person. To be met the different religious conviction can help us to assess our own religion better to seek a more exact understanding of it and to articulate in a clear way its beliefs, rituals and code of conducts. This dialogue can be the occasion of greater openness to the action of God in us to admire the good the true and the noble in other religions and praise God for that. It can help us to ask ourselves questions on how committed we are to our own religion.

Other religions constitute a positive challenge to people of other faith. They stimulate them both to discover and acknowledge the signs bestowed on them by God. Interreligious relations can promote better understanding of other religions, the overcoming of prejudices or summary judgments on others and an increasing appreciation of what some religions have in common. All this is most positive towards disposing people of differing religions to be less aggressive to become more welcoming to begin to see some of their own weak points and to be honest and courageous enough to acknowledge them. When that happens especially in both directions, we have excellent consolations for human growth, social harmony, justice and peace. Sincerely, interreligious encounters can help to promote recognition of guilt, moves to ask for forgiveness and gesture of reconciliation. Greater
harmony will result and the society will be a happy place to live in. In the words of Olusengun Obasanjo as reported by Michapu in Celestina (2010)

We are not only citizens of one nation, but also children of one God though tribe and tongue may differ in brotherhood, we stand……. Christians are as inseparable to Muslims as Muslim are to Christians. There shall never be atime when our society shall be totally free from differences. We must therefore resolve our differences without resulting to violence. Violence has never solved political, economic or religious differences. Violence can only lead to more violence (pg 23).

Arinze (1999) concludes by insisting that religion is not optional, it is obligatory. It is part of human honesty and the objectives acceptance of creaturehood to practice religion and religious crisis and bigotry are totally unacceptable. Good interreligious relations require that all adherents must be open minded and appreciative. It is possible without falling into relativism to admire elements that should be admired in another religion without thereby approving this religion in its entirety.
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary of Findings

A major finding in this research is that the Nigerian society is religiously pluralized and this significantly influences political decisions and policies of the government of the day. The study affirmed that the religious plurality has negatively affected the Nigerian polity. This is so because the pluralism in Nigeria assume tribal and ethnic dimensions making it look as if some tribes are identified with particular religion and political learnings. The diversity in the culture of Nigerians is so pronounced that Jekaejinha (2002) commented thus:

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic nation with diverse cultural groups that are about three hundred in number. Rather than harnessing our diversities towards viable national development we have become slaves to our ethnic origins to which over allegiance is largely focused at the detriment of nation building.

According to Meziobi (1994) cited by Jekayinha:

From 1947 the multi ethnic composition of Nigeria continued to be a bane to Nigeria’s national development and unity. Continuing, he insisted that whatever is done or anticipated in Nigeria particularly at government level had ethnic undertones be it employment, admission to universities, distribution of social amenities appointment to key offices, sitting of industries etc must reflect the ethnic and religious colorations. Attachment of a Nigerian first to his ethnic group before the nation is a bane
to Nigeria’s national unity, national consciousness, socio-cultural and political integration.

The study also observed that the government took a wise step in the decision to make Nigeria a secular non-religious state. The government wanted to play safe in the face of multiplicity of religion all of them seeking for supremacy and special favour. This noble objective which is in the constitution was messed up by the agitation of Muslims who insisted on sharia state. The agitation for the sharia state lasted for a very long time and during the tenure of Obasango the Zamfara state Governor took the law into his hands and declared the state sharia state. This anomaly eventually spread like a wild fire into about eleven northern states with its attendant consequences. At the end of the day two laws were governing Nigerians the 1999 constitution and the sharia legal system. The study also discovered that the government contradicted itself by getting involved in many religious issues in the following ways. The sponsorship of people to Mecca and declaration of public during religious Jerusalem annually, the recognition and celebrations allocation of land to both Christians and Muslims in Abuja and supporting them to build religious edifices and others. The study also established that the incessant unrests in Nigeria were as a result of religious and ethnic differences and Muslims will not want to allow other religious bodies to exist this has been demonstrated in the maitasine riot and other
religious riots that have continued since 1980 to date. The latest is the Boko Haram on slaught on Christians bombing them in the church, shooting them in the church and making it difficult for them to worship their God. The ethnic clashes have become common place in Nigeria some examples are Aguleri/Umuleri clash, Hausa Fulani and Berom clash etc. These are as a result of the multi religious and cultural nature of Nigeria. The study also emphasized that not withstanding its negative effects, religion to a good extent has affected the life of Nigerians positively in many ways. It has contributed to national development and put Nigeria on a very good pedestal. The study also noted that the level of religiosity is so alarming in that the country is supposed to be a country with high level of discipline and made up of people who are close to God but the reverse is the case in that Nigerians try to out do each other in criminal activities. The crime rate is high and there is corruption in every facet of our life. This is a big contrast to what the conclusion will be when one take a casual look at the way Christians and Muslims are dedicated to their religion. It is the view of the author that there is hypocrisy in the religious practice of the Nigerians.

The study is of the opinion that religious pluralism cannot remain an anathema to the country. All religious are preaching almost the same thing ie the worship to God. The contents of Islamic scripture and the Christian bible
never included violence hence it is seen as a way of life. The conflict in Nigeria has assumed a dimension that attracted international attention. This shows that it is high time that Nigerians will realize that religious intolerance cannot take them anywhere. The author suggested a religious dialogue in which all parties will come to a round table conference and agree on the way forward. All the parties the religions and the ethnic groups, need each other in this country. We are together as designed by nature. It will be practically impossible for us to separate from each other. We should build the spirit of tolerance in us so that we will be able to tolerate and accept each other. We should also realize that other countries of the world have multiplicity of religious and yet they co-exist.

5.2 Contributions to Knowledge/Scholarship

The research work to a good extent has contributed immensely to knowledge and scholarship.

The history of Nigeria as a nation, its political religious, social and cultural aspects are issues that every scholar not withstanding his/her discipline must have knowledge of. The research has done justice to the background history of Nigeria with a view to exposing how pluralistic Nigeria is.
The work makes one to understand that the pluralistic nature of Nigerian society has affected virtually all facets of Nigerian life.

The problems arising from Religious pluralism has given room for religious intolerance. This however is natural but the extent the intolerance has reached has called for comment and it is affecting all other aspects of the nationhood.

The outcome of this is that every leader has to handle issue of religion in Nigeria with extreme care. The multi cultural nature of Nigeria as exposed in the study will make any government of the day to give all the ethnic groups its due so that a repeat of the agitations in the past will not repeat itself. The study will give a Nigerian political a good knowledge of the trouble spots in life of the nation.

This research has exposed the hypocrisy in the practice of religion in this country. The fact that Nigerians are religious is not in doubt but the extent the practice of religion guides our life is another thing. From this study it is clear that it will be dangerous to take a Nigerian for granted on the ground that he/she is an addent church goer or he/she is devoted Muslim because his/her level of religiosity is very superficial. It is not a surprise that the same person who plays prominent role in the church or Mosque is the
same person who has gone out of his way to embezzle public fund. The same person may also be guilty of adultery at one time or the other. The research has revealed that the level of participation in religious activities does not transform in the individuals morality and people should not be deceived.

The research has made it open to scholars that the level of development Nigeria has attained today is as a result of their embracing of religion Christianity brought development and education and education developed to the stage it is today that Nigeria is now part of the global network. Nigerians are now in different parts of the world playing one role or the other and a Nigerian can make impact globally. One can now interact with someone else in far away Europe, America, Asia, Latin America and all over Africa. This shows that in as much as Religion is our burden because of its negative roles, it is also of immense use to Nigeria and we credit it for the good roles it plays in our lives. The research affords the reader the opportunity to know the possible causes of incessant riots and ethnic clashes in Nigeria. One can now know how to handle such issues if one has the opportunity to manage an office in Nigeria.

This research has shown that two laws actually obtain in Nigeria. There is the 1999 constitution and the sharia legal system which the
Muslims in the North advocated for and got for themselves. The constitution to a good extent gave credence to this because there is freedom of religious practice and a sharia court of appeal is also in place. The study further revealed that the agonizing part of it is that Christians sometimes are tried in this court in which they know nothing about its provisions. The study reveals further that the sharia law is women bias because a woman can be stoned to death for adultery and the male counterpart goes free. The Sharia is very crude to the extent that the amputation of hand for one crime or the other is done in a crude way without recourse to medical rules. The victim can die due to infection.

The study further reveals that Nigeria is rich in culture because every ethnic group has her own culture. For a scholar who decides to research on the cultural life of Nigerians, he/she will have a wide area of research and will be surprise that there are more that are yet to be discovered. The beauty of the whole thing is that at the end of the day there is unity in diversity, there are still many other things that bring Nigerians together things like sports, national identity, fighting for the territorial integrity of the nation and opposing of policies that are selfish in nature.

The study show cases the beauty of religious tolerance. This will help to channel our energy to meaningful issues like good education, security
road construction, good transport system investment in sports and boasting of our foreign Reserve. The study shows further that religious harmony will make the government operate with confidence because there will not be sabotage of any kind.

The study further revealed that Nigeria is not the only multi religious and multi cultural country. It is a challenge to Nigerians to co-exist and live in peace as obtains in similar multi religious, ethnic and cultural countries of the world.

5.3 Recommendations

A multi-cultural and religious country like Nigeria needs a leader with wisdom and experience. This is because everything that a leader does in Nigeria is interpreted in many ways-religiously, tribally ethnically etc.

Nigeria needs a leader with very strong will so that he will not be cajoled to take rash decisions because when a wrong decision is taken the people will react to it almost immediately. The blame for every wrong decision goes to the president even though he may not have had hand in it.

The law on secularism must be implemented to the later. The government should take measures to ensure that it is obeyed by every citizen. The issue of some states operating a different law from the federal
government should not obtain at all. Every state is under the federal government and the governor must abide by his oath of office of upholding the constitution of Nigeria. As a matter of fact any governor that goes contrary to this has to be removed without delay and a sole administrator will take over his duties.

The federal government should hands off all religious issues. The attitude of using government money to sponsor people to the holy land of Mecca and Jerusalem should stop. Let religion be the concern of the practitioners.

All religious groups must be registered with the ministry of religious affairs. Any religious group that is not registered should not be allowed to operate. The activities of all religious organizations must be strictly monitored by security organizations. The security report of their activities must be sent to the office of the chief security adviser for scrutiny and action from time to time.

There should be an awareness campaign on the need to tolerate each other as people of the same country. People should also be made to realize that as precious as their lives are to them so also the life of other people to them.
There should be a law on religious intolerance making it a criminal offence for any religious group to forment trouble in any part of the country. The law should stipulate stiff sentence for all those confirmed to be behind such uprisings. The security operatives should try to nip in the bud any plans to cause trouble in the name of religion.

As much as possible, the immigration officials should stop at boarder point all illegal aliens who chose to come into the country through the bush parts. These immigrants are the people that are used to cause trouble in places like Bornu, Adamawa, Yobe and other states in the north.

The government should make education compulsory at primary and junior secondary school levels. The education should be tuition free. it will be an offence for any parent not to send their children to school. The reason for this is because children at the ages of 5-15 are tools for those who want people to recruit for nefarious activities. When they are in school there will be no one to be recruited for such ungodly act.

Nigerians will be enjoined to genuinely practice their religion. The present situation in which people practice religion in one hand and commit crime with the other hand should be condemned. The religious leaders should lead by example. They should not preach peace and exhibit violence.
The corrupt life style of religious leaders must be seriously addressed. Corruption generally in Nigeria should be properly legislated on. People who get involved in corrupt practices should be allowed to face the wrath of the law. The law should come down heavily on corrupt leaders making them face death penalties or life imprisonments. These measures will serve as determines to others who may want to evfage in such crimes in future. Political leaders who are seeking the people mandate should be closely monitored both in their speeches and other activities. If they are found to be Religious fanatics they should be banned early enough because when they get to office eventually they will use it as an opportunity to further their religious intolerance.

    The distribution of offices and other social amenities must be evenly done so that all ethnic groups will be taken care of. The government should embark on policies that will make people think more of how best to improve the image of the country rather than painting it black with any available opportunity.

    The major religious bodies in this country should be encouraged to engage each other in meaningful dialogue that will eventually give room for religious harmony. The pluralistic nature of religious practice should translate to pluralistic moral actions instead of negative results. Nigerians
should realize that we worship one God in different ways people who display examplary behaviours should be rewarded. National honours should go to those who merited them.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

Religious pluralism: The Nigerian experience is a topic that is so broad that cannot be exhausted in one research. The issues involved in the topic are historical as well as contemporary to the extent that on daily basis the issues continue to change giving more challenge to researchers in the field. The cultural life of Nigerians is daily being affected by new developments in the area of religion social life, political life and even economically. This is why the need for continuous research in the area is necessary. the implications is that these issues affect culture on daily basis so that one research at a time cannot be used to assess the state of Nigeria’s cultural life style, therefore further research on this aspect of the work is still needed.

The effect of religion on democracy is an area that need continuous research. The religious behaviour of Nigerians change with time. The democratic life style of Nigerians equally change with time. When Nigerians voted for M.K.O Abiola in 1993 they did not consider religion because they
wanted the military out of the scene. This circumstance should not be used as a yardstick because in another circumstance Nigerians can put religion forward as a yardstick for voting for any other politician. There is need to always update research on the role religion plays in politics. The pluralistic nature of Nigeria makes it easy for both religion and politics to affect each other easily. This is why research should be carried out on the existence of two laws in a country. The 1999 constitution stipulates that the country is a secular non religious country but the northern elites who are predominantly Muslims have been agitating for sharia law to govern their lives as Muslims. This materialized at the regime of Chief Obasanjo. This is a bad precedence because it has made nonsense of the existing law. Further research is required on this to ascertain whether their intentions were genuine or a calculated attempt to cause trouble in the country.

The incessant trouble in the country arising from Religious intolerance and inter-ethnic clashes seem to be intractable. A lot of reasons have been put forward as reasons for this, scholars can still carry out more research to ascertain why Nigerians carry arms against each other at the slightest provocation Corruption as a hydra-headed monster in Nigeria. Why is it that Nigerians cheat at every level they find themselves?. Since the first Republic Nigeria government has been complaining of one form of
corruption or the other. Those who overthrow governments claim that they did it because of high level of corruption in the previous government. The tendency is that at the end of the day that government will be worse than the previous one. This is the case in all levels of government, agencies, parastatals even in the private sector. This corruption issue need more attention.

5.5 Conclusion

From the foregoing, the author has tried to establish that Nigeria as a pluralistic society has a lot of issues that pose serious challenges to her. As a nation many things are seeking for attention which she can hardly live up to. The multi ethnic, cultural and religious nature of the nation has been responsible for serious challenges that the country is going through. Of all these issues religion seem to dominate affairs of the nation. Virtually everything that is done by every leader is given religious interpretation. The political life of Nigerians is determined by their religious life the politicians use religious sentiment to manipulate the voting pattern of the people and at the end of the day the country remains polarized in terms of religion and from time to time they try to incite their followers against people of other faiths.
As a secular nation Nigerian government is not supposed to have sympathy for any religion at all, at the same time religious issues should not be an issue of national concern but the study revealed that successive Nigerian governments have had hands in Hajj and pilgrimage to Israel issues.

The attitude of Nigerians in the practice of religion which does not translate to good behaviour is of concern to the author. Nigerians within and in diaspora are anxiously waiting for a period when religious pluralism will translate to moral pluralism. Let leaders of all religions live in accordance with what they preach.

The perennial inter ethnic clashes is of interest to the author being an outcome of numerous ethnic groups that exist in Nigeria. These clashes are among the ethnic groups or against the government for an alleged marginalization and brazen denial of social benefits in response they will want to frustrate government polices in one way or the other. Not withstanding the bitter experiences we have had as a result of Religious pluralism, it is the position of this author that Religion still has much to contribute to the overall development of Nigeria. What is needed is sincerity of purpose and objectivity in every thing that Nigerians do.
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