

## **Ethno-Religious Crises and Its Implications on Security and National Development in Nigeria**

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37745/bjmas.2022.0038>

Published: 16th November, 2022

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**Citation:** Adabembe, K.O. and Adedayo A.M. (2022) Ethno-Religious Crises and Its Implications on Security and National Development in Nigeria, British Journal of Multidisciplinary and Advanced Studies: Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences 3 (2), 1-20, 2022

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**ABSTRACT:** *There has been upsurge in the incidents of religious violence in Nigeria and to a large extent; the country is no longer safe for the citizens and the investors. Based on this premises, this paper x-rayed historical background to religious crises, causes of religious crises, religion and development, and the implications of religious crises on national development. Survey research method was used to asses this situation and empirical results were found. From these results, it was discovered that, religion was the genesis of ethno- political crisis that infiltrates the present day Nigeria. This paper posits that religion which is supposed to be a unifying factor has contributed immensely to division, acrimony and all sorts of evil that permeates our contemporary Nigeria. However, it was noted in the paper that, many of the crises considered to be religious crises in Nigeria were actually political and tribal crises. To stem the tide of religious violence in Nigeria will be a herculean task because; the country is a fertile land for all forms of religion fundamentalists. Also, religion has been politicized in the county despite the fact that the country is a secular state. Finally, this work posits that, religious crises run counter to the tenets, teachings and ethical values of the three major religions which are in practice in the country. Meanwhile, religious fanatics and fundamentalists who originated and still promote religious crises in Nigeria violate religious tenets, ethical codes and teachings from the holy books. This paper concludes that, religious leaders as a result of their influence on the adherents must intensify efforts in sensitizing them on the dangers of crises in the country. Equally, religious leaders should desist from being an instrument of destruction in the hands of the political leaders.*

**KEYWORDS:** religious, crises, security, national, development

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## INTRODUCTION

The beginning of religious crises in Nigeria can be traced to 1945 when Anthony Enahoro of the Action Group (AG), moved a motion for Self Government which was to take effects from March, 1953. The northern members of the house opposed the motion and it did not see the order of the day this they did because of fear of southerners' domination. This singular event was the genesis of religious riots that broke out in Jos Plateau state in 1945. (Olomjobi, 2013). Furthermore, there was another riot in Kano 1980 and some cities in, the northern part of the country namely: Kaduna (1982), Bulumketu near Maiduguri (1982), Jimeta near Yola (1984) and Gombe (1985)" as reported by Lubeck 1991: 170 -195). Although, these riots built on the precedent laid by the Shiite movement in the late 1970s in which Mohammed Yusuf, who later became Boko Haram leader, was a major player (Mohammed 2010). Yan Tatsine was an Islamic sect and the first religious group to attack Nigerian security and other citizen who were not their members when their leader Maitatsine was killed by Nigerian security. The aftermath of this was destruction of lives and properties (Lubeck 1991).

The main National conflict that first divided Nigeria along religious line was the Sharia deliberation in the Constituent Assembly that took place between 1977 and 1978. It was in the midst of this deliberation that there was agitation for and against the incorporation of provision for a Federal Sharia Court of Appeal in the proposed 1979 Constitution because of its implications for the secularity of the Nigerian state (Laitin 1982:416). Unfortunately, religion which is supposed to be a unified factor and fundamental to national unity, development and peaceful co-existence is presently an instrument for destruction of lives, disunity and acrimony in Nigeria (Ushe, 2015). Furthermore, religious motivated crises is prevalent in contemporary Nigeria. Scholars have argued that, religion is the genesis of ethno-political crisis that permeates our contemporary Nigeria because religious sentiments have been incorporated to socio-political sphere in the country (Muogbo 2009, Enwerem 1999). More so, that religious crises are becoming daily occurrence in the country and is almost leading to anarchy if quick interventions are not made. Importantly, the trend of religious violence in Nigeria and the implications on national development needs to be conceptualized since this issue hardly received research attention. When such studies exist they are mainly concerned with religion and national security (Afolabi 2016, Egbefo, 2016). Even though, there are view works on religious crises and National development (Ajaegbu, 2012). Man is a religious animal just as they are political animal because, religion is considered to be a moral fortress of any society. For example, there are three main religions in Nigeria namely; African Traditional Religion, Islam and Christianity. Unfortunately, Nigeria that is considered to be one of the most religious nations of the world (BBC News, 2004, Samuel & Anadi, 2021) is bedeviled with religious crises, equally, despite Nigerians religiosity they are graded high among the corrupt nations of the world (Human Right Watch, 2005, 2018, 2019).

Religion has perpetrated more evil than good in Nigeria. Although, religion if properly harnessed can be a unified factor in the society and at the same time, it can be the bedrock of crises in a particular society as in the case of Nigeria if care is not taking. (Samuel & Anadi, 2021). Meanwhile, some crises in Nigeria are more of political and tribal in nature but people often times mistake them for religious crises. Religious crises can be classified into inter- religious and intra-religious crises. Maitatsine crises of 1980-1984 can be classified as intra- religious crises, the first major inter- religious riot in Nigeria was caused by Rev. Abubakah Bako who was accused of making some insulting comments about Prophet Muhammad. This riot started in Kafanchan on March 6<sup>th</sup>, 1987 from there it spread to Zaria and Funtua and it led to loss of lives and properties from Christians and Muslims sides. There were two major inter- religious crises in 1991, one was in the Tafawa Balewa Local Government Area of Bauchi State in April 1991, this was as a result of roasted meat popularly called suya and the second one was tagged Reinhard Bonnke riot which started in Kanostate in Nigeria lives and properties were destroyed in these crises (Isyaku, 1991). Association between Christians and Muslims is often times characterized with distrust (Amadu, 1989).

Ethno-religious conflict has taken different dimensions in Nigeria. The issues considered above are the springboards for the manifestation of ethno-religious conflicts in different dimensions as experienced in our society. There has been a continuous and unabated domination by one ethnic group over others and by one religious organization over others. The ingredients and specific factors precipitating ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria are needs, perceptions, desire for power, values, religious space, structural differences, communication differences, ethnocentrism, desire for autonomy, feelings and emotions (Familugba & Adedayo, 2020).

Although, inter- religious crises are prevalent in the Northern part of the country, there are occasions whereby it resulted to retaliation attacks in Southern and Eastern part of Nigeria. The revenge attacks by Christians in Eastern and Southern Nigeria are directed to all the Northerners. Whenever such happens both Christians and Muslims are victims of the attacks (Dzurgba, 2006). Unfortunately, it seems government has embraced Islam and Christianity as official religions of a country that is constitutionally a secular state. For instance, in political sphere, religion has always been considered before choosing leaders in the local, state and national levels. Take for instance, the ruling party in Nigeria All Progressives Party (APC) had been condemned on the choice of Muslim/ Muslim ticket on the coming presidential election which is slated February 2023. Nigerian Christians have seen this choice has a slap on their faces even at this period that religious crises permeate the country. Meanwhile, it is note worth that this agitation did not start with this political dispensation. The former president of Nigeria Olusegun Obasanjo openly kicked against same religion such as Christian/Christian or Muslim/Muslim presidential ticket in 2015 (Olatunji, 2014). Thus, the objective of this article is to trace the historical development of religious crises in Nigeria. Specifically, the article aims to: (1) review religious crises and its causes (2) identify the

implication of religious crises on security and national development (3) propose a possible solution to religious crises in Nigeria.

### **Conceptual clarifications**

There are some terms that needs clarification in this article. This aspect of the work will be dedicated to that. These terms are: religion, security, development and national development.

### **Religion**

Religion is a very difficult concept to give an appropriate definition, Adelowo (2001) reported that, Leuba, as informed by Pratt gave forty-eight definitions of religion from various scholars and equally included two of his own to make it fifty and scholars were still not satisfied with all these definitions except their own. Religion is a universal phenomenon. Man is a religious animal just as he is a political animal because, there is no known human society or culture that is not religious. Scholars have asserted that religious feeling, and belief in supernatural is found among all the races of mankind and cultures (Onyeidu, 2001). “Religion is a set of symbolic forms and acts that relate man to the ultimate conditions of his existence” (Bella, 1970:21).

Emile Durkheim view religion “as a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things that is it to say, things set apart and forbidden-beliefs and practices which unite, into one single moral community called a church and all those who adhere to them” (Haralambos et al, 2013). While religion according Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), is a feeling of absolute reliance, religion to him is an isolable matter. Formerly, religious institution was well-known with the cultural tradition that provided the fundamental means of individual and social identification. Traditionally, religion referred to the basic guiding images and principles of an individual and a culture. Religion was synonym with style and ways of life. (Joseph, 1975). Religion has a powerful influence on man, his value and environment. Religion is about relationships, this relationship is often between man and deities. There is also relationship that involves the adherents in the course of religious practices. August Comte views on religion was that, religion is a delusion, a symbolic thinking or an understandable behavior. According to Comte, the foundation of religion was an expression of powerful emotions and an immature thought. Religion according to Karl Marx is the, Soul the moan of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, the sense of the senseless conditions. It is the opium of the people. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opiate of the people. (Haralambos, 2013:435).

### **Security**

Security is the protection of life and property of a person. In recent time, the meaning of security has undergone a change from traditional conceptualization to a non-traditional meaning, Traditionally, security was the one-sided function of the state especially if we consider the

intellectual perception(s) of some political theorists like Thomas Hobbes who argued that the essence of a state is to provide law and order, which are attained through (effectual) security. Nevertheless, in an effort by the state to actualize the rationale of its creation (through social contract), it has found it compulsory to obtain rightful and lawful use of force. This idea has made security issue a function of effective monopoly of violence, which the state applies to engender strict conformity and complaisance to state laws by the peoples for effective security (Tickner, 1994).

Any society needs security and safety for its functions. Safety and security represent many things, including food supplies, health, housing, environmental security etc. It's seen as moral rights and intrinsic to development; Security and safety of men and women encourages well-being and financial health; It promotes in productivity of individual and economic life integration; It helps individual to be calmer, understanding, mind control and be more responsive than reactive, more observant, and achieve cognitive awareness; Security and safety is vital for survival. Security and safety are essential conditions for sustainable development and self-reliance (UN Commission on Human Security, 2003). Accordingly, there are various types of security, namely human and national security, others are Food Security; Health Security; Economic Security; Environmental Security; Personal Security; Community Security; Territorial Security and so on.

### **Development**

It is difficult to draw a universal definition for the concept of development. Meanwhile, scholars have given so many definitions based on their area of specialization. Scholars such as (Pye, 1966), Rostow (1960) view development as westernization, it is shifting from the level of traditional to the level of innovation. Development involves measureable and qualitative growth in, economic and socio-political space of a particular country (Ezeibe, 2009). It is steady growth of anything be it nation or person to some degree so it develops better or more progressive. Dzurgba, view development as a progression of constructing new houses. The scholar goes on to describe "development as a form of new buildings that have been planned and built together on the same piece of land" (Dzurgba, 2002:17).

### **National Development**

National development is qualitative as well as quantitative change in social, cultural and economy of a particular nation. (Encyclopedia, 1969) Ebeh, views national development as enhanced, changes in all aspects of the society be it, industry, political, economic, and socio-cultural in order to achieve development. National development is the ability of the country to nurture the standard of living of its citizens, this can be achieved making available for people's basic livelihood necessities (Google 2022). In all, it can be deduced from above definitions that national development involves all round progression in economic, education, social, political of a nation which affects the nation and the entire citizens positively.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Historical Background to Religious Crises in Nigeria**

This part of the work focuses on general issues of religious crises in Nigeria. It explores historical background to religious crises and how religion contributes to insecurity in Nigeria. The section concludes with the understanding that the existing religious crises in Nigeria and the terrorist are mostly enthused by their religious beliefs and social- stratification. More so, they are very certain that God demands and approves their actions.(Hoffman 1993).

Several scholars have long concluded that religious crises in contemporary Nigeria is an impediment to national development (Ezeibe, 2019, Abimboye,2009).Meanwhile, religious violence is not peculiar to Nigeria,there are records of religious violence in some Sub-Sahara Africa such as Mali, Gambia and Mauritania. (Basedau & Schaefer-Kehnert, 2019).Moreover, the issue of religious conflict can be traced to unending crises between Judaism and Christianity which was heightened in 16th century AD, Emperor Constantine who reigned during this era made this rivalry more violent by his declaration of Christianity as a state religion in Rome in 16<sup>th</sup> century. (Kegan, 1991). Unfortunately, there is no history of religious violence without the records of loss of lives and other valuables (Abimboye, 2019, Mear and Schneider, 1985). There are three major religions in Nigeria namely, African Traditional Religion, Islam and Christianity. It is noteworthy that, the most common inter –religious violence in Nigeria has been between Christianity and Islamic and this is prevalent in the Northern part of the country. (Lubeck, 1991).

Consequently, it is indisputable that religion is the life wire of human existence. Religion gives meaning to life itself. It guilds and explains people’s life and provides answers to some fundamental life problems of now and after existence. No wonder, Marx refers to religion as the opium of the masses. Nearly all religions have a promise of after life for the adherent. The power and influence of religion has been used to ruin Nigeria instead of building it. Therefore, killing innocent souls both young and old and destroying of lives and properties had been perpetrated by religious fanatics all in the name of fighting for God and defending their religion in Nigeria.(Afolabi 2016).The most dreadful act of religious killing was perpetrated right in a school campus recently in Sokoto state Nigeria. A student named Deborah Samuel was killed and burnt in a campus for alleged blasphemy this particular killing have generated a lot of controversies among Christian umbrellas in Nigeria.(Jannamike,2022.) As such, two arguments were built on causes of conflicts and religion in Nigeria. The first argument sees religious conflicts as a problem of religion itself, while the other argument considered religiouscrises to be actually socio- economic and political problem. It is the belief of this school of thought that the very foundation and genesis of Nigeria’s problem is not about religion but it is of struggle.(Afolabi, 2016).

Thus, the trend of religious crises in Nigeria that is far running into anarchy if quick interventions are not made and the implications on national development needs to be conceptualized. Meanwhile, it is of fact that social stratification and high level of poverty especially in the northern part of the country have contributed immensely to the present situation of Nigeria. It is of note that the majority of the people that are presently terrorizing the country are from educational disadvantage states. Little wonder these people are against formal education and are trying very hard to stop it in the Northern part of the country.

Scholars have argued that the Maitatsine foot soldiers were some young men who were at the disadvantages as a result of poverty and economic instability in Nigeria which made them to become street children or the Almajiris has commonly refers to in Nigeria. These young men were described by Isichei (1987:201–202) as “jobless, and homeless men, brought in from the countryside to be involved in all manner of petty jobs, like barbing, cobbling, cap knitting, and petty trade.”(Hiskett,1987) noted that, some of these people were from neighboring countries such as; Chad and Niger republic. Meanwhile, having extensively studied all these earlier movements such as Shiite movement and Maitatsine or Yan Tatsine sect of the 1970s it can be deduced that these movements were the bedrocks and sources of motivations for Boko Haram and Isis that is presently bedevil Nigeria and Nigerians. Scholars have long concludes that, trrorist groups are mostly inspired by their religious believes, and they are very certain that God demands and approves their actions.(Hoffman 1993).

### **Religion and Development**

The situation of contemporary Nigeria on the issue of insecurity caused by religious fundamentalists has been of great concern to all and sundry. Questions has been asked whether religion is a blessing or bane in Sub – Sahara Africa and Nigeria in particular especially a country considered to be a secular state. Hence the need for this section. This segment presents the review on general issues of religion and national development, it explores how religion impacts and impedes national development. Max Weber, a renowned sociologist and an economist, expatiated that religion and religious beliefs has intrinsic value on development of capitalism which in turn, can lead to national development. He explains this in his popular book, *The Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism*. In his arguments, he explains that, capitalism was enhanced in part of the world where Calvinist which was a form of Protestantism was in practice. Weber belief that, religious beliefs and practices can influence economic behaviors. He affirmed that capitalism started in some European and North America countries where Calvinist a protestant Christian religious affiliation was common. These groups of Christians lived an “ascetic life which involves abstinence from pleasures, an austere lifestyle and rigorous self- discipline”(Haralambos, 2013:447).The ethical value of these groups of Christians helped in development of capitalism. Whereas, (Wallerstein, 1974) argues that, capitalism cannot be said to be developed as a result of religious beliefs, he was of the view that, any intricate knowledge can be influenced to serve both political and social objectives, he concludes that, economy can actually influenced religion and

not the other way round. Similarly, (Cohen, 20002 and Samueleson, 1957) argued that, religion and development are two separate entities which must not mingled together while addressing the issue of economic development, the reason according to these scholars is that, there are no empirical evidence to back the claim that religion influences economic development up.

Meanwhile, religion can influence development of a nation if properly harnessed because of the ethical values that are inherent in nearly all religions. African Traditional religion is the oldest religion in the shore of African. According, to Adasuin(Ekeopara& Ekpanyong,2016 )“African Traditional Religion (ATR) is called ‘African’ due to certain reasons. First, it is called ‘African’ because it is indigenous, aboriginal, and foundational or handed down from generation to generation” (ATR) is concerned with upholding of values, ethical principles and morals which are crucial elements for national development. The socio-religious values and moral principles which are the basis of (ATR) if properly harnessed will leads to positive changes in attitudes and characters of citizens which will results to national development (Ekeopara et. al, 2016 ).Regrettably, lack of basic values, morals, ethics and social principles in nearly all levels of governance and leadership has led the country to her present situation. Meanwhile, Max Weber theory, on an ascetic living encourage people to follow a secular vocation with passion and seek economic gain. This kind of teachings have positive impacts on the development of some Pentecostal churches in Nigeria, for example Redeemed Christian Church of God, winners chapel, and some other churches in Nigeria have proven beyond reasonable doubt that religion can influence development of a nation this they do in area of education, religious tourism, health, employment and community social responsibility such as construction of roads and provision of other social amenities to their host communities. With this church have proven to be the moral bastion of the society (Adabembe, 2022).Similarly, in Islam the introduction of Islamic bank has contributed to the growth of economy which in turn has contributed to development of the nation. Islamic banking system conforms to the values of Sharia’s which is an Islamic Law which forbids payment and acceptance of interest charges for accepting and lending money. Usury which is popularly known as *riba*among the Muslims is forbidden. (Siddiqi1993, Olaoye, Dabiri, and Kareem, 2013). There are some Quran passages that support this assertion: Q3: 130, affirms “O ye who belief! Devour not usury (interest), doubled and multiplied; but fear Allah; that ye may (really) prosper” also Q2:274: reads “Those who devour usury will not stand except as stands one whom the Satan by his touch hath driven to madness. That is because they say trade is like usury, but Allah permitted trade and forbidden usury (interest).....”. Meanwhile, the religious and ethical values of Islamic banking system has contributed immensely to individual and national development since it was introduced in Nigeria. This was made possible because, it assisted in advancing and enhancing both small and medium scale businesses among the down trodden and vulnerable members of the society this has resulted into poverty alleviation. (Olaoye, I. K. et.al, 2013).



Unfortunately, religion can be bane and bring division and discords the dilemma that Nigeria has been facing for some years now. (Samuel & Anadi, 2021, Olomjobi, 2013). Presently, Nigeria is bedevil with Boko Haram insurgence a religio - political sect, ‘who declared the city and Islamic establishment to be intolerable corrupt and irredeemable’ (Walker, 2012: 3) this has grounded education ,economy and social activities some people in the northern part of the country, as many of the residents in these states has been displaced, most of the towns desolated since the activities of these group started in Maiduguri, Bornu state the northern east of Nigeria in the year, 2009. The activities of this group have spread to other states in the northern part of Nigeria such as, Niger state, Yobe and Bauchi, state. Meanwhile, there are indications that the group has collaboration with other global jihadists (Walker, 2012). Unfortunately, agriculture which has brought investors into these states has been grounded, indigenous and international companies have left these areas and these has led to reduction in internally generated revenue for the states affected. Thus, the lack of development in these areas. (Ajaegbu, 2012).

### **Ethno-Religion Crises and implications on Human Security in Nigeria**

Human security is the protecting fundamental freedoms, that is, freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. Human security integrates three freedoms: freedom from fear, freedom from want and the freedom from indignity.

Globally, threats to human security as continue to be of the more pressing issues of the global agenda at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The biggest challenge to human security is that of religious crises occasioned by some Islamic sets. Religious crises target the common, innocent people. In African countries, there has been various attack on members of the public by various Islamic religion groups and non-state actors such Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Ansar al-Sharia in Libya, Al-Shabaab (militant group) in Mali, Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group and so on. In Nigeria, there are also threats to human security from Militant Islamic Groups (Boko Haram) and other religious groups.

Nigeria-State, has been having challenges of insecurity some years back, but the recent waves of insecurity is escalating geometrically and, therefore, rapidly assuming a dangerous and lethal dimension. The tempo of insecurity is extremely frightening and the criminal activities being perpetrated by non-state actors have fueled and increased the velocity of force of terrorism, banditry and kidnapping attacks in nearly all the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria.

As a result of ongoing insecurity, this emergency is commonly understood as the threat posed by religious crises farmers-herders clashes, kidnapping, act of banditry, and other criminal activities in states in Nigeria. However, this understates the complexity and multidimensional nature of Nigeria security challenges, which impact all of the states in the Nigeria. At the same time, theft, extra-judicial killing, maiming, and attacks over lives and properties is primarily concentrated in

some major towns and communities across Nigeria. Following is a review of diverse security threats in Nigeria, the risks they pose, and the landscapes in which they have germinated.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This aspect of the study discusses the theory that forms the framework with which the research works is built. For the purpose of this study, the theory used is Social Identity Theory. Social identity theory is the part of an individual's self-concept resulting from apparent membership in a relevant social group. The theory was postulated by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s and the 1980s, social identity theory initiated the concept of a social identity as a way in which to explain intergroup, inter-ethnic and inter-religious behavior. Social identity theory explores the occurrences of the in-group and out-group and is based on the perception that identities are constituted through a process of difference defined in a relative or flexible way depends on the activities in which one engages. The theory is portrayed as a theory that forecasts certain intergroup behaviours on the basis of perceived group status differences, the perceived legitimacy and stability of those status differences, and the perceived ability to move from one group to another. Social identity theory is used to pass on to general theorizing about human interaction and social selves. Social identity theory states that social behavior will want a person to change their way of life while in a group. The assumption of social identity theory is that individuals and group are fundamentally motivated to achieve positive uniqueness.

By application, it is perceived in Nigeria society that ethnic and religious groups will want to over-power, supersede and dominate one another. There are phenomena whereby people discriminate and stereotyped against the social identity of other tribe, ethnic and religious groups. There are indications that religious organizations and ethnic group will want the people to accept their way of life, customs, norms, values, beliefs, religious in which these has been fueling ethno-religious crises in Nigeria. Every individuals and groups in Nigeria are always promoting their ethnics, tribes and religions. Social identity has exacerbated, polarized and threaten Nigeria unity as a nation.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The data for this study were collected through primary and secondary sources. The primary data were collected through the: Interview with Key Informants (KIIs), Focused Group Discussion (FGD) such as leaders of religious organizations, clerics, Church members, Mosques Members, African Traditional Religions (ATRs) Worshippers, leaders of ethnic groups, peace scholars, advocates and practitioners among others were interviewed. The respondents have good knowledge of the ethno-religious crises in Nigeria and its implications on security and national development. Purposive sampling technique was employed to select the respondents who were knowledgeable in the study.

The secondary sources include archives, books, journal articles, magazines, and other publications relevant to the study. The secondary data were used to complement primary data to strengthen the findings of the study. The data were analyzed using qualitative approach. The data was analysed using excerpts, paraphrasing and direct quotation.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs): 20 Christians, 20 Muslims, 20 African Traditional Religions (ATRs) Worshippers, 20 Leaders of religious Organizations, and 20 Leaders of ethnic groups.

In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) include selected members of the leaders of religious organizations and body's, leaders of ethnic groups, religious experts, peace advocates, and security experts.

### **The Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

One Hundred (100), questionnaires were administered to various representatives Christians, Muslims, African Traditional Religions (ATRs) Worshippers, Leaders of religious Organizations, Pastors, Imams in Nigeria. However, the entire questionnaires were recovered. The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) via Frequency and Percentage table.

**Table: Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents**

S/N	RESPONDENTS BIO DATA	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
1	<b>GENDER:</b>		
	Male	64	64
	Female	36	36
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
2	<b>AGE DISTRIBUTION:</b>		
	18-25	4	4
	26-40	42	42
	41- 55	32	32
	55years and above	22	22
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
3	<b>EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION:</b>		
	Primary Education	0	0
	Secondary Education	6	6
	Tertiary Education	94	94
	No Formal Education	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
4	<b>RELIGIOUS/ ETHNIC GROUPS:</b>		
	Christianity's	20	20
	Muslims	20	20
	ATRs Worshippers	20	20
	Leaders of Religious Groups	20	20
	Leaders of Ethnic Groups	20	20
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings of Objective 1

#### Causes of Ethno-Religious Crises in Nigeria

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Political power struggle	5	5%
Scramble for resources and economic competitions		
The fear of domination	2	2%
Selfish interest on the part of religious leaders	8	8%
Increased politicization of religion	10	10%
Pervasive poverty and unemployment especially among the youth	13	13%
Government involvement in religious matters	6	6%
Wrong religious orientations and low literacy level of religious and tenets of the holy books	7	7%
Religious and ethnicity fanaticism	16	16%
Land issues	14	14%
Perceived feelings of marginalization	4	4%
Vengeance and relative insecurity	8	8%
	5	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Fieldwork, 2022.

The Table above revealed the distribution of respondents based on their opinion of causes of ethno-religious crises in Nigeria. The data showed that 16(16%) respondents indicated that Wrong religious orientations and low literacy level of religious and tenets of the holy books is one of the major factors that is responsible for ethno-religious crises in Nigeria. 14(14%) respondents indicated Religious and ethnicity fanaticism, 13(13%) respondents indicated Increased politicization of religion, 10(10%) respondents indicated Selfish interest on the part of religious leaders, 8(8%) respondents indicated Perceived feelings of marginalization, 8 (8%) of the respondents indicated the fear of domination, 7 (7%) of the respondents indicated Government involvement in religious matters, 6 (6%) of the respondents indicated Pervasive poverty and unemployment especially among the youth, 5 (5%) indicated Political power struggle, 5 (5%) indicated Vengeance and relative insecurity, 4 (4%) indicated land issues, while only 2(2%) respondents indicated that scramble for resources and economic competitions is the causes of ethno-religious crises in Nigeria.

Accordingly, respondents also postulated during interview session that factors precipitating ethno religious crises in Nigeria as follows; misinformation and ignorance, economic difficulties, political motivation, activities of preachers, intolerance, porous borders, desire to actualize ethnic agenda, other conflicts clothed in religious “garments”.

In additions, respondents affirmed that the most notorious avenue for fomenting ethno-religious crises has been the approaches of adherents on ethnicity and religious propagation, that the modes of propagation among the various ethnics and religions have been far from the ethics of the regards for coexistence and personal convictions of various individuals. Majority of the respondents talk much about the misapplication of concepts and terminologies in religious activities has complicated religious crises in Nigeria. It is also gathered that the serious factors behind ethno-religious crises in Nigeria is the social and the economic factor. They postulated that ethno-religious uprising in Nigeria is a consequence of the inhuman structure of the nation’s status quo, an enormously capitalist society where human use fellow beings to survive. Respondents conclude that Nigeria is restructured, social dysfunctions in the form of religious fanaticism, ethnicity propagation will continue to flourish.

**Findings of Objective 2****Effects of Ethno-Religious Crises in Nigeria**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Mutual distrust	27	27%
Slow economic and educational development	35	35%
Wanton loss of lives and destruction of properties	21	21%
Discrimination and stereotyping	7	7%
Huge losses of the nation needed manpower	10	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Fieldwork, 2022.**

The Table above revealed the distribution of respondents based on their opinion of the effects of ethno-religious crises in Nigeria. The data showed that 35(35%) respondents indicated slow economic and educational development as the major effects of ethno-religious crises in Nigeria. 27(27%) respondents indicated mutual distrust, 21(21%) respondents indicated wanton loss of lives and destruction of properties, 10(10%) respondents indicated huge losses of the nation needed manpower, while only 7(7%) respondents indicated that ethno-religious crises lead to discrimination and stereotyping in Nigeria.

Accordingly, respondents also postulated during interview session that the effects of ethno-religious crises in Nigeria are far beyond their epicenters. They averred that the effects has led to refugee flows, internal displacement, environmental and health hazards, economic failures and has continued to fuelled organized crime and insecurity in Nigeria.

Respondents affirmed that during ethno-religious crises in Nigeria, many citizens have been maimed, killed and wounded. They said in various times, ethno-religious crises has led too wide spread disruption of socio-economic activities worth hundreds of millions with negative effects on Nigeria productivity.

**Findings of Objective 3****Implications of Ethno-Religious Crises on National Security and Development in Nigeria**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Political Instability	30	30%
Socio-economic instability, poverty and hardship	22	22%
Hatred	11	12%
Psychological trauma	23	23%
Political instability Adversely implications on good governance	13	16%
Creating unsecured environment	5	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Fieldwork, 2022.**

The Table above revealed the distribution of respondents based on their opinion of the implications of ethno-religious crises in Nigeria. The data showed that 30(30%) respondents indicated that political instability is one of the major implications of ethno-religious crises in Nigeria. 23(23%) respondents indicated psychological trauma, 22(22%) respondents indicated Socio-economic instability, poverty and hardship, 13(13%) respondents indicated Political instability Adversely implications on good governance, 11(11%) respondents indicated hatred while only 5(5%) respondents indicated that ethno-religious crises created unsecured environment for socio-economic activities to thrive in Nigeria.

Respondents averred that, apart from the monumental losses which can be qualified the crises further deepened the divide which hither to existed among the various ethnic and religious adherent. For instance, the psychological trauma and the blister among the victim of ethno-religious disturbances is a recurring decimal. Such individuals never live to neither forgive nor forget the persons involved in and the circumstances of such carriages.

In the same vein, respondents affirmed that politically, ethno-religious crises have made gibberish of the constitutional provision for the freedom of worship and expression. The far-reaching



implications are that the citizenry has gradually lost confidence in the political will of successive Nigerian leaders to keep the country as one united and sovereign entity.

In addition, respondents opined that, ethno-religious crises in whatever form, whether doctrinal, ideological or physical have resulted in monumental disasters. Estimable and inestimable human and material resources have perished on all occasions of such carnages.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

An attempt has been made in to appraise ethno-religious crises in Nigeria. In the process, we have identified the causes of ethno-religious crises in Nigeria, effects of ethno-religious crises on national security and development in Nigeria; the issues of ethno-religious crises are discussed in order to establish the implications of such pandemonium for national development. Practical suggestions have also been proposed towards sustainable ethnics and religious peace, harmony, co-existence and national development and innovation. In any attempt to utilize ethnicity and religious for peaceful cohesion, stability and progress, it is a basic responsibility for every ethnics and religious adherent and by implication for every Nigerian to live by the moral and social values of his or her ethnic group and religion.

In view of the Ethno-Religious Crises and its Implications on Security and National Development in Nigeria, the following recommendations are proffered:

It is observed that if social and economic challenges are more constructively addressed in Nigeria, the issue of religious uprising and crises in all forms shall greatly reduce and most Nigerians, who are at the lowest index of economic development, shall have a new orientation of constructive engagement.

The federal government of Nigeria should work towards organizing national conference on religion, ethnicity, law and human security with focus on religious extremism, blasphemy, violence, terrorism and human and sustainable security in Nigeria. Dialogue has been an age-long crisis resolution strategy for all forms of human differences. In view of the degrees of unawareness and lack of knowledge often exhibited by ethnics and religious adherents about one another's ethnic and religion, effective dialogue is hereby recommended if the ethnicity and religious in the country would do anything significant for the socio-economic development and advancement of the nation.

Religious activities of Christians, Muslims and African Traditional Religions (ATRs) which is propelling ethno-religious crises in Nigeria should be regulated with enactment of extant laws, regulations and guidelines by the national assembly. In view of this, government should resuscitate the Advisory Councils on Religious Affairs (ACRA), which was set up in 1987. Such a Council

can be transform to Ministry of Religious Affairs and should comprises distinguished religious scholars and opinion leaders drawn from across the ethnic, religious and social organizations. The federal government of Nigeria must have the political will to make public the reports of the various previous panels that were established to investigate past ethno-religious crises in Nigeria. Items such as origin, local government areas and most importantly, religious denomination should be de-emphasized and deleted from all forms and processes of transaction either for employment, scholarship, empowerment, business or commercial ventures and admissions to educational institutions in Nigeria. The need to institute and preserve a Pan-Nigerian identity, mutual trust and confidence in the corporate existence of the country and security of sovereignty and self-dignity.

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British Journal of Multidisciplinary and Advanced Studies:

*Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences 3 (2), 1-20, 2022*

**Print ISSN: 2517-276X**

**Online ISSN: 2517-2778**

Website: <https://bjmas.org/index.php/bjmas/index>

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Published by European Centre for Research Training and Development UK

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