Full Length Research Paper

Challenges of sustainable security and national integration in the 21st century: The place of religious studies

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Abstract

The study focused on sustainable security and integration of multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic dimensions of Nigerian polity that has exerted on social security and other emergence ideals of democratic governance in the country. The study specifically aimed at finding out if the objectives of religious studies could be of help in sustaining security and national integration in the country. Two research questions guided the study and a hypothetical statement was raised. The population of the study included all the religious educators in both federal and state universities in the South East geo-political zone of Nigeria consisting of Abia, Anambra, Enugu, Imo and Ebonyi states out of which 100 educators were selected using simple random sampling techniques. Questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. Data was analyzed using mean while hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Keywords: Challenges of sustainable, Security, National integration, Religious studies, 21st century.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria came into being in 1914 with Calabar as capital city which has been transferred to Lagos and Abuja in contemporary society. The amalgamation of southern and Northern protectorates by the colonial rule brought together various ethnic groups along with varied cultural cleavages and of course diversity of religious beliefs and practices encumbered by linguistic variations. The major challenge confronting Nigeria in the 21st century is how to sustain the unity of the nation, national integration, peace and stability in order to guarantee equitable human resources development and societal transformation.

Roland (1961) said that "a country is classified as homogenous" if 80 percent or more of its population should belong to the same religion or the same language" then one must perforce to concede that Nigeria is by no means a homogeneous society. Njoku and Njoku (2013:124) agreed and added that Nigeria is not only heterogeneous society but also one made up of diverse and sects for which religious groupings in Nigeria consist of African traditional religion, Christianity and Islam.

Religion is one of the basic institutions of man. Family and school also exist yet religion gives culture ultimate orientation through control, integration and education. Institutions exist for the sake of the society yet individuals are subject to it. Human institutions differ considerably with time and proceeds from human will for which no society is static. It is true that man creates society but the society influences man (Roland, 1961: vii).

The major focus of religious studies is to assist in the all round development of individuals with the undertone of compassionate and fair minded persons that can make positive contributions to society as individuals and as members of the groups. The pivot of common essential learning is to bring up individuals who would not only be educated, sympathetic and rational but also have sense of social responsibility for humanity and societal progress.

Religious studies according to Nduka and Olonti (1983) deals with the building up of the moral habits, good manners and also academic excellence . It

underscores the mastering of basic good habits, ethical/social etiquettes through exemplary life of educators along with training and continuous inculcating how to make use of public goods. Furthermore, it impacts how to make and sustain friendship, keep school regulations and indeed, how to talk to elderly ones with respect.

Religious studies are geared towards the development of autonomous moral character. It would ensure the development of strong moral will-power through internalized moral principles and discipline that enhances self actualization.

Furthermore, religious studies develop in the individuals the ability of moral judgment and decision making required in dealing with moral conflicts that occur on daily life situation as basis for discrete moral consideration and justifiable approached or methods. Religious studies transmit great traditions to the individuals through inculcation of norms and ideas needed for desirable life in the society. Through the study individuals become aware of comprehensive need for normative structure in the society and as such get strongly committed to the moral order through persuasive presentation of moral norms.

Accordingly Obilo (1995) summarized the imperatives of religious studies as follows: This aim specifically intends to transmit the values of one nation's heritage to the next generation.

- Foster the spirit of respect for human dignity and awareness of life.
- Train those who can contribute towards realizing a peaceful international society.
- Nurture individuals who in turn will form and develop a democratic society where freedom, truth and peace rule.
- Train individual who can make independent decision and foster a sense of morality.
- Nurture those who can endeavour to inherit and develop traditional culture and create culture that is rich.

The relegation of the rule of law to the background has become a challenge to sustained security and national integration in Nigeria. Eikbomun (2007) expressed that the danger of black market is overwhelming as environment, lives and property are set ablaze and hoodlums resort to stealing, armed robbery, kidnapping along with violence for which security of lives and property have become unstable in the society.

Sustainable security has been threatened by corruption, greediness and poor performance of public enterprises. Ezeani (2005) had no doubt that some public enterprises operate at a loss and McGrew (2000) agreed and said that the public enterprise has attracted much criticisms especially since the 80s encumbered by the micro-economic policies arising from the global economic crisis for which public enterprises operations reflect a history of huge financial losses, over staffing and burden of excessive debts. The implications of large social

system underscore the acceptance of one another among the majority and minority groups. According to Federico (1975) the unity and integration of large social system depends on whether the majority groups adopt the minority group within their neighbourhood and whether the minority accepts the culture of` the majority. Njoku (2011) agreed that integrated society eliminates ethnicity, racism, unequal treatment and the malady of none indigene syndrome. But when the majority discriminates against minority in employment, education and citing of projects that foster inequality impact negatively on national integration

Alemika intoned that the distinguishing features of classic democratic society is the centrality of rights, security and welfare of citizens as the responsibility and legitimacy of government. He argued that the various governments in Nigeria failed in upholding the rights of citizens in the country. He further stated that government equally failed to effectively endorse and implements economic and socio-political principles in relation to the task of enhancing and sustaining democratic governance in pursuit of national integration and sustained security of Nigerian citizens. In other words, governments largely relegated to the background principles and functions that bear on the maintenance of citizenship rights and national integration to the detriment of the larger Nigerian citizens (2007:143).

The amended constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria enhanced sustainable national security and integration such that every citizen has equality of rights, obligations and opportunities before the law and that exploitation of human or natural resources in any form whatsoever reasons, other than the good of the community be prevented (Constitution, 2011: chapter 2 section 16, 17 subsection 1 paragraphs 1 and 4). Inspite of the constitutional proviso governance in Nigeria is fraught with imperfection and political violence. Chaotic situation arose in Rivers state (Inko-Tariah, 2014). As at July 2013 River state legislative activities were grounded as lawmakers attempted impeachment of Otelemaba Amachree honourable speaker of the house. Consequently the legislative activities were carried out in undisclosed locations. Legislative violence reigns terror, kidnapping, intimidation and cheap blinking as well, repression (Nnachi, Ude and Igu, 2007 & Aliu, 2013).

Legislative violence triggered violent clashes between two or among members of the legislatures on divisive issues or tight in vote that results to fights, physical confrontation or combat deployed to overpower or fiercely counter an act of opposing ideas or forces. Legislative violence has correlation with political violence that government deploys in order to achieve political goals. Many people believe that violence is not only justifiable but also necessary to achieving political wills (Wikipedia, 2014).

Mills intoned that rewards and recognitions are often perceived as insufficient and poorly distributed, and

members are inclined to compete with one another for those prizes (1967). The fact remains that there are fixed amount of resources to be distributed throughout legislative period and those resources are scarce and as such they trigger off legislative conflicts that is generally a win-loose in nature. Those legislatures who are losers are not supportive of the decisions. Halverstadt (1991) asserted that an organization that is losing such resources as volunteer work hours, communal self-esteem or status in the larger community or money is put to an edge emotionally. Parties to conflicts within the system are more likely to display and act out system tensions and fears on one another. Therefore legislative violence impacts negatively on sustainable security and national integration in the 21sty century Nigerian society.

Statement of the Problem

Much has been said about challenges that confront sustainable security and national integration in the 21st century Nigerian society especially various ethnic groups, varied cultural cleavages, religious groupings, beliefs and practices as well as linguistic variations. The major challenge confronting Nigeria is how to sustain the unity of the nation, peace and stability in order to guarantee equitable human resources development and societal transformation. In line with the above scenario the research is posed with the finding and way religious studies could help sustain security and national integration in the 21st century.

Therefore the problem of this study posed in a question: what is the place of religion in sustaining national security and integration for better tomorrow?

Research Questions

The two research questions deployed in the study were:

1. What are the challenges confronting sustainable security and national integration?
2. In what ways could religious studies help in sustaining security and national integration?

Hypothesis

H$_{01}$: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female educators in the place of religious studies in sustainable security and national integration in individual Nigerians.

METHODOLOGY

Survey design was deployed in the study. The population

of the study is the federal and state universities in South East geo-political zone of Nigeria. The researcher sampled 10 universities. The ten educators were randomly selected out of 10 universities while accidental sampling was adopted in the selection of the ten (10) universities. This brings the target population to 100 religious studies educators. Questionnaire was the instrument for data collection and face validation was carried out by five experts in educational measurement and evaluation. Hundred copies of the questionnaire were distributed to a corresponding number of religious studies educators in the sampled schools. Mean was used to analyze the data. A decision rule was derived by adding the assigned values and dividing it by the number scores. Therefore any score below 2.5 is interpreted as rejected and 2.5 and above interpreted as accepted. The assigned scores = 4+3+2+1 = 10
The number of scales = 4

$$\therefore \frac{10}{4} = 2$$

Data Presentation

Table 1 shows that items 1-12 are challenges confronting sustainable security and national integration obtained mean scores above 2.50. The result with a grand mean of 3.3 indicate that the respondents agreed with above listed items in the table as challenges confronting sustainable security and national integration

Table 2 shows that items 13-26 fall within the real limit of agreed with the grand mean of 3.3 which is above the criterion mean of 2.5. This indicates that the items are ways in which religious studies could help in sustaining security and national integration in the 21st century.

This underscored that the t-critical value of 1.96 is greater than the t-calculated value of 1.71, in other words, the null hypothesis was accepted. It showed that there is no difference in the mean responses of moral and female educators on the place of religious studies in individual morality of the Nigerians.

Findings

The findings of the study are summarized as follows:

That indexes like corruption, lack of respect, violence, intolerance, greediness, insincerity, religious beliefs and practices, cultural differences along with ethnicity affect sustainable security and national integration. Those religious studies are a veritable tool for sustainable security and national integration.

DISCUSSION

Results of the study in Table 1 showed that the

Table 1: Mean Scores on Challenges Confronting Sustainable Security and National Integration (N = 100)

S/N	Items	$\bar{x}$	Remarks
1.	Greediness	3.5	Accepted
2.	Violence	2.9	Accepted
3.	Religious belief	3.8	Accepted
4.	Religious practice	3.8	Accepted
5.	Insincerity	3.9	Accepted
6.	Lack of respect	2.8	Accepted
7.	Corruption	3.8	Accepted
8.	Intolerance	3.5	Accepted
9.	Cultural differences	3.8	Accepted
10.	Poverty	3.0	Accepted
11.	Illiteracy	2.5	Accepted
12.	Ethnicity	2.9	Accepted
	Grand Mean	3.3	

Table 2: Mean Scores on Various Ways Religious Studies could help in Sustaining Security and National Integration

S/N	Items	$\bar{x}$	Remarks
13.	Inculcating in the individuals good conscience	3.7	Accepted
14.	Building up good sense of judgment	3.6	Accepted
15.	Cultivating in the individuals the habits of obedience, honest and hard work	3.4	Accepted
16.	Developing in the individuals the spirit of social conformity	3.7	Accepted
17.	Enabling man develop self-reliance and independent action	3.0	Accepted
18.	Orienting and re-orientation of value system	3.0	Accepted
19.	Transforming the normal life of the individuals	3.6	Accepted
20.	Developing sympathy for people in need	3.3	Accepted
21.	Helping the individuals to overcome emotional overtones	3.6	Accepted
22.	Providing good sense of discipline	3.3	Accepted
23.	Inculcating in man respect for others	3.1	Accepted
24.	Building in the individuals the right ego	3.7	Accepted
25.	Helping individuals to develop self control and self imposed discipline	2.7	Accepted
26.	Predisposing individuals to the golden rule of reciprocity	3.3	Accepted
	Grand Mean	3.3	Accepted

Hypothesis

H_{01}: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female educators on the place of religious studies in individual Nigerians.

Gender	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Df	t-cal	t-critical	Decision
Male	58	3.35	0.37				
				98	1.71	1.96	Accepted
Female	42	3.30	0.49				

respondents agreed with the items 1-12 on challenges confronting sustainable security in the 21st century. This was evident in the results which emphasized violence, intolerance and greediness which are factors that affect stable peace of society. This is in line with Eikbomun (2007) that saw kidnapping as an alert to insecurity and

that in a society where the rule of law is relegated to the background the society becomes anarchical. The society where there is no peace, there will be no development, there will be no growth and there will be no progress. It is understandable, why Williams (1974) in Njoku (2011) said that slightest provocation has brought untold sufferings and disaster on individuals, organizations or a nation, in such a society disorder or breach of public peace has become endemic such that economic, social life and humanity are constantly put on the edge

Subsequently, results of the study Table 2 showed that the respondents agreed with the listed items from 13-26 on various ways religious studies would help in sustaining security and national integration. This is in line with Federico (1975) who said that integrated society eliminates unequal treatment, ethnicity, and minority annexed with dominant group foster human capacity building and societal progress. When people are united, there would be societal cohesion, group sentiment, interdependence, respect and rule of law as such there would be progressive improvement of the society that would guarantee security of life and property.

In line with the above, religious studies would sustain national security and integration for future progress and societal transformation. Banks and Cleggs (1977), and Anyikwa (2002) agreed that religious studies are geared to inculcate in the individuals social and moral values that would engineer good sense of judgment, habits of obedience, self control and good conscience needed in progressive improvement of society in the 21st century.

CONCLUSION

Sequel to the findings of the study, it could be concluded that challenges to sustainable security and national integration would be ameliorated through religious studies. It is also established that there would be cohesion, group sentiment, and progressive improvement in an integrated society. Furthermore, that concerted efforts towards religious studies would impact greatly on the individuals, implementation of government decisions and the welfare of Nigerian society would experience the needed transformation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the study guided the recommendation made:
(1) Individuals should develop interest in the orientation and re-orientation of value system in order to build dynamic families and combat challenges of security and integration on national development in Nigeria.
(2) The religious studies educators should aim at impacting on the individuals those norms, values and moral standards that reshape individuals to make

(3) meaningful contributions to the society through exemplary life style.
(4) Religious studies should be focused on the challenges that confront sustainable security and national integration in the 21st century as stress that butteries the relevance of the study in contemporary society.
(5) Religious studies should be given equal opportunity to compete with science and technology (ICT) courses to project its importance in nation building and crisis management
(6) The government and education planners should sensitize the individuals and public through media on the need for religious studies
(7) Religious studies educators should employ versatile strategies to impact positively on the individuals, sustainable security and national integration in Nigeria society in the 21st century.

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