

Role of Religious Teachings on Justice, Peace and Security for Sustainable Development in Nigeria: Islamic Perspective

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It is well established that there is no nation that can enjoy a true sustainable development without justice, peace and security. Based on this view, religion as a complete way of life, Islam left no aspect of human life untouched, being spiritual and materials, economic and political, individual and social, educational and cultural, national and international. Therefore, this paper presents the challenge of injustice, fear and insecurity in Nigeria and prescribed some Islamic measures which if taken, harmony, peace, security and sustainable development are ensured in this county, where fear and social vices will be things of the past. In order to achieve these goals, historical and positioned systems of data collection were adopted. The study discovered that the only solution to these problems in Nigeria is to subject the leaders and followers to embark on the law promulgated by the Creator of the universe and total submission to Him alone can solve the problems. The paper recommended that, every Nigerian citizen should be made to understand the true contents of their religious books to actualize the love, tolerance and togetherness embedded therein for peaceful co-existence. More so there is need for dialogue between the various religious leaders in the county for the exchange of ideas, views and opinions to bridge the gap between the faiths.

Keywords: Religion, Nigeria, Peace, Security, Development

Introduction:

Nigeria as a nation has a multiplicity of languages, cultures and religions. There are also a variety of values and ethical beliefs, western values, traditional values, Islamic values and Christian values just to mention a few. Each of these values, however, has its own socio-moral principles as well as legal demands. In the same vein, each of them has its own unique approach to duty, responsibility, equality, rights, legitimate, and authority. These make Nigeria to be facing a lot of problems which include political conflicts, ethnic militants, religious crises, boundary disputes, cultism, assassination, kidnapping, robbery, ritualize etc as a result of injustice, fear and insecurity. These problems may be attributed to lack of good governance and transparency in leadership. According to Aminu and Yakubu

(2012), the life of Nigerian citizen is subjected to all manners of insecurity and dangers to the extent that almost all the spheres of human life are surrounded with insecurity James and Paul (2020) stated that Nigeria is a country blessed with abundance of human and natural resources which nature has bestowed on her. The country's climatic condition favour wide variety of agricultural and economic activities. Despite that, her people are still suffering of injustice, fear, and insecurity and spread all over poverty ineffective infrastructure facilities. According to Ashiru (2018) the Terrorist attack and their escalated activities created widespread insecurity among Nigerians, increased tensions between various ethnic communities, interrupted development activities and frightened of investors.

The trend of injustice and insecurity in the world today has become a great source of concern to peace lovers at both national and international levels. The major problem in Nigeria communities is the terrorist groups that hinder peace and harmony in the country. With the level of security agencies in Nigeria i.e. Nigeria Police Force (NPF), National Intelligence Agency (NIA), Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC), National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Nigerian Prisons Services (NPS), Civil Defense (CD), and others, the level of insecurity on individual and the growth of economic in the country is still high.

In this paper, the following sub-topic shall be thoroughly discussed: conceptual framework of religion, Islam and justice, Islam and peace, Islam and security, solution to the aforementioned problems in Nigeria, conclusion, recommendation and reference.

Conceptual Framework of Religion

It's difficult to give universal definition of religion that would be acceptable all over the world just because the tenets, doctrines, teachings and bases of religions are differ. According to Mustapha (2019). Such tenets may either be laid down by the religious founder himself, or developed during the existence of the particular religion. According to Balogu (2012), who gave example of such tenets and doctrines as the Five Fundamental Pillars of Islam, the Christian doctrine of Trinity and Ten Commandment of Judaism. In support of this Quadri (2003) explained that Islam groups all religions in to two categories: monotheistic and polytheistic religions. The monotheistic religions are revealed, i.e. Christianity, Islam and Judaism. The polytheistic religions are unrevealed, and they include those religions which recognized the worship of their beings than God.

On this bases Balogun (2012) states that there are two kinds of religions: spiritual and non-spiritual. The spiritual religions are those which claim to possess sacred books peculiar to them. The scriptures are claimed by their adherents to be either directly revealed by God to their recipients, or divinely inspired writings. Such scriptures are considered to be immutable and inviolable. They often have great influence on the respective cultures of their adherents. Example of such religions and their scriptures are Islam and the Qur'an, Christianity and the New Testament; Judaism and the Old Testament, to mention few. Non-scriptural religions on the other hand, claim no sacred books, but they

possess such mythology from which come primordial form of doctrinal beliefs could be discerned. Such mythology is often preserved in the retentive memory of those who are associated with it

Different scholar defined religion from different angles according to their perception, some of which are, Oloso (2009) adopted that religion is derived from the Latin word 'Riligare' which means 'to bind back'. This represents the belief in the existence of God/gods as well as the activities that are connected with the worship of the God/gods. According to Kannike and Thani (2020) who said that different definitions are given to religion according to the background and academic disciplines of researcher. From the perspective of many people, religion is a belief in Supreme Being, and activities connected to such a belief. Hornby (2000), defines religion as a belief in the existence of God or gods, especially the belief that they created the universe and save to exist after the death of the body. He further said that religion is a particular system of faith and worship based on religious belief. Babayo and Shariff (2020), accepted that religion is perfected by Islam laid the basis for the unification of humanity. Therefore, the religion when approached from Islamic perspective can bring true happiness to the human race. While Ismail (2008) defines religion as the very business of life, the very matter of space-time, and the very process of history. According to Ahamd (2014), the principles of religion can be harnessed to promote peaceful co-existence and cohesion in the society. Religion is used to reconcile individuals, recognizes relationships, increases commitments of duty, honoring obligations and a greater participation in welfare services.

To wrap it all therefore, religion is the people's way of life including both their tradition and social interaction. It is man's integral attitude to life. Because, from the dawn of his creation, man has never been divorced of religion. In a nutshell, religion represents the belief in the existence of God or gods as well as the activities that are connected with the worship of the God or gods.

Islam and Justice

Justice is on word that captures the essence of Islamic laws and teachings. Is the word that describes the overriding values that permeate all Islamic dictates and teachings. Islam is a religion that fosters justice in all its rulings, thus it treats all people equally before the law and grant them justice, fairness and equal civil right without discrimination. Justice means giving to each person what is due for the person. Justice is done when there is equality. All individuals are endowed with equal right without discrimination on account of race, creed, colour, religion, social background, etc. The matter of equality which is a core aspect of justice in Islam is not limited to merely declaration of principles and the establishment of law. History recorded that this principles and laws were duly practiced during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad and during the reigns of the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs who succeeded him, in the Golden age of Islam. The followings are the examples of such principles and spirit of Islam:

- 1 Uthman ibn Zayd, one of the most beloved companions of Prophet Muhammad, once attempted to intercede with him on behalf of Fatimah daughter of Al-Aswad Al-Makhzumiyyah who was to be punished for stealing velvet materials and golden ornaments. The Prophet refused Uthman intercession in spite of his affection for him, and reprimanded him severally saying 'How can you intercede with me concerning a penalty ordained by Almighty Allah', then he said to the people who had witnessed the matter: “before the advent of Islam, people of noble descendant were not punished if they were guilty of theft and poor indigent people were punished for the same crime. I swear by Allah the Almighty, that if my daughter Fatimah was guilty of the crime of theft, I would sentence her to the punishment ordained by Almighty Allah”
- 2 The second Rightly Guided Caliph Umar bn Al-Khatib, (RA), who was responsible for organizing the administration of Justice in the Muslim state upon the firm foundation of the Holy Qur'an and the tradition of the Prophet (SAW), said in his ordinance to the various judges under his administration, thus: “it is essential for a judge to be just in his decision and he should not give any preference to the persons considered eminent in society”. Sanni (2014) contributed that the second Caliph Umar bn Khatib was also a jurist, he held court and sometimes at the court of appeal. He once inflicted the shariah punishment of eighty lashes for drinking alcohol upon his own biological son Abu Sahmah, which resulted to his death.

In fact, Qur'an insists and instructs Muslims on justice and kindness to everybody for as long as he did not prevent Muslims from observing their faith. Allah says:

God does not forbid you to deal kindly and with full equity with those who do not fight you on account of your faith, nor drive you out of your homes, God loves those who behave equitably. Q60:8

Justice from Islamic perspective is a right that could be viewed from two angles 'right of God' and 'right of man'. The right of God is to keep His commandment and worship Him adequately without association any partner with Him. While the right of man therefore, include, right of individual, right of life, right to freedom of religion, right to freedom of movement, right of speech etc. Based on these, Taiwo (2009) posited that all these right is sacred as long as he or she does not deliberately violate the law of God, or transgress the right of other.

Islam and Peace

Islam as a religion of peace, preaches peace, and enforces peace in the society and among humanity, advocates that Muslims should establish peace and to realize that gentle and peaceful persuasion is more effective in making people observe the true teaching of religion than force, as it is enjoined in the Qur'an. Allah says:

Call people to the path of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with them in the most kindly manner. Your Lord knows best who strays from His path and who are rightly guided. Q16:125

To show up the concept of peaceful co-existence, the Qur'an extended the hand of friendship to invite the people of the book to dialogue as stated in this verse:

Say: People of earlier revelations. Let us come to an agreement which is equitable between you and us; that we shall worship none but God, that shall associate no partners with Him, and that we shall not take one another for lords beside God. And if they turn away, then say: 'Bear witness that we have surrendered ourselves to God'. Q3:64

Islam also advises the faithful Muslims that they should not allow arguments between them and the people of the book to lead to unpleasant situation.

Do not argue with the people of earlier revelations in other than the most kindly manner, except for those of them who are intent on wrongdoing; and say: 'We believe in that which has been revealed to us, as well as that which has been revealed to you, for our God and your God is one. It is to Him that we submit ourselves.' 29:46

Islam singled out the Christian for special respect among people of the book because of what it terms as their affection for the Muslims.

And you will certainly find that the nearest of them in affection to the believers are those who say, "We are Christians." This is so because there are priests and monks among them and because they are not given to arrogance. Q5:82

On a genuine manifestation of Islamic tolerance when it comes to dealing with non-Muslim communities living side by side with Muslims in the land, Islam makes some distinctions within the framework of making peaceful coexistence with the adherents of other religions some of which are:

1 Friendship

Islam does not preach that Muslims should live in isolation of others. It believes in peace, harmony, co-operation and understanding with non-Muslims. Islam wants all people to come together, under God's banner. God commands the Muslims to be friendly with non-Muslims who did not fight them or drive them out of their homes on account of their faith (Islam). No blame would attach to them if they maintained friendly relations with Muslims, treating them fairly, giving them all their due. Qur'an says:

God does not forbid you to deal kindly and with full equity with those who do not fight you on account of your faith (Islam), nor drive you out of your homes, God loves those who behave equitable. God only forbid you to turn in friendship towards those who fight against you because of your faith (Islam), and drive you from your homes and help others to drive you out... (Q60:8-9)

3 Food Recommended

The cordial attitude of Islam to the adherents of the revealed religions (Jews and Christians) is shown in its recommendation of their food to the Muslims and viz-a-viz, so that through this, visits and hospitality can be exchanged, and the whole society will thus enjoy an air of tolerance and friendship. Allah says:

Today, all the good things of life have been made lawful to you. The food of those who were given revelations (Jews and Christians) are lawful to you, and your food is lawful to them... Q5:5

1. Marriage

Islam equally recommended that the pious, religious and chaste women among those who were given the Books (Jews and Christians) are lawful for the Muslims to marry them. Only that the Noble Qur'an cautions, however, that not all the adherents of the revealed religions are honest to their religious obligations. It is those who are sincere in their religious duties that are regarded as righteous. The Qur'an says:

And the virtuous women from among the believers and the virtuous women from among those who were given revelations before you (are also lawful to you) when you give them their dowers, taking them in honest wedlock, not in fornication, nor as mistresses. Anyone who rejects the faith (will find that) all his works will be in vain. In the life to come he shall be among the losers. Q5:5

In a critical look, there are more children of mixed parentage in Nigeria especially in Yoruba land where inter-religion marriage are obviously practiced, and that will continue to be such increase as Nigerians from various ethnic and religious group continue to embrace and tolerate each other in marriage. According to Al-Qaradawi (184) who said that tolerance of such degree is a characteristic of Islam which hardly to be found among other faiths and nations. He further said, despite the fact that Islam takes the people of the Book to task for their unbelief and errors, it permits the Muslim to marry a Christian or Jewish woman, who may be the mistress of his house and the mother of his children, the source of his repose, and his companion for life; retain her own faith.

2 Neighbourliness

Islam gives room for peaceful co-existence with non-Muslims because it allows neighbourliness between the two groups, which is Muslims and adherents of other religions. Allah says:

If any of the idolaters seeks asylum with you, grant him protection, so that he may hear the word of God, and then convey him to his place of safety. That is because the idolaters are people who lack knowledge. Q9:6

Worship God alone and do not associate with Him any partners. Be kind to your

parents and near of kin, to orphans, the needy, the neighbour who is related to you and the neighbour who is a stranger, the friend by your side, the wayfarer, and those whom your right hands possess. God does not love those who are arrogant and boastful. (Q4:36).

3 Same Source of Religion

Christianity and Judaism recognized by Islam as a revealed religion which shares the same source with it, that is why the Glorious Qur'an never addresses the Christians or Jews without saying: "O people of the Book" or "O you who have been given Book". Al-Qaradawi (336) added that this indicating that they were originally people of a revealed religion. For this reason, there exist a relationship of mercy and spiritual kinship between them and the Muslims, all having in common the principles of the one true religion sent by Allah through His Prophets (A.S.). Allah says:

In matters of Religion, He (Allah) has ordained for you the same as He had enjoined on Nuah that which We have revealed to you (Muhammad) and as We enjoined on Abraham, Moses and Jesus: steadfastly uphold the Religion and do not divide into fractions... (Q42:13).

Islam and Security

Security threats take various forms in different parts of the country and this rages from low-level civic disorder to large scale violence and armed insurgency directed either at the citizens or public and private establishments. According to Shehu (2018) who observed that in the case of intra-religious radicalism, two major reasons can be indentified; first, there is ignorance of half of knowledge of the true teachings of the very religion that the people involved claim to be defending. For example, Boko Haram. Secondly, is the economic factor as a cause of religious radicalism in Nigeria. In spite of the fact that the country is blessed with both human and natural recourses, the gap between the haves and have-nots is ever on increase and this has led to frustration and disillusion among average Nigerians on the lower side of the economy. As a result, criminal activities spread all over.

One of the most fundamental laws of nature is that of self-preservation and it is synonymous with security. This is because, one secures in other to preserve. Thus, from the beginning of man existence, security has remained high on his agenda. However, even as important as security is to man, its meaning has mostly been assumed narrowly understood and largely remains an under-developed concept. Over the years, security has become both an ideology and an emotive term under which bover anything can happen.

Edimahel at (2015) defines security as the requirement to maintain the survival of the state through the use of economic power, diplomacy, power projection and political power. Egunjobi (2013) added that security has to do with self-preservation which is the first law of existence. Thus, Islam guarantees for every individual, and for the community as a whole, all elements of security, justice,

stability, reassurance and needful provisions. It protects both the individual and the community against all factors of provocation, oppression, injustice and poverty, and established rules to enforce standard living among mankind, some of which is:

It is but a just punishment of those who make war on God and His Messenger, and endeavour to spread corruption on earth, that they should be put to death, or be crucified, or have their hands and feet cut off on alternate sides or that they should be banished from the land. Such is their disgrace in this world, and more grievous suffering awaits them in the life to come. (Q5:33).

The crime to which this legislative statement refers involves rebellion against mankind, causing fear among the humanity, committing aggression against their lives and property, spreading corruption on earth, and threatening the security of the land, i.e.: kidnapping, theft, robbery, ritualism, fraudulence, yahoo plus etc. Islam promulgates these punishments on those who join such a group in order to frighten others from such crimes and to establish adequate security, harmony, tranquility in the community. Islam refrained evils and totally unjustified aggression. It gives man an example of goodness and a peaceful attitude towards everyone.

Solution to the Aforementioned Problems in Nigeria

Many people have tried to suggest possible means to eradicate or reduce the issue of justice, peace and insecurity problems in Nigeria. This paper profound adequate possible solution to that, which is only *Shari'ah*, the Islamic law is capable of eliminating all these challenges in the country if it is well implemented, because, the scope of *Shari'ah* encompasses the whole human's life, there is no aspect of human's life in which *Shari'ah* did not touch. Therefore, the objective of *Shari'ah*, is to show the best ways and means to fulfill the need of human beings in the most successful and most beneficial manner. In the Islamic legal system the function of the law is to control the conscious actions of the people. It means the existence of freedom and the ability of the people to do or not to do an act. And made it compulsory on the leaders to strongly implement under *Shari'ah*: justice, welfare, God-Consciousness, admonition, security and well-being of individual.

Conclusion

Effort has been made in this paper to state some challenges of Nigeria in term of injustice, insecurity, and fear which detriment the positive growth and adequate sustainable development of the country. Islam is a religion that fosters justice in all its rulings, thus it treats all people equally before the law and grant them justice, fairness and equal civil right without discrimination. Two examples were given from the Prophetic Traditions and from his second Caliph Umar bn Khatab on justice for adequate co-existence in the community. Furthermore, Islam warn against any thing that can destabilize the well-being of man on earth like irrational arguments between them and the people of the book (Christians

and the Jews) that can lead to unpleasant situation. Special respect should be given to the people of the book because of what it terms as their affection for the Muslims. Efforts were made also to give some adequate measures that stimulate love among mankind if they are well established. Lastly, the paper explain the importance of security in man's life, because, security is a safety of a state and her citizen against criminal activities such as terrorism, theft, assassination kidnapping, insurgence etc. security ensures the degree of protection against dangers, damages, loss and crime.

Recommendations

Having established the position of religion (Islam) on justice, peace and security in Nigeria, it is imperative that this study offers some specific recommendations on changing the mind-set of different religious adherents in the country on the followings as a matter of urgent.

1. The position of the Nigeria constitution on the issue of religion matter should be made known to individual by the religious leaders to avoid crises among the adherents of religions in Nigeria.
2. For Nigeria to experience real sustainable development there is need for individual and national positive transformation, a complete change in value and attitudes from both the leaders and followers.
3. To bring back peace and security to Nigeria, there is a need for dialogue between the various religious leaders in the country on the exchange of idea, views and opinions to bridge the gap between the faiths.
4. Nigeria government should take serious recognition to true religious studies in various levels of studies; this will surely in turn instill the fear of God and the love of humanity in individual heart.
5. There is a need to reinforce Nigeria securities to be adequately trained on the modern strategies and techniques for proper establishment of harmony in the country

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