

## **Secularism, Religion and the Rising Challenges of National Cohesion in Nigerian, 2000-2015.**

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### ***Abstract***

*Religious sentiment in Nigeria has created a bipolar Muslim-Christian identity that has overlain a serious threat to national stability and integration in the country. The study attempted to examine the position of the State and the challenges of religious activism on state cohesion. The research approach to this study is the documentary research design. The research relied on secondary data drawn from an array of published and unpublished materials relevant to the study such as books, journals, magazines, conferences and seminar papers and newspapers. Other sources of secondary data were reports, white papers of investigation panels and other quantitative publications related to the problem of the study were all systematically analyzed. In interpreting our data, the relationship between State, Secularism and Religious activism was established at both theoretical and empirical levels. Empirically, we used a qualitative and historical method that was critical and analytical in providing descriptive and historical details. This was also complemented by descriptive quantitative analysis. The qualitative and historical method provided us with clear perspective into our research problem by giving us the opportunity to understand the historical details and accurate account of the past and to use the past to discuss the present. Conclusion is that drawn religious activism is a serious migraine to State cohesion and national integration in Nigeria. Recommendations such as practical application of the constitution, non-involvement of state or government in religious activities and a lot of others were proffered.*

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***Keywords:*** *Secularism, Religion, national cohesion and Instability*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Nigeria is a plural state with diverse ethnic and religious institutions. The country has over 350 ethnic groups and plethora of religious beliefs. The dominant religions are Christianity and Islam. Traditional religious worship cut across different communities and settings (Chentu, 2013). The Christian adherers dominate the southern region of the country and the *Middle Belt* areas comprises of States such as *Plateau, Benue, Taraba* and *Nassarawa* State. The Northern States are predominated by the *Hausa-Fulani* ethnic groups which is mostly Islamic adherers (Abdullahi, 2014).

The *Othman Danfodio* Jihad of 1884 and the advent of European missionaries change the religious landscape of the society from traditional institutions. This further paved way for the penetration of Islam and Christianity in Nigeria (Chentu, 2013). The Ayatollah Khomeini revolution in *Iran* and the external relationship of the *Hausa-Fulani* ethnic groups with neighbouring countries such as *Niger, Northern Cameroon, and Chad* further exacerbate the extremity of Islamic religion in Nigeria. The cry of marginalization

and the formation of Christian Associations and denominations attributed to the growth of extreme Christian practices in Nigeria (Ibrahim, 2007).

The extremity of religious practices in Nigeria created more problem than a blessing in the development of the nation. This has contributed to societal menaces such as ethno-religious conflicts, fusion of politics and religion, integration of ethnicity and religion. This has been a serious problem to the Nigerian constitution and the leaders of the country; past and present, military , civilian, among others uses resources from the government treasury to support pilgrimage to *Mecca, Rome* and *Jerusalem*. A lot of billions were abused and still being abused to finance these functions while more than half of the country's population is wallowing in abject poverty and hardship yet the country, braggart its head as a secular state (Chentu, 2013).

The ugly menace showcases its head in the early part of 2004, where some States such as *Zamfara, Niger* and a lot of others in the Northern part of the country adopted the practice of *sharia law* at the expense of the Nigeria constitution which advocated for right of religious practices and the secularization of the country. Religious zealot often equate the secularization to atheism and some blamed the problem to the fusion of religion with governance/politics most especially the IBB administration and the OICs saga.

## **1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Nigeria is a heterogeneous society with diverse ethnic and religious groups. The birth of extreme practice of Islam and Christianity ushered in a serious problem to the act of governance. The issue of who constituted the majority group and the preference of their interest has long been a problem to the country. Ethnicity and religion move hand in hand in Nigeria but religion is more of a unifier of groups than ethnicity. It generates sympathy, mass participation/involvement and also transcends ethnicity but tends to compete with the State in its act of governance (Cinjel and Joseph, 2015). This can be seen in the violent conflicts in the country, the showcase of religious politics and the discrimination among citizens on the ground of religion (Cinjel, 2015). The essence of secularization in the Nigerian constitution is to promote unity, balances and the superiority of the state over all other institution in the state (Bello, 2013). The combination of governance and religious practices all constituted a serious threat to the Nigerian State and its constitution.

Another problem which warranted this study is the negligence of the place and position of secularism in the Nigerian constitution and dominance of religion in the act of governance. Secularism only appears in a written form and does not exist in practice. The penetration of religion in Nigerian politics and the extreme practice of religion among citizen paved ways for societal menaces such as ethno-religious conflicts and discriminations among citizens, religious sentiments and a host of others.

It is against this backdrop that the following research questions were posited to guide the study.

- a. Does secular state mean atheism as it is being peddled?
- b. How can the Nigerian government be true to the spirit of the constitution by remaining neutral when it comes to religious issues?
- c. How can the interest of the secularist and the non-secularist be reconciled in such a way that the corporate existence of Nigeria will not be jeopardized?

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The method by which data were generated for this study is the secondary source. The subject of study being a current issue of debate in both National and International arena. There were qualitative soft publication and entries in recognized and official websites. Others includes online version of international dailies, books, journals, reports, seminar and conferences paper, national newspapers etc.

Being a non-experimental research, the use of qualitative descriptive analysis is employed for the analysis of the generated data. This will be done through careful analysis of the formulated hypotheses in line with the reviewed literature. Thus, under the findings and discussions, each discourse is based on some background assumption presented in the form of research questions and they are subsequently upheld or rejected.

In interpreting our data, the relationship between *Secularism, Religion* and the *Nigerian State* was established at both theoretical and empirical levels. Empirically, we used a qualitative and historical method that was critical and analytical in providing descriptive and historical details.

This was also complemented by descriptive quantitative analysis. The qualitative and historical method provided us with clear perspective into our research problem by giving us the opportunity to understand the historical details and accurate account of the past and to use the past to discuss the present.

## 3. AN OVERVIEW OF RELIGION

Related to the concept of ethnicity is religion. Religion is conceived differently by different scholars. Unlike ethnicity, religion has proved relatively difficult to conceptualize. There is no clear consensus on the conception of religion by theologians and social scientists. This is not merely because scholars grapple with the element of subjectivity, but largely because of the inherent difficulty in understanding the “inner essence” of religion (Egwu, 2001). Different scholars, therefore, understand religion differently. For instance, anthropologists regard religion as a component of the cultural aspect of life, while sociologists see it, as being of social, rather than political significance (Egwu 1998; Barrett, 2001). For theologians, it is the essence and centre of civilization and the sublime aesthetic expression and root of all decision, actions and ultimate explanation of civilization with its invention and artifacts; its social, political and economic system, its past and future, promises and history (Muazam, 1997:3).

Barrett (2001) identifies different perspectives used to grapple with the complexities of religion. They include rationalist, intellectualist and socio-cultural perspectives. Rationalist perspective premises on the assumption that established religion is based on ignorance and deliberate manipulation of the masses by priests and their superiors. The intellectualists present religion as a mechanism for explanation, prediction and control of space, time and events. The social structural perspective insists that religion is more than an idea. It is the social and structural changes in society that form the principal determinant of religious movement and expressions in the society (Egwu, 2001).

Classical writings on religion have not been able to grapple with the whole essence of religion either, the writings of Durkheim, Weber and Marx on religion have been argued to be extraneous to contemporary experiences in the developing world (Barrett, 2001). In classical expositions, religion is reduced to some other epiphenomena and denied its independent existence (Egwu, 2001). Durkheim, in his study of religion,

presented arguably, the most influential interpretation of religion from a functionalist perspective. He argued that religion is based on the division of what is considered sacred and what is profane. It is therefore a unified system of beliefs and practice related to sacred things set apart and forbidden. His conclusion was that the worship of God is nothing more than the worship of society (Barrett, 2001). Society is therefore the real object of veneration of religion. He further argued that social life is impossible without the shared values and moral beliefs which define the collective conscience. Without them, there would be no social order, social control, social solidarity or cooperation. In short, there will be no society. Religion reinforces the collective conscience. The worship of society strengthens the values of moral beliefs which provide the bases for social life (Haralambos, as cited in Abdu, 2010).

Durkheim therefore presents religion as functional. His approach tends to discount the divisive and disruptive use of religion. For Weber, religion is essentially concerned with the problem of meaning, human destiny, life and death, suffering and justice (Barrett 1991), and has a relationship with the expiation of capitalism. In his work, the protestant ethic and spirit of capitalism, he demonstrated the relationship between the rise of certain forms of Protestantism and expansion of capitalism. According to Marx, religion 'is the sigh of the oppressed creator, sentiment of a heartless world and the soul of soulless condition. It is the opium of the people (Haralambos, 2000:460). Marx, like Durkheim, interpreted religion as a society projected and a false reflection of an alienated man. It is therefore an illusion which eases the pain produced by exploitation and oppression.

#### **4. THE CONCEPT OF STATE**

The state is one of the most problematic concepts in political discourse. This is not just because of its historical and relevance to present political circumstances, but the problem of its ambivalence – its uncertainty and vagueness. As a result, the state has become a central component of contemporary social inquiry. It is widely debated and discussed in varying theoretical persuasions. Generally, discussions on the state are broadly categorized into two – the liberal school and the Marxist school.

The liberal school dates from the emergence of modern political theory in the writings of social contract theorists like Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Rousseau (Abdullahi, 2004). These thinkers argued that the state developed out of voluntary agreement or contract made by individuals who recognized that only the establishment of a sovereign power could safeguard them from the insecurity, disorder and brutality of the state of nature (Heywood, 1994). The state, according to this view, is a neutral body, an arbiter or umpire among competing group and individuals in the society. It is capable of protecting each citizen from the encroachment of his or her fellow citizen. The state is, therefore, a neutral entity acting in the interest of all and presenting what can be called "common or public interest" (Heywood, 1994:39). Since there is no ruling class, the power of the state is not exercised in the interest of any class or group of interest (Dahl 1999).

The liberal conception of the state has been the elaborated by pluralist theory of the state (Heywood, 1994). Pluralism holds that political power is dispersed among a wide variety of social groups rather than concentrated in an elite or ruling class. The pluralist theory tries to theorize an idea of the state, incorporating diversity of group life and some kind of central authority (Ibrahim, 2007). Laski as cited in Anifowose (2007)

provides a good presentation of the pluralist or liberal view of the state. He argues that “the state, so to say, is the crowning –point of modern social edifice and it is in its supremacy over all other forms of social groupings that its special nature is to be found”.

In liberal discourse, the state is characterized by five major features. Although Ibrahim (2007) used these features to describe modern European States, the distribution is a lucid presentation of liberal or pluralist perception of the state. The first feature is that the state is a public power above both the ruler and the ruled. In its second feature, the State is an identifiable geographical territory over which it holds jurisdiction. Thirdly, the state has maximum control over resources and a monopoly of force. The fourth feature is that the state is a supreme authority; it is sovereign. Finally, the state has a comprehensive aim than most associations; fundamentally, this aim is the traditional need to promote common good. The state is thus:

A society of individuals submitted, if necessary, by compulsion, to a certain way of life. All conduct in the society must conform to that way. The roles which settle their characters are the laws of the states, and, by an obvious logic, they have necessary primacy, and that is to say sovereign over all rules (Laski as cited in Abdu, 2010:28).

Apart from the formal consensus on concepts or notions like liberty through group life, plural sovereignty and group personality, the pluralists’ conception of the state is still imprecise. They differ in the actual account of the meaning of the state. In many instances, the state is presented almost to mean the same thing as the government. The shifting perception or examination of the state by major writers of pluralist view tends to further confuse the situation. Taking a critical look at Laski’s view on the state, Ibrahim (2007) observes the shifting character and definition of state. He noted a shift from Laski’s initial concept of state as an enforcer of norms and working in the general good of its members. This conception shifted significantly in the 1930s and the state became simply the representation of class interest (Ibrahim, 2007).

The pluralist theory did not respond to the intrinsic problems in their position – the theory did not deal with the fact that the groups can be as oppressive, mean-minded and destructive of liberty as any state (Ibrahim, 2007). The school also ignored the degree of neutrality of the state in relation to group interest or the precise degree of intervention that could be exercised by the state over groups. Generally, the theory is historical and lacks insight in relating the state to wider social formation (Clark and Dear, 1984).

Coming from a radical political economy background, Marxist theories consciously and significantly address the question of the state in capitalist societies. Although Marx is observed not to have developed any consistent theory of the state, considerable progress has been made, using materialist approach to examine the state (Clark and Dear 1984; ). There are four broad strands of argument within this framework, Classical Marxist theory, contemporary Marxist theory or neo-Marxist, state derivation debate and the debate on the state in post-colonial societies.

The classical Marxist theorists view the capitalist state simply as the coercive instrument of the ruling class, and a product of irreconcilable class antagonism. However, Ziemann & Lanzendorfer as cited Abdu (2010) observe that what are presented as a classical Marxist theory of the state are series of analyses and views of Marx and Engels on political problems, indications, hypotheses, fragments and affirmations of a materialist theory of state which often contain “little than catalogues of queries, preliminary assumptions and axioms. “They are often fragmented with glaring “methodological” and

theoretical problems...” (Ziemann & Lanzendorfer as cited in Abdu, 2010:30). The state is viewed as a product of the emergence of social classes and the need for protection against external enemies. The state is also presented as a product of division of labour; it arises only as a result of the division of society into classes, but its institutional roots are activities and functions of non-class society (Draper, 2009). Engels as cited in Abdu (2010) presented the state as a historical product; just like man. The state created itself independent of the society. At another level, the state is presented as a superstructure and a product of society. According to Engels;

The state... is a product of society at certain stages of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradictions with itself, that it is cleft into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms, classes with conflicting economic interests, might not consume themselves and society in sterile struggle, a power seemingly standing above the society became necessary for the purpose of moderating the conflict, of keeping it society, but placing itself above it, and increasingly alienating itself from it, is the state (Engels, cited in Abdu, 2007:252).

At a different time, Engels also conceived the state to be a class of the executives. He noted thus:

...because the state arose from the need to hold class antagonisms in check, but because it arose, at the same time, in the midst of the most powerful, economically dominant class, which, through the medium of the state, becomes new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class. Thus the state of antiquity was above all the slaves, as the feudal state was the organ of the nobility for holding down representative state is an instrument of exploitation of wage-labour by capital (Engels, Cited in Abdu,2007 257).

The summary of this is aptly in the manifesto of the communist party; “.....the executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie” (Marx and Engels as cited in Abdu, 2010). In the 1970s, Marxist research attempts to extend the theoretical understanding of the function and character of the capitalist state. This can be categorized into the “instrumentalist” and the “structuralist” approach to the state. These approaches were advanced by Barrette (2001) and Heywood (2003), respectively. The approach tries to examine the different roles of the capitalist economy as well as different models of understanding the causal link between capitalist society and state (Clark and Dear as cited in Abdu, 2010).

## **5. SECULARIZATION AND THE NIGERIA STATE**

The word secular is the coinage of the Latin word *secularis* and this denote an age of time, non-involvement in religious or spiritual affairs and exclusion of religious from public affairs. It is the process by which religious element and dimension are being remove from a thing. A secular state on the other hand is state in which the constitution transcends every persons and groups. It is a kind of state at which the state surpasses and also has power over all other institution.

In the word of Galtung (2014), a secular state is a state that removes religious colours in its act of governance. It is usually practice among pluralist and heterogeneous society and the essence is to give group her sense of self-expression, freedom and unity. In a secular state, people or citizen are allowed to practice what or ever kind of religion

of their kind but the law of the state which is enforceable through the constitution exceed and transcend all other laws ( Ghali, 2008)

This situation is quite unfortunate in Nigeria; Nigeria is a heterogeneous state with different group practicing diverse religion. The only emblem that gave the state power over the diverse groups is the secular outlook which empowered the constitution over every institution. It also created a sense of balance and harmony among the diverse groups (Gofwen, 2010). The place and position of religion has continued to compete with the State in Nigeria and the aftermath of their clash is violent conflict (Igwara, 2007 ). In the preamble of the Nigerian constitution, the state is secular and it enthused:

We the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria: Having solemnly resolved to live in unity and harmony as one indivisible, indissoluble, democratic and sovereign nation under God, to provide for our self a constitution for the purpose of promoting the good government and welfare of all persons in our country on the principle of freedom equality and justice.

And in section 1(1) and section 2 (1), the constitution enthused:

The constitution is supreme and its provision shall be a binding force on all authorities and persons throughout the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Nigeria shall be one indivisible, indissoluble, democratic and sovereign Nation to be known by the name of the Federal Republic of Nigeria founded on the principle of Freedom, Equality and Justice.

Most leaders of the country, both military and civilian have incorporated this practice in the country but with some certain modifications from what secularism entail (Jibril, 2009). The *IBB administration* created the weaker and has worsen the foundation for secularism in Nigeria. This is as a result of the involvement of the country in the OICs and the preference bestowed on one religion over the other, a position of non-delicate balance in which some religious groups live in fear and at a state of marginalization (Huntington, 1999). Most government in Nigeria often claimed and pronounces secularism whereas, it is only applicable in written and is not being practice. The billions of naira that is often channeled for pilgrimage in *Saudi Arabia, Israel and Italy* suggest the opposite of the phenomenon (Jibril, 2009). The challenge from different angle like the movement and the establishment of sharia law among northern states during the second tenure and reign of Olusegun Obasanjo is a prototypical example, the clash of the Islamic movement of Nigeria with the Nigerian military in recent times, the homages of the country's leaders to religious leaders and the incorporation of the place of C .A. N and I. A.N in Nigeria is a visible feature of the confusion. What seem sympathetic is that plethora of the country population are wallowing in abject poverty while Government is busy channeling funds to support religious institution which has continue to be a threat to State cohesion and peaceful co-existence of the country. Espousing a similar view, Igwara (2010) asserted:

Nigeria is a confused and a fail state with a constitution that is loose and only applicable to the poor. Secularism is merely in a written form than in practice and if care is not taken, religious apparatus would one day dominate the State. In 2015, *Yarima Sanni*, a former governor of *Zamfara* marry an under age and it was the place of religion that transcend, in 2011 during the post-election violence, religion dominate the scene. In most societal conflict in Nigeria, it is religion that often raise its ugly head above other institutions .where is the power of the State and the constitution in Nigeria?

If this situation will continue to exist, achieving national state and state integration will continue to be a mirage (Jibril, 2009). The country non-productive ventures and the menaces of poverty should be giving serious attention rather than funding religious functions that often raises its head and compete with the state machinery.

## 6. Deprivation Theory

This theory was propounded in 1969 by Ted Gurr and a lot of analysts on the relationship between religion and violent conflicts in Nigeria has opined that religion has become an instrument to protest forms of deprivation, exclusion, alienation, poverty and marginalization, failed development, public corruption, and has been used for a variety of purpose by the powerful elites to advance interests that are necessarily religious. A non-material angle of the deprivation hypothesis will be utilized in this study. This is because it expressed in the relationship between the *State* and *Religion*; with perceived mutual deprivation of religious space to both Christians and Muslims in the country. On one hand, Muslims believe the required Islamic sharia in all its ratification as a right, in order to practice the dictate of their faith well and fully. On the other hand, however, Christians push for a secular constitution amounting to deprivation of their religious right and Christians opine that the adaptation of sharia-law within any legal instrument is also tantamount to a violation of their right as non-Muslims. (Usman 1987).

Foxes (2001) symbolizes the letter position aptly to aggravate the situation is the active involvement of the government in religious affairs. This thus goes contrary to the Nigerian constitution. The contestation between the secular and the religious alternatives is a situation which the state is caught in the middle, generates so much acrimony that can lead to in-violence as feed into it. The relationship between State, Religion and the management of that relationship is one of the few areas which Nigerian Christians and Muslims actually believe they have a score to settle.

## 7. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The table below shows the activities that describe a mix and clashes of religion and state affair in Nigeria. It pointed out the issue of under age marriage that was vehemently opposed by the State and the *Christian religion* but it was supported by the majority of the *Muslim faithful* who uses religion to lure other Muslims to vote for the act against the state will. It also shows the persistence clashes of the Muslim sect (Islamic Movement of Nigeria) with the Nigerian army, the saga of the former first lady-*Turai, Yar'adu* in Jos during the *Jos conflict, Jang* and his role in the Jos conflict, the introduction of sharia law in Nigeria, the *Kano State* and its mass wedding, tithing to the religion institution and a lot of others.

**Table One (1): Clashes and The mix of Religion and State Affairs in Nigeria**

Issues	Years
1 Under Age Marriage saga in NHA	2013
2. I M N Conflict with Military	2014
3. I M N Conflict with Military	2015
4. Turai Yar'adu Saga in Jos	2011
5. Post-Election Violence	2011



6. Presidential Inauguration	At every Inauguration
7. Tithing of to Religious Institution	Monthly in each state
8. Government and Pilgrimage	Every State
9 Names and Employment	Among State in the federation
10. Sharia Law	2004
12. Jos Election	2011
13. Kano Conflict	-
14. Kano State Mass Marriage	2013
15. Governance and Pilgrimage	Annually

Source : Researcher's Survey, 2017

Nigeria is a country with 36 States and the *Federal Capital Territory* which is situated at *Abuja*. The country often presented itself as a secular state but in reality, religion tend to dominate the activities of the State. The Bureau for Statistic in 2015 revealed that approximately, every State in the Federation annually sent not less 1.2 million of its citizens to pilgrimage to either *Israel, Saudi Arabia or Italy* (Igwarra, 2007 ). It is estimated that the cost over ahead and the expenditure of every person will amount to the total of 700000 *naira* for a state to spent to finance pilgrimage in Nigeria while plethora of the citizens are battling in the poverty trap.

The creation of the *Pilgrimage Board* by the Federal and State apparatus pointed the connect between religion and the act of governance in Nigeria .The recognition of the voices of religious organ and the building of national religion centre such as the *Christian Ecumenical centre* and the *National Mosque* by the Federal government are also a serious pointer to religion dominance of State affairs in Nigeria. In Northern Nigeria, the

Northern States most especially the Muslim dominated States pay more loyalty to the most exacted position of the Sultan of Sokoto (Sarkin Muslime) to that of the Federal Government (Gofwen, 2007).

**Table 2 Religion Affairs in the Nigeria State**

<b>Religion function</b>	<b>Places and position</b>
<b>CAN</b>	36 States and Abuja
<b>IAN</b>	36 State and Abuja
<b>Religion centre</b>	National Mosques/Christian Ecumenical centre
<b>Sarkin Muslime</b>	Sokoto
<b>Pilgrimage board</b>	Abuja and 36 state of the federal

Source: Researchers survey, 2015.

## 8. CONCLUSION

The theoretical nexus of the state and ethno-religious conflict is better appreciated by looking at the contemporary descriptive typology of the Nigerian State. The Nigeria state has variously been characterised as a patrimonial, prebendal and Rentier State. This characterisation of the state has implication for state civil/society relations and consequently, inter-ethnic and religious relation. The state has a connection between religions and Government activities and yet if often seen as a secular society.

This situation is not healthy for the development of the state and has been a serious migraine to state cohesion and stability. The adoption of a state religion and the incorporation of religion into the act of governance would entail the favouring of one side at the expense of others. Secularism would have been the best option for the sustenance of peace and development in Nigeria. Any attempt to favour one ethnic or religion group over others will continue to affect ethnic and religious relation in the country.

## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following sets of recommendations were proffered:

- a. The content and dictates of Nigeria constitution should strictly be applied, practices and utilized as provided. This will go a long way to strengthen and empower the potency of government in the act of governance.
- b. State machinery should also desist from interfering in religion affairs such as expending to fund pilgrimage, tithing to religious groups and its non-implementation of taxation on religious groups in Nigeria.
- c. Neutrality and non-involvement of government in Nigeria activities should be the dictate of every State, machinery of government and political parties in Nigeria. This is because Nigeria is a heterogeneous society with diverse religions groups.
- d. Religion activities and functions should be taxes, control and regulated. The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria should transcend and surpasses all belief, customs, values and religious institution in the country.
- e. A proper definition of secularism should be defined in the Nigeria constitution and it should be defined in the Nigeria constitution. The definition should not only appear in written but it should be applied in full force at every nook and crannies of the country. A line separation should be created between state functions, act of governance and religious activities in the State. Nigerian government should allow the dictates and provisions of the constitution to prevail.
- f. Nigeria government should desist from interfering and incorporating religion activities in the act of governance. Nigeria is not only plural but complex and heterogeneous, attempting to apply or flow with a particular side would mean fueling animosity with the other sides.

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