

Ethno-Religious Crisis and Development in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria Between 2002- 2022

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Abstract

The study examined the ethno-religious crisis and the problems militating against development in plateau state between 2002 -2022. Some of the specific objectives were to ascertain the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents in Jos, Plateau State, examine the major causes of crisis/insecurity in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria, determine the negative effects of ethno-religious crisis on the economic, social and political development of the state and future generation. Descriptive research survey design technique was used in the study. The area is made up of 4.2m people while the sample size for the study comprised two hundred (200) residents/respondents drawn from all the local government areas of the state using random sampling techniques. The instrument used for the study was well structured questionnaire on a modified 4 points likert's scale type with varying degrees of items in each cluster. Pearson Product Moment correlation giving a reliability coefficient of 0.86, mean and percentage distribution were used in analyzing the research questions while T-test was used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The result showed that the major causes of ethno-religious conflict in Jos, Plateau State were marginalization, citizenship and indigene, religious and ethnic intolerance, victimization, land dispute, struggle for power. The effects/implication of ethno-religious conflict on the socio-economic and political development of the area were loss of lives (15.14%), destruction of social and economic activities and among others. Also, ineffective internal security, conspiracy of the national elites, arrogance of power, and know it mentality, mutual distrust and lack of confidence etc were all accepted as the challenges of ethno-religious conflict in the area. It also showed that deployment of security, setting up of vigilante group, provision of welfare for victims of conflicts and the orphans and widows in the affected areas, reconciliation, educating people on the need for peace by organising games, etc were all accepted as the government efforts in promoting ethno-religious harmony in the area. It was recommended that there should be a transparent and accountable leadership that rises above primordial consideration to enhance the peaceful co-existence of autochthons and settlers in Jos, Plateau State.

Key words: *Ethno-religious, Criss, Development, Plateau State, Nigeria*

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria's complicated multi-ethnic, multilingual, multi-cultural, and multi-religious population has led to its classification as a plural state. Due to this identity crisis, the nation is now violently divided along lines of religion, language, culture, ethnicity, and regional identity (Osaghae & Suberu 2005:4). Even though there are many different ethnic and religious groups in the nation, there have been numerous ethno-religious conflicts as a result of these communities being marginalized and discriminated against. With a population of more than 200 million and more than 250 ethnic groupings, Nigeria is nearly half Muslim and half Christian, excluding traditional religions (Paden, 2008; Schwartz, 2010).

Before violent conflicts began in the state in 2001, Jos Plateau State was considered a serene settlement with a quiet atmosphere of alluring fascination. Most people assumed that the state was "The Home of Peace and tourism." The Berom, Anaguta, Afizere, Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa-Fulani are the principal ethnic groupings of Jos. These groupings aren't always the same because there are differences among them. The Berom, Anaguta, and Afizere are thought to be the main indigenous communities of Jos, whereas the Hausa-Fulani, who are predominantly Christian, are known to as "Jasawa" or "settlers." The word "settlers" is used to set them apart from the Hausa-Fulani people who live in the states further north. The Hausa people in Jos are also politically represented by people who go by the title "Jasawa."

Since early 1990s and especially from 2001, Jos has experienced a series of clashes between the majority Christian indigenes (Anaguta, Berom, and Afizere) and the minority settlers Hausa-Fulani (jasawa). The result of these clashes resulted into ethno-religious and political violence.

The National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), Kuru, Jos, was instructed to conduct extensive research on the problem some time ago. At least 4,000 people have reportedly died in Jos and other smaller towns and cities in Plateau State in the last ten years, based on conservative estimates. In September 2001, appointments to political offices caused numerous disturbances in Jos. It was a political dispute over the nomination of Hausa-Fulani to a significant political position between the Berom, who are backed by the indigenous Anaguta and Afizere, and the Hausa-Fulani (settlers). The conflict between the Hausa-Fulani, who are Muslim, and the mostly Christian indigenous people quickly took on a strong religious, socioeconomic, and ethnic dimension, pitting Muslims against Christians.

Nonetheless, a number of attempts have been made over the years by the government and civil society organizations to end the conflict, including the use of special forces (military and police), nonviolent communication between religious groups, and the formation of inquiry panels to handle recurring disputes. However, these attempts have been deemed ineffective because the crises continue to arise. The following goals led the study: (1) investigate the primary factors contributing to the ethno-religious crises and instability in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria; (2) ascertain the detrimental impacts of the ethno-religious crisis on the state's economic, social, and political development from 2002 to 2022; (3) investigate the difficulties in managing conflicts in Jos, Plateau State, and ascertain the government's initiatives to foster ethno-religious harmony in Jos.

Conceptual theory

The terms begging for clarification which will be explained for better understanding are as follows:

Ethno-religion

Ethno-religions are communities of people who share a common religion but are not related by blood. In these situations, religion is typically intimately associated with a certain ethnic community, and those who identify as members of an ethno-religious group typically do so by drawing on both their religious and ethnic heritage.

Ethno-religious conflict

This is the conflict, dispute, war, rivalry, argument, or argument between different ethnic and religious groups. A position that is incompatible with the groups in question about their symbolic values gives rise to ethno-religious conflict. Conflicts between communities that define themselves according to their respective ethno-religious identities and in which religion plays a central role in social and cultural life are referred to as ethno-religious conflicts. Several authors have noted that the average Nigerian is deeply religious (Oluduro 2010; Ekundayo 2013). Nigerian society places a high value on religion, which has also had a significant impact on the nation's geopolitical evolution. The same dynamic that has brought Nigerians together has also given rise to multiple conflicts inside the nation. Conflict based on both ethnicity and religion is referred to as ethno-religious conflict.

Development

Development is the process of creating growth, progress, positive change, or the addition of physical, economic, environmental, social, and demographic components. The goal of development is to raise the standard of living for the populace and create or expand local and regional income and employment opportunities while preserving the environment. Development is the gradual improvement of anything, be it a country or an individual, to a certain extent in order to make it better or more progressive. Dzurgba see development as a way of building new homes. The scholar continues, "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 the qualitative and quantitative transformation of a country's social, cultural, and economic aspects (Encyclopedia, 1969). According to Ebeh, in order to achieve national development, improvements must be made to all facets of society, including the political, economic, industrial, and sociocultural spheres. The ability of a nation to raise the standard of living for its people is known as national development, and it can be attained by providing for the needs of the most basic inhabitants (Google 2022). From the aforementioned definitions, it is clear that national development encompasses all aspects of a country's economic, social, and political advancement that have a positive impact on the country and all of its residents.

Ethnicity

Although the concept of ethnicity is relatively new, it is a complex phenomenon that describes several perspectives. Osaghae (1992) defined an ethnic group as a social formation based on customs that are particular to a culture as well as a distinct cosmology and set of symbols. An ethnic group is a collection of people who identify as having shared features that set them apart from other groups in their culture, either by themselves or by the perception of others. Different cultural behaviors emerge, and ethnic groups can be distinguished by differences in language, politics, religion, and occupation. Since ethnicity is founded on cultural distinctions, it is social in character. People's conceptions of themselves are greatly influenced by their ethnic culture, and identity and culture are interwoven. Ethnicity, as a social construct, can be seen as the use of ethnic identity and distinctions to one's benefit in cooperative, competitive, and conflictual settings (Osaghae, 1995).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical Background to Religious Crises in Nigeria

This section of the text focuses on Nigeria's broad religious crises. It looks at the backdrop of religious crises throughout history and how religion fuels insecurity in Nigeria. The realization that the current religious conflicts in Nigeria and the motivations of terrorists are mostly rooted in their social stratification and religious beliefs is the section's conclusion. Furthermore, they are adamant that God commands and blesses their deeds.(Hoffman, 2004).

However, there are reports of religious violence in several Sub-Saharan African countries, including Mali, the Gambia, and Mauritania. Religious violence is not unique to Nigeria. Schaefer-Kehnert & Basedau, (2019). Furthermore, the problem of religious conflict can be linked to the ongoing conflicts between Judaism and Christianity, which reached a peak in the 16th century AD. The reign of Emperor Constantine during this time increased the intensity of this rivalry by establishing Christianity as the official state religion of Rome in 16th century (Kegan, 1991). Regretfully, without records of lives lost and other assets taken, there is no history of religious violence (Abimboye, 2019, Mear and Schneider, 1985). Nigeria is home to three main religions: Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional Religion. It is interesting to note that, in Nigeria, violence between the Islamic and Christian faiths has been the most common kind of interreligious conflict, especially in the northern regions of the nation. (Lubeck, 1991).

It follows that religion is unquestionably essential to human existence. Religion provides purpose to existence on Earth. It unites and clarifies people's lives and offers solutions to some of the most important issues facing humanity both now and in the future. It makes sense why Marx calls religion the "opium of the masses." There is a promise of an afterlife for followers of almost every faith. Instead of helping to create Nigeria, the power and influence of religion has been exploited to destroy it. Thus, religious extremists in Nigeria had killed innocent people in their youth and destroyed lives and property under the pretext of battling for God and defending their faith.(Afolabi, 2016). The most horrible crime of religious murder occurred lately in Sokoto state, Nigeria, on a school campus. Deborah Samuel, a student, was killed and set ablaze on a school amid accusations of blasphemy. This specific killing has caused significant controversy among

Nigerian Christian organizations (Jannamike, 2022). Two explanations about the reasons behind conflicts and religion in Nigeria were thus constructed. While the other thesis believed that religious crises were primarily socio-economic and political issues, the first argument saw religious conflicts as a fault with religion itself. This school of thought holds that struggle, not religion, is the fundamental cause and origin of Nigeria's problems (Afolabi, 2016).

Religion and Development

Many people are quite concerned about the state of instability brought on by religious fanatics in modern-day Nigeria. It has been questioned if religion is a good or bad thing in Sub-Saharan Africa, and Nigeria in particular—a nation that is regarded as a secular state. This section was so necessary. This section reviews the general topics surrounding religion and national development and looks at the ways in which religion both helps and hinders this process. Renowned economist and sociologist Max Weber elaborates on the intrinsic significance of religion and religious beliefs for the growth of capitalism, which can therefore contribute to the development of a country. In his well-known book *The Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism*, he discusses this. In his defense, he clarified that the practice of Calvinism, a kind of Protestantism, promoted capitalism in certain regions of the world. Weber thought that religious practices and beliefs may affect people's economic decisions. He confirmed that the origins of capitalism could be found in several nations in Europe and North America that were predominantly Calvinist or protestant Christian. According to Haralambos (2013), these Christian communities led "ascetic lives which involve abstinence from pleasures, an austere lifestyle, and rigorous self-discipline." These Christian sects' moral principles contributed to the growth of capitalism. While (Wallerstein, 1974) contends that religion cannot be said to have influenced the development of capitalism, he was of the opinion that any complex knowledge can be shaped to further political and social goals. As a result, he comes to the conclusion that religion can actually influence the economy, not the other way around. In a similar vein, scholars Cohen (2002) and Samueleson (1957) contended that religion and development are two distinct concepts that should not be combined when discussing the subject of economic development. This is because, in their view, there is insufficient empirical data to support the idea that religion promotes economic development.

Meanwhile, because almost all religions share ethical principles, religion can impact a country's growth if it is used effectively. The oldest religion on the African coast is traditional African religion. As per Adasuin (Ekeopara & Ekpanyong, 2016), "There are specific reasons why African Traditional Religion (ATR) is referred to as "African." First, the reason it is called "African" is that it is indigenous, aboriginal, foundational, or passed down from generation to generation (ATR). Upholding morals, ethical standards, and values is important for the development of a country. If appropriately applied, the socio-religious values and moral principles that form the foundation of ATR will result in good changes in citizens' attitudes and character, which will advance national development (Ekeopara *et al.*, 2016).

However, Max Weber's theory of ascetic living encourages people to follow a secular vocation with passion and seek economic gain. These kinds of teachings have positive impacts on the development of some Pentecostal churches in Nigeria, such as Redeemed Christian Church of God

and Winners Chapel. These churches have demonstrated beyond a reasonable doubt that religion can influence the development of a nation through their work in the areas of education, religious tourism, health, employment, and community social responsibility, which includes building roads and providing other social amenities to their host communities. Unfortunately, the absence of fundamental values, morals, ethics, and social principles has led to the current state of affairs in the nation. It has been demonstrated that the church is the moral center of the community (Adabembe, 2022, Adebembe and Adebayo, 2022). In a similar vein, the establishment of Islamic banks in Islam has aided in the expansion of the economy and, consequently, the advancement of the country. The principles of Sharia, an Islamic law that prohibits taking or paying interest for accepting or lending money, are upheld by Islamic banking systems. It is forbidden to engage in usury, often known as *riba* among Muslims (Olaoye, Dabiri, and Kareem, 2013).

Effects of Ethno-Religious Crisis

Over the past three decades, ethno-religious conflicts have alarmingly increased throughout all of northern Nigeria. Kano, Bauchi, Nassarawa, Jos, Taraba, Kaduna, Niger, Borno, Maiduguri, and Benue State have all experienced it, in that order. The disintegrative and demeaning societal rudiments of ethno-religious identities are a threat to Nigeria's peace, stability, and security. One of Nigeria's biggest security challenges is the recurrent ethnic and religious conflicts between the two main religions, Islam and Christianity. It appears that ethno-religious conflicts have plagued Nigeria. Life and property are destroyed as a result of the ongoing ethnoreligious strife. It is not possible to calculate the number of lives lost or properties destroyed as a result of these disasters statistically. Following the major conflicts, there is a skirmish that results in numerous injuries and thousands of people fleeing their houses. Even though these governments have an abundance of natural resources, the different ethno-religious disputes have caused economic and political instability. The human capital costs resulting from religious disputes, both directly and indirectly, are immeasurable. The degree of devastation caused by several religious conflicts and persistent insurgencies by religious fundamentalists has resulted in both human and economic losses for the Nigerian state.

The decrease in foreign direct investment in the state is one of the effects of the ethno-religious crises. Due to their uncertainty about their safety from acts of ethnoreligious violence, investors are unable to make significant economic investments due to the high level of insecurity. According to Onwumah (2014), an ethno-religious crisis harms facilities and resources that were expensive to acquire. According to Onwumah (2014), no foreign investor would want to put money into a nation where intercommunal and ethnoreligious strife is common. There are two types of anxieties that investors have. First of all, the primary goal of foreign investment is profit, which cannot be achieved in a crisis situation. Second, the resources that have already been committed will undoubtedly be lost. Nigeria's standing in international trade ties is harmed by this. Nigeria is endowed with a number of tourism destinations, many of which are found in the northern states. Since it defies logic and reason to conduct tourism trips in a region that is a hotbed of violence, the ethnoreligious situation in northern Nigeria might be blamed for the industry's malfunctioning character. According to Onwumah (2014), Nigeria's ethno-religious crises presents the country in a negative light abroad. Nigeria is seen as dangerous and unsuitable for security, primarily due to

intercommunal and ethnoreligious conflicts.(Onwumah, 2014). There are two types of anxieties that investors have.

Theoretical Framework

This section of the study covers the theory that serves as the foundation for the research methodology. Conflict Trap Theory is the theory that was applied for this investigation,.Paul Collier, Elliott, Havard Hegre, Ankle Hoeffler, Marta Reynal-Querol, and Nicholas Sambanis are the proponents of this hypothesis. They interpret the term "conflict trap" to mean that once a dispute starts, it usually picks up steam on its own. It appears that peace grows elusive and difficult to regain. According to Collier *et al.* (2003), even when peace is restored, it frequently does not last. Conflict trap proponents attributed the protracted structure of a typical conflict to several interrelated causes. Multiethnic societies seem to be particularly vulnerable to the rallying, manipulating, and mobilization of ethnic feelings for the benefit of both the warring factions and the government, which may be why conflicts persist there. Furthermore, conflict typically turns into a useful political tool in multiple societies, especially when there are major complaints among the populace, as they seek to further their interests and objectives. Furthermore, even if the guardians of authority and power in the society are prepared to give in to the demands of the groups, they are typically not regarded as trustworthy or as having the ability to persuade the rival factions to come to a consensus. It is possible that the opposing factions fear that if they manage to extend an olive branch, those in charge of power and authority will back out of any deal (Collier *et al.*, 2003). It is further argued that giving in to the demands of the warring groups makes it even harder for the guardians of power and authority because doing so may foster the emergence, growth, mushrooming, and radicalization of other groups, many of which have competing goals.

Extremely unequal income distribution and a very low average income are also significant patterns associated with protracted conflict. This could be because it is less expensive to maintain conflict when there is a large layer of the population living in poverty and potentially weak institutions like the security agencies that are unable to deter and capture lawbreakers. Furthermore, because warring parties have ready access to weapons for waging war, maintaining conflict has been easier (Collier *et al.*, 2003).

However, the fact that a truce is raised following a disagreement is crucial to the long-term pattern of conflict. It gets harder to go back to the way things were. Conflict is thought to feed animosity and to tip the scales in favor of more conflict by swaying the interests of powerful parties. Additionally, the criminal entrepreneurs who gain financially from the violence will stop at nothing to maintain the peace process. Collier *et al.* (2003) state that:

Whether their motivation is primarily political or commercial, violence entrepreneurs may profit from war to such an amount that they are unable to accept peace with proper compensation. People who consider themselves political leaders gain from war because it allows them to maintain control over their organizations in a hierarchical, militaristic manner, which is far harder to defend during peacetime. The absence of the rule of law in the territories they govern serves the interests of those who regard themselves as extortionists. But leaders perceive themselves as having spent a lot of money on military hardware that will be obsolete as soon as they accept peace. Seeking peace from a rebel leader may be likened to asking a world-class swimmer to empty their pool.

Based on the aforementioned presumptions, the conflict trap hypothesis makes sense and is appropriate for understanding the difficulties involved in managing ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria. It provides in-depth understanding of the interrelated elements that keep conflict going. It is assumed that after a conflict breaks out, it takes longer and is more difficult to bring about peace because of a variety of factors, including ethnic diversity, the spread of weapons, the existence of income inequality, the existence of a vast republic of thugs, and the actions of criminal entrepreneurs. The theoretical and conceptual journey exposes different viewpoints on the appreciation of violence. Notably, while each viewpoint may be brief, inadequate, restricted, and incomplete in and of itself, taken as a whole, they are complimentary and enlightening.

METHODOLOGY

The questionnaire and interviews used in the study were the primary sources of data, and books, journals, and other research materials were the secondary sources. Focused group discussions (FGD) and interviews with Key Informants (KIIs) included clerics, churchgoers, mosque attendees, worshippers of African Traditional Religions (ATRs), leaders of ethnic groups, peace scholars, advocates, and practitioners, among others. The respondents are well-informed about Nigeria's ethnoreligious conflicts and how they affect both security and the country's progress.

The strategy of purposeful sampling was utilized to choose the participants who possessed awareness about the study. The study's conclusions were strengthened by the use of secondary data to supplement primary data. The qualitative method was used to analyze the data. Direct quotation, paraphrase, and extracts were used in the data analysis.

The Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Two hundred (200) representatives from Nigerian churches, mosques, African Traditional Religions (ATRs) worshippers, religious organization leaders, pastors, and imams were given questionnaires. Only one hundred and eighty questionnaires, nevertheless, were found. The Frequency and Percentage table in the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) was used to evaluate the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Major Causes of Ethno-religious conflicts in Jos, Plateau State

S/N	Variables	N=185	SA (4)	A(3)	SD(2)	D(1)	Total	Mean	SD	RM
1	Land Dispute		81	54	20	30	556	3.01	1.05	A
2	Marginalization		90	50	34	11	589	3.18	1.11	A
3	Struggle for power		70	66	40	9	567	3.06	1.03	A
4	Citizenship and Indigene rights		88	70	20	7	609	3.29	1.25	A
5	Victimization		75	85	10	10	585	3.16	3.10	A

6	Discrimination	67	69	24	25	548	2.96	1.09	A
7	Religion and Ethnic Intolerance	80	65	20	20	575	3.11	1.09	A
8	Weak Judicial system	65	60	20	40	520	2.81	1.03	A
9	Poverty	61	54	40	30	516	2.79	1.02	A
10	Wrong Interpretation of Holy Book	51	54	60	20	506	2.74	0.91	A
	Grant Mean						3.01		A

KEY: Mean value <2.5 is rejected® while that ≥2.5 and above is accepted (A). RM=Remark

Table 1 demonstrated that, among other things, victimization, land disputes, struggles for power, marginalization, citizenship and indigeneity, religious and ethnic intolerance, and victimization were the main drivers of ethno-religious conflict in Jos, Plateau State. High mean scores higher than the critical mean rating of 2.5 were linked to all of the previously identified causes of ethno-religious conflict as well as other reasons. The observation from this research is in tandem with the finding of Udoh (2015) who reported porous borders, illegal arms importation, marginalization, poor leadership, religious extremism. Akintokunbo (2011) blamed widespread and unregulated corruption, greed, selfishness, lack of patriotism, lack of political will and conscience, and a lack of vision and purpose among our leaders and the populace for the insecurity in Nigeria, particularly in Kaduna. According to Otite (2012), security agent mistakes are to blame for Nigeria's current condition of insecurity. Furthermore, Abubakar (2005) linked national resource disputes, ethnic conflict, and the government's incapacity to meet the basic requirements of the populace to Nigeria's state of insecurity.

Table2:Effects of Ethno-Religious conflict on socio-economic and Political development in Jos Plateau

Effects	Frequency	Percentage
Loss of lives	28	15.14
Retardation of educational development in the area	23	12.43
Polarisation of State into ethnic and religious divide	18	9.73
Lack of representation in decision making	13	7.03
Increased violent crime	18	9.73
Food insecurity	25	13.51
Destruction of social and economic activities	26	14.05
Diversion of government resources to military and other security agencies	13	7.03
Relocation and closure of business	10	5.41
Absence of genuine peaceful and social co-existence among the people in the area	11	5.95
Total	185	100.00

Source: Field survey 2023.

Ethno-religious conflict has a number of implications and repercussions on the socio-economic and political development of the region, including death tolls (15.14%), disruption of social and economic activity (14.05%), food insecurity (13.51%), and a delay in the advancement of local education (12.43%). Every consequence received a rating higher than the crucial mean of 2.5 (Table 2). This is consistent with the findings of Ozoigbo (2019), who stated that underdevelopment, poverty, hunger, youth unrest, drug abuse, kidnapping, armed robbery, brain drain, and low pay in the global community are the main negative effects of ethno-religious conflict and insecurity in any country. According to Charas (2015), social, economic, and political advancements cannot occur without security, which is the most essential component of human life. According to Zabadi (2011), all other considerations are pointless until a person's bodily safety can be guaranteed. Imobighe (2001) further stated that without security, it will be difficult for citizens of a state to engage in worthwhile, productive activities; as a result, it will be challenging to link the state's human development to the advancement of its citizens' overall well-being.

Table 3: Challenges of Ethno-Religious Conflict in the study Area

S/N	Challenges	SA(4)	A(3)	SD(2)	D(1)	TT	Mean	SD	Rm
1	Ineffective internal security operations	75	60	35	15	565	3.05	1.25	A
2	Difficult terrain	35	35	70	45	430	2.32	1.01	R
3	Mutual distrust and lack of confidence	66	64	35	30	516	2.79	1.07	A
4	Arrogance of power and know it all mentality	50	50	55	20	520	2.81	1.08	A
5	Commercialisation of the conflict	40	65	40	40	475	2.57	1.01	A
6	Externalization of the conflict	51	49	45	30	511	2.76	1.05	A
7	Preference for hard conflict management	40	65	70	15	510	2.76	1.06	A
8	Conspiracy of the National elites	70	65	40	10	575	3.11	1.21	A
Grand Mean							2.81		A

KEY: Mean value <2.5 is rejected® while that ≥2.5 and above is accepted (A). RM=Remark, TT= Total.

Table 4.3 showed that ineffective internal security (, conspiracy of the national elites, arrogance of power, and know it mentality, mutual distrust and lack of confidence etc were all accepted as the challenges of ethno-religious conflict in Jos, Plateau except difficult terrain which was rejected since the mean rating was less than 2.5. All these challenges were above the critical mean value of 2.5 meaning that they were all accepted. In-effective Internal Security Operations: the Nigerian military has found itself operating under very tight and hazy political environment where its personnel are caught up in the dangerous high-wire identity politics in the nation. In addition is the lack of logistics such as vehicles, communication equipment and tracking devices, among

others that according to the Chief of Training and Operations (CTOP), Army Headquarters, Major General Lawrence Ngubane, has made it difficult for the troops to effectively carry out its operations (Daily Sun Newspaper, 31/1/2011).

Table 4: Government Efforts in Promoting Ethno-Religious Harmony in Jos.

Government Efforts	Frequency	Percentage
Setting up vigilante group	30	16.22
Creation of peace agencies	20	10.81
Deployment of security personnels	50	27.02
Educating people on the need for peace by organizing game	15	8.11
Provision of welfare for victims of conflicts and the orphans and widows in the areas affected	25	13.51
Reconciliation inquiry	20	10.81
Ostracism	10	5.41
Mediation and Negotiation	15	8.11
Total	185	100.00

Source: Field survey 2023

Table 4 showed that deployment of security setting up of vigilante group, provision of welfare for victims of conflicts and the orphans and widows in the affected areas, reconciliation, educating people on the need for peace by organizing games, creation of peace agencies, mediation and negotiation etc were accepted as the government efforts in promoting ethno-religious harmony in the area. A recognizable security organization in the shape of a vigilante group is required for the disputes in Barkin Ladi and Jos North Local Government in order to exclusively safeguard people's lives and property. This can be accomplished by enlisting young people without jobs who are willing to guide, report, and defend the community against outside aggressors. Respondent who says the state has failed to provide for this group by not paying them a regular income base has questioned the state government in the pursuit of peace. Vigilante organizations are now plundering their various host communities as a result of this (interview, 2017). This suggests that the government of Jos, Plateau state, has not done enough to foster interethnic and interreligious harmony. This significantly supports Dada's (2019) opinion that the government has not done a meaningful job of putting an end to ethno-religious violence in Jos.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research has unequivocally shown that religious and ethnic identities do not, by themselves, spark or cause violent conflicts. Instead, underlying disputes that are frequently dismissed as ethno-religious are issues of unequal access to opportunities, resources, and power. Furthermore, the most intense disagreements arise over matters deemed essential to the state's existence and growth, when opposing factions typically take an exclusive, "do or die" stance. These include land ownership, resource distribution, and state power control.

The following suggestions are made in light of Nigeria's ethno-religious crises and their effects on national development and security: It has been noted that when social and economic issues are handled more positively in Nigeria, there will be a significant decrease in religious uprisings and crises of all kinds, and the majority of Nigerians who currently rank lowest in terms of economic development will adopt a new constructive engagement mindset.

A national conference on religion, ethnicity, law, and human security should be organized by the Nigerian federal government, with an emphasis on issues related to religious extremism, blasphemy, violence, terrorism, and human and sustainable security in Nigeria. For all of human history, dialogue has been used as a crisis resolution technique for disputes of all kinds. Efficient communication is advised in light of the relative ignorance and lack of understanding that members of different ethnic and religious groups frequently display toward one another. This is necessary if the nation's ethnic and religious communities are to make any meaningful contributions to the socioeconomic growth and advancement of the country.

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