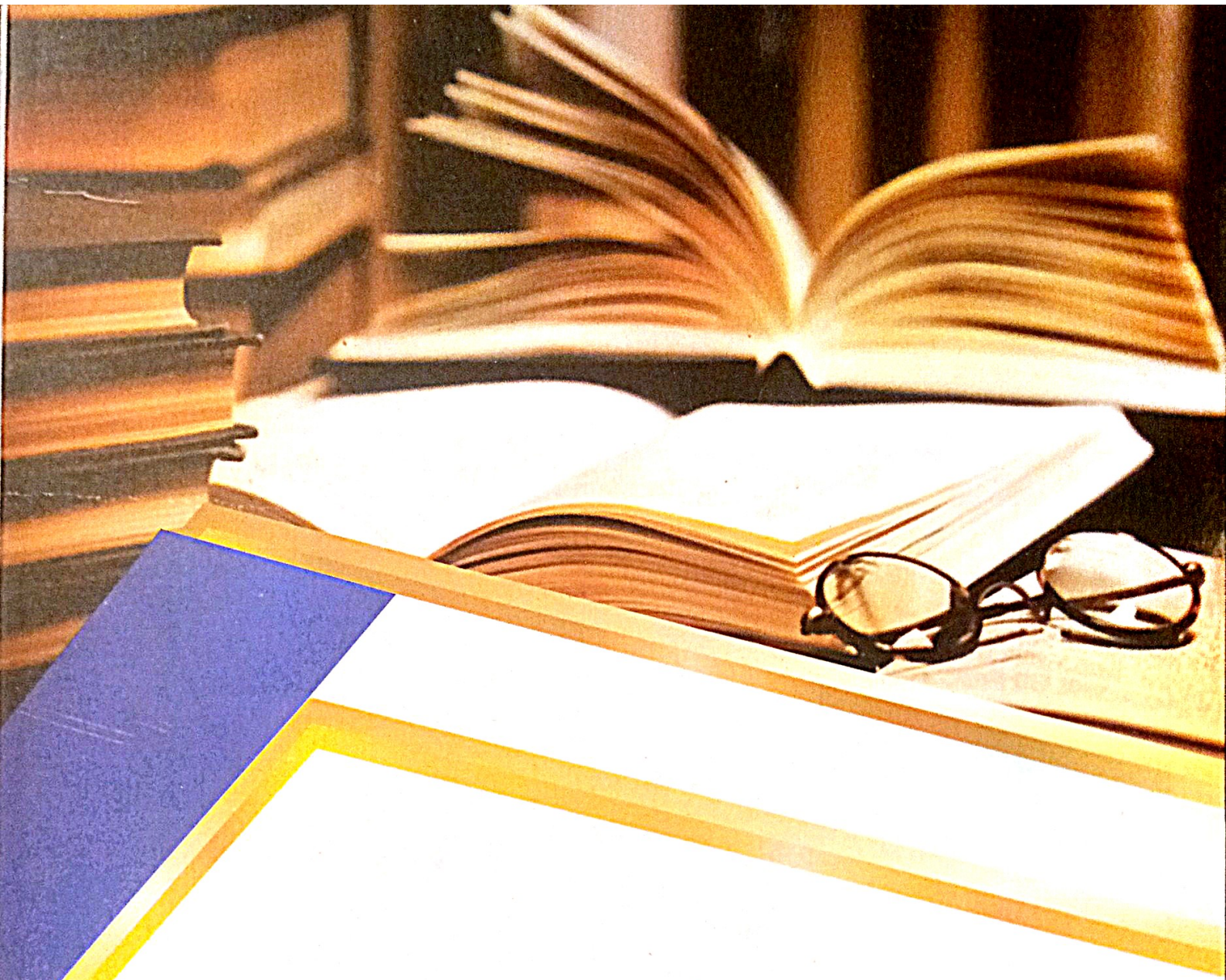


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(MJALE)

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Multidisciplinary Journal of Arts and Language Education (MJALE) is an educative journal of resident in the Arts and Language Education Department, Faculty of Education, Ekiti State University. The journal is committed to publishing scholarly articles showcasing modern trends and innovative discoveries in education.

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The coverage of the journal include:

1. Blended learning pedagogy
2. Issues of contemporary concern in globalization
3. Reports in educational research
4. Attainment of philosophical goals through pedagogical approaches
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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Religious education can be defined as the studies that cultivate the right knowledge of the service and worship of God or the supernatural. The purpose of this paper is to identify how Religious education aim at providing the individuals with good moral, character, and social sense of responsibility and sustainability as regard development. For instance, Islam does not create a division between a worldly and the religious significance of education.

This research type is historical having the contribution of the three dominant religion, Islam, Christianity and Traditional types as the point of focus. Religion education play vital role in sustainable development of Nigeria and Africa at large despite disagreement, fighting that arises from religious intolerance. The finding of this research reveals that religious education plays an active role in noticeable discourse change for sustainable development. (a) Religion play vital role in developmental institutions and agencies.(b)The extremist in every religion are those that are responsible for violence; killings and barbaric behaviour.(c)Religion is responsible for moral, spiritual, political and social developments. Conclusions are drawn and recommendations are made that religious education should not be a total neglect in discourse and should be seen as partners in development

Keywords: *Religion, Education, Sustainability, Development, Progress.*

Introduction

Religious education aimed at providing the individuals with good moral character and with social sense of responsibility. Most of the religions did not create a division between a worldly and the religious significance of education. An educated religious individual does not only live as a social and responsible being but also will have the fear of Allah in his conscious and subconscious layers of mind.

Modern system of education apart from being a mean to an end it also emphasized the worldly importance of education, be it political, economic, and social, but totally disregard moral aspects that is why the modern society suffers from so many evils. The strange thing about it is that most of the social evils are the creation of the educated people. For instance immorality are noticeable in all schools which include all sort of sexual immorality, increasing cases of violence in schools were some students beat up their head teachers, setting schools on fire, violence among lawmakers, bribery and corruption among the lawyer and judges and the recent case of a Nigerian

nator that slapped or beat up a married oman at a store among others. Such eople have no value or character. ducation to them means the worldly uccess and material gain. This is not the slamic view of education as opposed to his worldly and materialistic view of ducation. Some people believed that slamic system of education denies the mportance of worldly life and its esponsibility, this is not true. The Qur'an teaches us to be responsible for our work and live a happy, moral, social, institutional and sustainable life. This is an indication that religion cut across every human endeavour be it political, economic, social, educational, etc.

Religion education has does so many goodies in term of moral, physical, political, economic and educational development in Nigeria. Most especially in the field of education, history have shown that the cultivation of knowledge started from the adherents of both Islamic and Christian religions who are called the missionaries, it was through their efforts that many institutions were built.

In summary, the above discussion emphasized the significance of religious education which also includes the application of knowledge. In Islam for example, Muslim should acquire knowledge because it is armour against enemies, it enable his/her possessor to know the right from the wrong and it is a must we acquire religious education for moral upbringing and sustainable development.

The Concept of Religious Education

Religion means the belief and worship of a supernatural controlling power, especially God the Almighty. It is a particular system of faith and worship. Religion according to James. (n. d.)

Is an omnipresent and seamless part of daily life, taking an Infinite variety of forms that are part of the distinctive quality on each community.

Religions could thus not be seen as something a part or personal. It is rather a dimension of life that suffices for whatever people do religion has an effect on many people.

Attitudes to everything, including such matters as savings, investment and a host of economic decisions. It influences area we had come to see as vital for successful development, like schooling, gender quality and approaches to health care. In short religion could be an important driver of change, even as it could be a break to progress.(p. 13)

Education is the process by which knowledge is cultivated from one generation to another. It is the acquisition of knowledge that helps to develop and direct the physical intellectual and mental aspects of human being there by uplifting him from Animal stage to stage of perfect, active and effective human being.

Religion, Development and Progress

Religion has played an important role in influencing progress to a significant extent, such as provision of numerous opportunities on spiritual matters, social aspect of man, maintenance of social harmony, welfare, socio-economic development of a country, social justice, social security, social insurance, zakat, charity, brotherhood, love, mutual respect, education, poverty alleviation, agriculture, trade and commerce, etc. Nigeria still wallows in state of pandemonium on all the fore mentioned points yet still struggling to progress. National` development is a process of improving the range of opportunities that will enables individual humans and communities to achieve their aspiration

and full potential over a sustained period of time while maintaining the resilience of economic, social and environmental system (Munasinghe, 2004).

Dambisa (2010) opines that most African countries are confronted with major developmental challenges orbiting on leadership, corruption, insecurity of varied degrees like kidnapping, terrorism, child industry, ritual killing, armed robbery and the most endemic problem which is poverty is also reeking. Furthermore, the scholar adds "there is no denying the fact that all these indices of backwardness are similar to what is operating in Nigeria today".

Nigeria is grabbling with such problems such as illiteracy, hunger, poor health condition, humiliation, unemployment and expectations of accelerated development seem difficult to realize. Citizens of Nigeria are feeling frustrated, not cared for, basic amenities to keep life going are not seen while corruption and nepotism keep growing in the hands of the political gladiators. Nigeria economic prospects are now in grim and the economy is in recession (Eboh, 2016), while corruption is on the high side demoralizing every aspect of the government (Nwabughiogu, 2016). In affirmation of these facts, President Muhammadu Buhari, addressing his ministers on the state of the nation during Eid-el-Fitri, called for prayers for Nigeria. He emphasized that the present challenges facing Nigeria as a nation are enormous; they include economic recession, lack of development in agriculture and mining sectors, lack of patriotism, agitation from Indigenous people of Biafra (Nwabughiogu, 2016). The state of the nation has greatly affected her quest for improved quality of life of her citizens as poverty; unemployment and starvation still pervade the nook and cranny of the country.

A country is classified as developed when it is able to provide qualitative life for its citizenry. Nigeria in the last fifty years has been battling with the problems of development in spite of abundant material and natural resources in her possession.

As long as secular discourse continues to exclude religion in its analysis of globalization, progress and development of people, the result of its analysis will always be defective (Joseph, 2011)

Max (2009) asserts that "the neglect of religion as an ordering, uniting and dividing factor in a number of influential interpretations of globalization is a major cause of misunderstanding and studied blindness regarding what is going on in the world". This could be regarded as misconception as noted by Williams (1990) that religion and development do not mix; that religion (must) have a negative repercussion on development. He also argues that religion and development can, and do go together. He submits that Nigeria's development had had the assistance of religion and still does; that without the close collaboration of religion and development in the past, Nigeria would have charted and therefore taken different course, and maybe has a slower rate of development. Following this view, Adeyemo (2002) re-echoing the views of Durkheim, Karl Marx and Max Weber on the role of religion in social institution such as economics and politics. He said that religion is an interactive force in a society because it has the power to shape collective beliefs. It provides cohesion in social order by promoting a sense of belonging in collective enterprise.it is against this backdrop that this writes up sets to discuss religious issues that are

related to development and progress in the nation.

They issued a statement urging structural changes or world societies in order to alleviate hunger and malnutrition lesson of that conference bring to the fore the complexity of such acts of charity like feeding the hunger as well as the interdependency of the basic organs of society for the realization of integral development, technological, economical, ideological and political will, religious and cultural values for world peace.

On another occasion, with the gradual onset of economic globalization accompanying the call for a New International Economic order, select leaders of the major world religions particularly monotheistic ones, Judaism, Islam and Christianity in an interreligious peace colloquium in Lisbon. Gremellion & Williams, (1978) quoted Portugal (1977) that the importance of religion in the emerging world order was reiterated. They proposed a comprehensive grasp of politics, economic, religion-cultural ethnic, faith communities and ideologies as necessary for peace in the new human order, especially as all these transactional actors in the world scene are significantly affected by faith dimension.

Furthermore, the World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD) set up in 1988 continues the dialogue of religion and development agencies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Oxford Regnum Books International, 2001). The result of such dialogue has been an emphasis on integral development; that is, development that is not merely economic but one that includes the political, social, cultural, economic, and technological as well as the religion-spiritual aspects of human life. Such development must focus on the human person involved in development and promote his overall development, social, cultural, personal and religious. Institutions now appreciate the position of faith-based groups that "economic development programmes will not be sustainable, even within their own terms of reference, unless they incorporate the spiritual as well as the cultural, political, social and environmental dimension of life. (Wendy, 2011)

As a result of such dialogue there is a realization that the religious faith of people help shape their view of development and their life in general. Religion provides the unifying power that grows the socio- political, economic, technological, cultural and moral dynamics of a culture. This is particular true of Africans for whom life is an intricate web of the sacred and the secular.

Implication of Religion on Nigerian development

The role of religion for the sustainable development of Nigeria has been both positive and negative. Positively, religion stands as a reliable institution providing stepping stones to sustainable development. Sanneh,(2003) said "Although they were little prepared for it, the churches found themselves as the only viable structure remaining after the break down of state institutions, and as such had to shoulder a disproportionate burden of the problems of the societies". Even though this statement is true but the state institutions do not shirk her responsibilities in some areas of her responsibilities. As this author wrote in another paper, "from the days of the missionaries to the present the church in Africa has focused it development strategies in two areas: education and healthcare."

And they have done remarkably well, as detailed below.

Christian Faith based Organizations (FBOs) like the Christian association of Nigeria (CAN) and Muslim Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) like the Nigerian Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs (NSCIAN) in many ways contribute to sustainable development of Nigeria (Olalekan, 2009) in the face of the weakness of the Nigeria state and the inefficiency of its institutions to provide the human good to it-citizens, the Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) Supplement and complement government's efforts toward improving the standard of living of Nigerians. The Faith Based Organization in Nigeria are involved in pro-poor, charitable works which alleviate poverty, promote progress and serve as an agents of development according to Omobolaji,(2011) Faith Based Organizations in Nigeria provide health and educational services through their hospitals, clinics and maternities, schools and colleges, vocational training centres, seminaries' and universities. They own economic institutions, such as bookshops, hostels, banks, insurance, mass media and ICT companies and are prominent owners of real estate in the form of sacred cities and prayer camps which cover thousands of hectares of land. The lands on which their hospitals, schools and orphanages are situated also make up part of their real estate portfolio"

Specifically, research on religion and development in Nigeria (2009) identifies the main Muslim Faith Based Organizations to include "the Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN), the Nasrul-llahi-Fathi society of Nigeria (NASFAT), Quareeb society of Nigeria, Ansaru-deen society of Nigeria, Nawairu-deen society of Nigeria, Ansoruli- Islam and the National council of Muslim Youth Organization (NACOMYO). The main Christian FBOs include Christian Rural and Urban Development of Nigeria (RUDAN), the Justice and Peace Caritas Organization (JDPC), the Urban Ministry, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CHAN), oriented development (POD) of ECWA. FOMWAN with consultative status in the United Nation among other things aims at the intellectual and economic empowerment of Muslim Women, the rehabilitation of children and orphans the encouragement of young girls to embrace education and proper adequate health care, etcetera. This it does in partnership with the Nigeria government through the Universal Basic Education Programme and Nomadic Education Programmes. NASFAT among other programmes aim at tackling poverty and ensuring sustainable income for the society. Thus, it promotes small scale business by granting loans to individuals and cooperative societies. It also encourage education programme among the Muslims and non-Muslims by establishing schools such as primaries, secondary and tertiary institution (Fountain University) to cater for the teeming Nigerian population seeking for admission on various courses. CRUDAN partners with the government and other ensuring sustainable income for the society. Thus, it promotes small scale business by granting loan to individual and cooperative societies. CRUDAN partners with the government and other Faith Based Organizations to promote rural and urban development especially in areas of "rural development, agriculture, water and sanitation, micro-finance and livelihoods development and training". (Olakunle, 2009).

JDDC was also established as an integral development commission and as a pontifical council guided by the social

development. It coordinates all programmes relating to social welfare, rural, urban and water development, animating integral development, etcetera (Olakunle, 2009). Established in all the Catholic dioceses in Nigeria (over 99 in number) (OCF Catholic Hierarchy) and with branches in the parishes and Zone levels (small Christian Communities), (Catholic Archdiocese of Ibadan) JDPC boreholes for drinking water to communities, (The Nigerian Tribune, 2012) promotes good governance in many ways and partners with government to monitor elections, trains police and prison officers (Punch Newspaper, 2012) grant small-scale loans to farmers and traders (CIDJAO, 2001) provides housing, (JDPC Enugu Diocese) build hospitals, constructs and equips schools, advocates for widows, women's, unjustly imprisoned, etcetera

This is equally true of African Traditional Religions though not institutionalized like Christianity and Islam, African traditional religion contributes to the sustainable development of Nigeria psychologically. It provides a sense of security and assurance of assistance from the spirit of the ancestor which Africans believe serve as a protective shield against such evil forces as witches and wizards which can disrupt individual and communal development. Therefore, when faced with riddles of life, and in moments of suffering and difficulties a good member of Nigeria's fall back on their traditional religious practices with Christianity and Islam respectively, "millions of Muslims and Christians on the continents have managed to absorb to their system of values and beliefs certain contributions from ancestral indigenous creed. (Mazrui, nd). Furthermore, the tolerance of African traditional religion toward other religious belief and practices will always serve as example for Christians and Muslims as they struggle for mutual-co-existence.

However, in spite of their laudable involvement in promoting progress and sustainable development, religion in Nigeria has in some ways been imbibing sustainable development. Christianity and Islam are often antagonists, leading to ethnic and religious conflicts resulting in loss of lives and destruction of properties. For instance, 1980-2002 more than ten thousand Nigerians died and properties worth millions of dollars were destroyed in riots between Christian and Muslims. Toyin (1998) presented the facts of countless tragedies to exemplify religious violence in Nigeria:

In 1980, the maitatsine crisis claimed thousands of lives (the Government conservatively estimated the death toll at just over Four thousand) and caused millions of naira in property damage.

On the last day of October 1982, eight large churches were burned in the prominent city of Kano. A major riot in Kaduna that same year claimed at least hundred lives. In 1984, violence sparked by Muslims in Yola and Jumeta killed approximately seven hundred people (including policemen) and left nearly six thousand people homeless. In the first week of February 1986--- at Ilorin, the capital of Kwara State, palm Sunday turned disastrous as Christians clashed with Muslims in leading to the destruction of three churches--- In March 1987 Christians and Muslims in key Northern town cities such as Kaduna, Katsina, Zaria and kafanchan clashed with devastating Consequences--- In 1988, Christians and Muslims turned the Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria in to a battle field on which a hundred of People were injured and one person lost his life- -- In 1991, the Religious crisis in Bauchi States reached the breaking point leading

to massive destruction --- In 1992, large scale violence returned to Kaduna State, with sever clashes in Zangou- Kataf, Kaduna and Zaria.

Two 1994 incidents in Kano and Sokoto revived the tension--- in May and June 1995, a new crisis erupted in Kano, sparking sporadic attack on Christians and Southerners. In May 1996, eight people lost their Lives when police clashed with a group of Muslim students (Toyin, 1998. 3-4).

Similar religious conflicts riot and violence arising from clashes between Christians and Muslims occurred in Nigeria almost every year. "Rioting in 2001 killed more than 1,000 people, and subsequent outbreaks in 2004 and 2008 killed another thousand. Smaller but no less vicious attacks in2009 claimed dozens of lives (http;www.time.com).

This has only been intensified by the Jama'atu, Alhlisunna lidawati wal-Jihad, Islamic sect's militancy in Nigeria. The Boko haram also aimed at complete Islamization of Nigeria in Taliban style has claimed since 2009 up to 1,000 lives and destroyed valuable government and business properties. Its terrorist activities in Nigeria are crippling the economy of northern Nigeria, creating insecurity in the country, driving away investors, foreign and local, and resulting in much government spending on security instead of infrastructure.

It should be noted, however, that as the council on Foreign Relations in a symposium "Religious Conflict in Nigeria, "(2007) Council of Foreign Relations discovered most religious conflicts in Nigeria also have ethnic and political nuances.

Another reason for the upsurge of religious intolerance and violence is economic. According to Paulinus (2011), a cruel irony in Nigeria is that as the country discovers more and more oil fields, a sizeable proportion of the population sink more deeply into poverty. The concomitant decline of investment in the education and economic well-being of people especially the young , makes the latter easy prey for religious fantastic or lunatics who promise them something greater than themselves, whether in this world or in the next (Paulinus, 2011).

Religions find a mentalist, whether arising from Christianity, Islam or Africa traditional religion, are abuses of religion and therefore is abhorrent. Genuine religious spirituality respects human dignity under God; advocate for peace and tolerance; justice and fairness; progress and development; protection of lives and property; promotion of the common good and creation of condition conducive to human freedom, civil and religious. The level of violence arising for religious conflicts brings to the fore front the importance of interreligious dialogue, in order to foster such dialogue; the Catholic Bishop Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) established an interreligious dialogue commission in response to the demand of the Vatican 11 council document of Nostra Aetate (Austin, 1975). The Federal Government of Nigeria equally established to the National Religious Advisory Board (1986) and the Nigeria inter-religious dialogue for sustainable peace and religious tolerance. However, these international organizations are not taken seriously in Nigeria.

Religion also impede sustainable development by tacit collaboration in corruption and mismanagement of the economy mainly because religious leaders have failed to challenge the unjust

structures that give rise to bad governance, corruption and social malice. Although some FBOs like the Muslim Jama'atu NAsril Islam, Centre for Human Rights in Islam (CHRI) and the Christian Justice Development and Peace Commission (CJDPC) and the Ecumenical Commission of Justice and Peace are social –political organisation, they have not spoken with one voice against the cycles of injustice, greed and self-aggrandizement of the political class that confiscates the state resources for personal use, this dehumanizing the Nigerians' on the contrary, various religion groups have sought to benefit from corruption and nepotism of the Nigeria system of when a number of their religion is in power as the president or as the governor or local chairman etcetera. By doing so, religion in Nigeria put their selves in a position to be used at will by the political class. It is little wonder that the Nigeria government can so easily side-track people even in policies aimed at alleviating poverty like the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) programmes. (Nigeria Institute of Social and Economic Research, 2001) Thus, religion instead of being an agent of development has at times been an agent of decline, destruction, violence and revenge.

Since it is not enough for religions to contribute to sustainable development of Nigeria merely by providing social services which is what they have been doing. Religious leader in Nigeria must figure out a way to honestly embrace peace and promote mutual co-existence by understanding one another's religious belief. Such effort was made almost immediately after independence from the British early in 1970 in the form of symposia. (Nigerian Dialogue) A journal of inter-faith-studies on the Relationship between Christianity and Non Christianity Religion by the University of Nigeria Nsuka was lunched July 1974. It promotes such relationship but could not continue perhaps due to lack of funding (Odumosu, 2011). Through such ways, each of the members of Christians, Africa Traditional religion fundamentalism that often is responsible for varying forms of violence that results not only in wants on destruction of lives and property, but cripples the economy and set back the clock of sustainable development, reversing the tide of human development gained through many years of arduous labour, planning and creativity.

Conclusions and Recommendations

From the literature reviewed, it could be concluded that religion in one way or the other serve as an agent of sustainable development which has contributed meaningfully to sustainability of people in Nigeria, and Africa as a whole. This is to a good number of Nigerian citizens who identifies themselves as religionist. In fact, a survey of people's religious beliefs carried out in ten countries in 2004 by BBC NEWS suggests that Nigeria is the most religious nation in the world, topping the list by ninety per cent of the population opting for their religious belief as moral guide for life. This religiousness can be harnessed for the development of the country, ideally, instead of impeding sustainable development, religion ought to promote it, because faith addresses the ultimate concern of human being and permeates all aspects of human life: Vital, social, cultural, personal and religious. Religion thus provides an anchor giving to various forms of human experiences, life and actions promoting interreligious dialogue and education for tolerance will reduce religious conflicts. Hence, religion will be free to contribute to sustainable development through the nurturing of

human conscience for honesty, transparency and the common good.

In the light of their numerous contributions to sustainable development, development agenda and curriculum reform in religious education should be properly integrated in to Nigeria system of education as to make Nigerians not as recipients of the country's wealth, but as educators to contribute to industrial development of the country. In this way religion will help Nigerians overcome the ignorance responsible for the disconnection they often make between their faith and their civic duties and the promotion of the common good. Because they have due access to the people, religious education curriculum in Nigeria must emphasise the importance of hands work, the role of science and technological advancement, a workable good of order, then importance governance for sustainable development of Nigerian people, while they are involved in national development of Nigerian people. While they are involved in national development through their Faith Based Organizations (FBOs), while they are involved in national development through their Faith Based Organizations, religious leaders must fight against corruption and injustice. Their influence in public policy must be to promote the common good and sustainable development of Nigeria. In this regard, worldwide Christianity and Islam not only speak up against the various form of marginalization of Africa in International trade, but must through their networks promote better mutual and relationship of Nigeria (and Africa) with other countries in all area of partnership.

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