INTER-RELIGIOUS RELATIONS AMONG THE YORUBA AND HAUSA IN A SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH-WESTERN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT
Inter-religious relations and interactions between communities with diverse ethno-religious inclinations are aimed at promoting mutual understanding and coexistence, among the Yoruba and Hausa communities in Sagamu. Existing studies on relations among the Yoruba and Hausa communities have focused largely on their economic, political, social and cultural relations with little attention paid to their inter-religious relations. This study was, therefore, designed to examine inter-religious relations among the Yoruba and Hausa in Sagamu with a view to identifying factors that promoted and incidents that undermined their peaceful co-existence. Purposive sampling was used to select Sagamu Local Government Areas for being the core host Hausa Muslim settlers' communities in Ogun State. Key informant interviews were conducted with 20 religious leaders while Interreligious Relations Questionnaire on Peaceful Co-existence was administered to 188 respondents. The quantitative data were subjected to descriptive analysis. Seven factors promoted inter-religious harmony among the Yoruba and Hausa in Sagamu. They were: exposure of the people of Sagamu and the reception of foreigners, Islam and Hausa language as unifying factors, inter-ethnic marriage, Akarigbo's Role as father of all, participation in religious festivals, political relations and cultural assimilation. Four incidents undermined the inter-religious harmony between the Hausa and Yoruba in Sagamu. They were: interference in chieftaincy matters, violation of the Oro cult festival, indigenous land rights and collection of laada (payment of commission) which created enmity. Socio-economic and political factors both contributed to the promotion and incidents that undermined inter-religious relations among the Yoruba and Hausa communities in Sagamu, Southwestern Nigeria.

Introduction

Throughout its existence as an independent country, Nigeria has had several incidences of inter and intra-ethnic violence, and the issue is thought to have become worse and more persistent over time. More than twenty thousand Nigerians have died in several distinct confrontations along ethnic, religious, and other intra- and inter-communal lines since the end of military government in 1999.[1] While most of the occurrences have been relatively minor, some conflicts have destroyed whole villages and the loss of hundreds of people in a matter of days or weeks.

Nigeria's history has been significantly shaped by the division between Islam and Christianity as well as the differences in religion and ethnic affiliation. It has also contributed significantly to the ongoing problem of Christians and Muslims living in heterogeneous society. The majority of Nigerians express the view that such a diversity of individuals and ideologies cannot make impact on the growth of a strong and steady democracy. However, the intricacy offers a legitimate basis for reevaluating the intercultural and multicultural effects of coexisting faiths in a specific nation like Nigeria.

Among Nigeria's biggest, most politically engaged, and economically oriented ethnic groups are the Yoruba and the Hausa, who are also renowned for having a wide range of religious and cultural practices. Along with its many languages and multiracial culture, the diversity is reflected in the variety of religions. The Hausa is a member of a people living chiefly in northern Nigeria, whereas the Yoruba people are primarily concentrated in the South-Western part. The settlement of Hausas in the Southwest of Nigerian city of Sagamu was facilitated by the trade in kola nuts and livestock, as opposed to other factors. Over time, this commerce developed into a chance for both ethnic groups to forge friendly and peaceful ties.

The groups had interacted before colonial times. Substantial migrations of Northerners into Yoruba territory and vice versa have occurred, even as far as Lagos' coastal areas. Nevertheless, the Northerners had already established themselves in Lagos by the seventeenth century, if not even earlier.[2] The colonial situations further quicken the interaction. According to Albert[3] the Yoruba ethnic group first reached the city of Kano as early as 1903. Some of them came with the British Nationals as hired people to perform household and personal services. The reason was due to the fact that after the affirmation of Lagos as a colony in 1861, and the bombardment of Ibadan in 1893, the first set of people that were employed by the British nationals as assistants were the Yorubas. The revolution in the transportation sector which steered the process of laying the railway sleepers and tracks on the track bed that connects Kano to Yoruba land contributed massively to these contacts. Ever since, the Hausa and Yoruba have enjoyed a relatively cordial relationship.

However, in a pluralistic and interfaith community with certain forms of contextual discrimination, as it is known enclosed by cultural and devout sects in Nigeria, encounters concerning people may soon become attributed to lack of friendliness, mutual mistrust, and panic. Ethno-religious clashes have been a persistent aspect of the country since the 1980s. In reality, this distrust and lack of goodwill among the many ethnic components are the causes it.[4]

Sagamu is potentially instructive examples of how Christians and Muslims might coexist in certain circumstances yet engage in violent conflict in others in light of their experiences. The primary research questions that this effort seeks to answer are: What basic circumstances backed the peaceful co-existence of adherents of Christianity and Islam in Sagamu? What kind of patterns do the communities have in terms of their inter-religious relations? What are the factors affecting the interreligious relations between the two groups in the selected community? How does inter-religious relation between the Yoruba and Hausa communities

[1] I. Nwanaju. 2005. *Christian – Muslim Relations in Nigeria*. Free Enterprises Publishers. Lagos. P 35
[2] A. Tijani. 2008. The Community of Hausa in Agege, Nigeria. *Journal of Social Science*, Volume 17(2): p 173
[3] I.O. Albert. 1999. *Ife-Modakeke Crisis*: Community Conflicts in Nigeria: Management, Resolution and Transformation. Ibadan: Spectrum Books. p 5
[4] I Nwanaju, 2005, Christian-Muslim Relations in Nigeria, Free Enterprises Publishers; Lagos, p 35

affect peaceful co-existence in Sagamu? How can serene co-existence be promoted among the Yoruba and Hausa communities in Nigeria as a whole?

The study demonstrates that it is feasible for people of various faiths and ethnic backgrounds to coexist peacefully and that religion can be a highly effective instrument for promoting togetherness, which, when managed correctly, may lead to economic and political progress. On the other hand, religion could be a disturbing force and a useful crisis tool if improperly handled, and, on the other hand, how problems can be amicably resolved if all parties can sincerely come together to resolve their disagreements and then go on to coexist in peace. The solution to the ongoing ethno-religious crises in other regions of Nigeria will undoubtedly become clear after reading this. There is no doubt that accurate information on the causes, consequences, and countermeasures to the religious crisis in Sagamu will aid students, educators, religious researchers, political leaders, and policy makers in developing beneficial policies and making decisions on matters that affect religion even in other parts of the nation.

The research adopts Samuel Adewale's theory of Cross-Fertilization of religious elements which states that the ideas or elements of one religion flow into the other religions to enrich them. Adewale notes that a multi-religious society is bound to interact and exercise some reciprocal influence on one another. He posited that because of the unavoidable relationship between the adherents of Christianity and Islam in Nigeria especially at the local level, Christians and Muslims work, eat and drink together.

This theory reflects a system of approach whereby people of diverse religious beliefs interact with one another in Nigeria society. There is no doubt that the value of one religion flows into another thereby contributing to cordial inter-religious relations among the people. It is for this reason, that, the Cross-Fertilization of religion theory is very appropriate for this work.

The Hausa Community in Sagamu

The people of Sagamu welcome and accommodate strangers. This is why we have different immigrant communities such as the Hausa community among them. Hausas had been in Sagamu since the last decade of nineteenth century. A Muslim Missioner in *Makun,* Mallam Ibrahim Kodurogbejo was a descendant of a Hausa man who was already resident in *Makun*.[5] There were a few of them living among the Sagamu Communities. Their population grew year in and year out as they arrived in the town and stayed permanently among the Sagamu Communities. There are one or two families in Sagamu today, Muslims by religion, who are descendants of one of the series of forerunners of Hausas in Sagamu.

Migration of people from one part of the country to the other is not a new thing. It had happened centuries before, and it will continue to happen. As expressed above, Hausas had been living in Sagamu as far back as the nineteenth century and they were living predominantly in *Makun* and *Ofin*. During the reign of His Royal Majesty William Christopher Adedoyin, he put in another dimension to the occupation of the Hausas in Sagamu.[6] There were some Hausa Communities in *Iseri*; the Kabiyesi asked them to move out of Iseri to Sagamu with the promise of better care in respect of accommodation and their trade. The Kabiyesi's move was accepted by them and they moved from Iseri to Sagamu. Oral tradition said that they first settled in *Ibido*. On this migration were these few names that could be remembered. The leader of the emigrants was *Mallam Dogo Daura*. He was a butcher and a cow dealer by profession. *Mallam Dogo's* wife in the name of *Maikano* was part of the movement. Others were Mallam Jika, Yusuffu, there was Liman and there were *Mallam Adamu, Kandon Maidoki, Habibat* and others. The Hausa emigrants were accommodated at Mr. Alaba's compound in *Ibido* and they lived in this compound for many years.[7]

During the reign of Oba W.C. Adedoyin, he felt it was necessary to settle the Hausas in a commonplace. The Northern Communities were already in Sagamu and those who came in to join them on the invitation of the Kabiyesi lived

[5] O. Ayodele. 2003. *Sagamu: Migration to year 2000*. Ojoko-Biri-Kale Press

[6] O. Ayodele. 2003. *Sagamu: Migration to year 2000*. Ojoko-Biri-Kale Press

[7] O. Ayodele. 2003. *Sagamu: Migration to year 2000*. Ojoko-Biri-Kale Press

together in the town without any discrimination. By the year 1940, Kabiyesi allocated the land that we call Sabo today to the Hausas to settle. Luckily enough for the town, more Hausas came to Sagamu and stayed with their predecessors. The land was an isolated place out of the Sagamu metropolis. Sagamu Township then was within the limits of *Ijoku*. Sabo location was then separated from Sagamu town by bush. All the Hausas in the town of Sagamu then were advised to shift to Sabo, but despite the honour done to them by Oba Adedoyin, not all the Hausas moved. Many of them remained where they were living both in *Makun* and *Ofin*. Those who heeded the order to go were mostly the Iseri emigrants. The Kabiyesi W.C. *Adedoyin* made *Mallam Dogo Dan Daura* the appointed leader and head of Sabo Community. The intention was to put the Hausa Community under the same umbrella and under the supervision of an authorised Head.

Yoruba- Hausa relations in Sagamu

There was no significant ethnic conflict between Hausa and Yoruba communities in Sagamu before the crisis of 1999. In fact, there were friendly social, political, and economic ties between the two ethnic groups. It was observed that the Hausa people residing in the aforementioned region were not politically biased. Citizens were afforded the liberty to associate themselves with a political faction of their preference. Moreover, they contributed a substantial role in the public activities of the town. The selection of the individual who would serve as their representative on the council of the local government was at the discretion of the Hausa community. Alhaji Dan Sagamu, a member of the Hausa community, was selected to serve on the Sagamu Local Council at one point in time. Alhaji Lawal Isa and Alhaji Aminu Umaru were elected to serve on the Ijebu Remo Local Government Council during the periods of 1976-1979 and 1990-1991, respectively. Furthermore, Alhaji Sanni Aliyu held the position of a representative on the Sagamu Local Government Council during the period spanning from 1990 to 1991. Consequently, it is evident that the political landscape of Sagamu encompassed the Hausa community residing in Sabo. The individual's civil liberties pertaining to political participation were not revoked.

The economy of Sagamu was significantly impacted by the Hausa community. The Hausa people migrated to Sagamu with the primary objective of engaging in commercial activities. At the outset, the emphasis was placed on the livestock sector. Following the sale of their livestock, the individuals in question allocated a portion of their earnings towards procuring kola nuts from the inhabitants of Sagamu. These goods were subsequently transported back to Northern Nigeria in order to resale. Animals were transported from northern Nigeria to Sagamu for a specific objective. Both the Hausa and the Yoruba benefited from the kola nut trade in terms of riches and success. It provided locals with employment possibilities and a means for farmers to get rid of their kola nuts. The thriving kola nut industry contributed to the Hausa and Yoruba population of Sagamu living in peace. Due to the growing Hausa population in Sagamu, the natives granted permission for the construction of a Central Mosque in Sabo in 1976. They initiated supplementary community projects, such as the establishment of hospitals and schools with an Islamic focus. The aforementioned factors were mutually beneficial to the Hausa and Yoruba communities residing in the locality, thereby promoting amicable inter-ethnic relations.

At the societal level, a noteworthy prevalence of inter-ethnic marriages has been observed. Furthermore, a significant number of Hausa individuals residing in Sagamu are proficient in the Yoruba language and partake in the consumption of Yoruba cuisine, and conversely, the same can be said for Yoruba individuals in relation to Hausa culture. Furthermore, it is observed that individuals of Yoruba descent may be observed wearing traditional clothing typically associated with the Hausa ethnic group. The material that came before it makes it clear that the two ethnic groups got along well until the 1999 incident happened. In fact, an observer observed that both groups had continuously embraced one another's varied traditions, customs, and lifestyles.

Factors Responsible for Inter-Religious relations among Hausa and Yoruba in Sagamu

i. Exposure of the people of Sagamu and the reception of Foreigners

The Sagamu people have long being known for their travels beyond their hometown. People in Diaspora intentionally combined elements of Christianity, Islam and Traditional Yoruba Religion to create a dynamic example of multiple religious belongings and identities because of

their exposure and contacts with many people even outside of their homeland. Consequently, the people are very receptive to strangers and especially the Hausa and did not see their religion as a barrier.

ii. Akarigbo's Role as father of all

All the monarchs that have reigned in Sagamu like the present Akarigbo, Oba Ajayi seek to promote the well-being of all in their domain since every Oba is regarded as the custodian of the institution of the *Akarigbo*; the reigning monarch has been concerned with the particular interest of "strangers" in his domain. The fact that the Akarigbo receives Hausa shows that the people of Sagamu receive them and this has been the factor that allows peaceful co-existence between the two communities in Sagamu.

iii. Islamic Religion and Hausa Language as uniting Factors

Hausa commercial community in Sagamu continues to be characterised mostly by Islam. The Hausa are a population of immigrants who primarily retain their faith. As a result, the transit camp (*Zango or Sabo*) in Sagamu City is a unique social community that still practices Islam and speaks Hausa. The Hausa in Sagamu has been a strong correlation between morality and prosperity. The Islamic rules of conduct, that fostered a climate of trust, is to blame for the success. The Hausa's religion, Islam, offers such a moral code. Since a formal moral code was necessary for successful integration in order to approve and regulate business ties. Islam served as the "blueprint" for the development of a moral business community. Islam offers moral and religious punishments to enforce a code of behaviour that made confidence and credit feasible. It also allows merchants to recognise and deal easily with one another. Islam helps protect the identities of network members. In Sagamu, Islam and the Hausa language, therefore, serve as uniting factors in interactions between Hausa and Yoruba.

Though, the language of the people of Sagamu is Yoruba, today because of the cordial relations between the 'host' and 'stranger' communities, now they largely speak their languages which have really helped their relations. This becomes clearer in Hausa-speaking churches in Sagamu where indigenes participate in worship because they understand Hausa language.

iv. Inter-Ethnic marriage

Since the religion of Islam and Traditionalist allow marrying more than one wife, our investigation reveals that inter-religious and inter-ethnic marriage has been a viable means for inter-religious relations between the two communities. At the societal level, a notable prevalence of inter-ethnic marriages has been observed.

v. Participation in Muslim and Christian Festivals and Celebrations

One other factor that is promoting and enhancing inter-religious relations among Hausa and Yoruba communities is that discrimination and separation during each religion festivals are discouraged.

vi. Formation of political institution for Hausa

Our findings indicate that many Sabo Electoral Wards were won by Hausa candidates because the Sabo populace realised that, given their current predicament, it was to their advantage to vote for Southern political parties.

vii. Political Relations

The Hausa people in the town did not experience any political discrimination. They were allowed to join whatever political party they wanted. Additionally, members of the Hausa community had the ability to vote in the election of representatives to their local government council in addition to playing a significant role in town politics.

Religious conflicts and incidents that undermined inter-religious relations among the Hausa and the Yoruba Communities in Sagamu

There was no community without one problem or the other. The factors that brought about conflicts can be summarized below:

i. Interference in Chieftaincy Matters

The problem the Sagamu Community had with the Hausas was in 1952 when Oba. W. C. Adedoyin died. After his death, three people

emerged as contenders for the throne, Prince Adeleke Adedoyin (the first son of the late Kabiyesi) Prince Moses Sowemimo Awolesi and Prince Solanke from the ruling houses vying for the vacant stool of the position of the Akarigbo. Prince Adeleke Adedoyin took occupation of the palace having an edge over the others as the son of the immediate past King.

The Sabo Hausas came round in full support for Prince Adeleke Adedoyin. One could see the glaring reason for their support. Oba Adedoyin settled them in Sabo, hence their full support for the Prince. The Hausas stormed the palace as security guards. The Hausas brought cows which were killed daily on which the people supporting the Prince were fed. The Hausas at times moved in large groups with their walking sticks and cow sticks and swords chanting songs. They called the Prince "*Seriki n tulasi*". Meaning whether the people wanted it or not the Prince would be king. They created some crisis in the town through this venue. People were beaten up and people were harassed especially between Sabo and the palace. The Western Regional Government had to intervene by approving Prince Moses Sowemimo Awolesi who was installed as the Akarigbo of Remo. Prince Adeleke Adedoyin was ordered to move out of the palace. The Hausas moved back to Sabo and calmed down in disappointment.

ii. The Leader of butcher and the Leader of Hausa Community crisis of 1962

The Hausa cattle traders fought for the positions of *Sarkin Pawa* (the leader of butchers) and *Sarkin Hausawa* (the leader of Hausa community). At this time, the *Sarkin Pawa* served as both the chief butcher and the head of the whole Hausa population. His position gave him influence, which benefited his company. Because of his position, he became the most qualified and reliable commercial landlord. The commercial tenants would provide a lot of commission for this. Additionally, he was entitled to a portion of the royalties received from the selling of cattle. The fight between the wealthy Hausa chiefs for the position of *Sarkin Pawa* was justified by all of these factors, in addition to the respect and status that the office carried. Consequently, this created factions in both communities. The indigenes who supported a Hausa against the choice of the Hausa community led to both internal and external wrangling in the communities.[8]

iii. Conflicts concerning Hausa community acquiring Lands in 1968

Another problem with the Hausa community in Sabo, Sagamu was the issue of land. Since the Hausa had agreed to pay for any further land they needed, lands were being sold to them because of the monetary gains without the consent of family members who own the land ('*awon omo onile'*). The *omo onile* saw this as a threat to their future, most of the lands paid were forcefully claimed back without repayment of the money and this generated bad blood among the people.

iv. Yoruba Traditional Oro cults versus the Hausa community of 1999

It is pertinent to know that *Oro* had been part of the tradition of the Sagamu people[9]and the Hausa had been in Sagamu since the late nineteenth century. The Hausa, therefore, had become part and parcel of the Sagamu tradition.[10] The rules of the festival are known to all and sundry including those living in Sabo. Thus, when during the festival, some Hausa women "deliberately" violated the traditional rules that women should stay away from the streets, but rather stayed outside to watch the events, and problems erupted[11]. The pre-determined action was reported to the *Sarkin Hausawa* who pledged that the Hausa Community would adhere to the norms and the customs of the tradition. The traditional *Oro* Cult members concluded that their actions were intentional and that the women were used as

[8] A. Tijani. 2003. *Sabo Communities in Yorubaland, Nigeria (1916 – 1967)*. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Ilorin: University of Ilorin

[9] O. Ayodele. 2003. *Sagamu: Migration to year 2000*. Ojoko-Biri-Kale Press

[10]L. Olagunju. 1999. Sagamu: Journey into the Valley of death. Nigerian Tribune. Olagunju, L., and W. Efunnuga. 1999, 20 July). Sagamu: Death toll now 120. Nigerian Tribune.

tool to perpetrate to ignite trouble and so trouble ensued.[12]

v. Hausa Domination of some markets and trades

The kola nut trade is basically dominated by the Hausa, just like the cow trade and transportation around Sabo area. Although we have other people living around Sabo, these other Sabo Communities were not domineering like the Hausas except the Igbo community that deals in electrical and electronic gadgets.[13] But as was already established, the Hausa played a significant role in Sagamu's economy. Initially, they focused on the livestock industry but later ventured in kola nuts trade which became the origin of their affluence and prosperity. The increasing enjoyment of the group led to the invitation of additional relatives from various locations. The rapid initiation of competition between the newcomers and the indigenous population resulted in conflicts and established the conditions for inter-ethnic hostilities within the community.

vi. **Rivalry and conflict among youths**:

There were tensions among the Yoruba and Hausa youths due to the rate at which Yoruba girls preferred the Hausa boys to the indigenes, and this affair was not for marriage but for sex satisfaction because of the material gains. Many parents supported their girls because through this they were able to own cattle and other material gains. There were even cases of married women sleeping with the Hausa for monetary gains.

vii. The Claim that Sabo belongs to the Hausa Community

The Hausa indigenes of Sabo as already expressed superseded all the other Communities in Sabo for their contributions towards the development of Sabo. Hausas claim that Sabo belongs to them became a big problem because some of them took Sabo as their home and not as a second home. They believe that they are the owner of Sabo; hence they assumed that Sabo belongs to them.[14] Their assumption is based on the fact that they excelled in population. After all, they were directed to live at Sabo as a Community of their own, when they originally arrived in Sagamu. To that end, *Sarkin Hausawa* was appointed for them and the *Sarkin Hausawa* had since been a recognised office like any other Baale (village head) in the Local Government.

viii. Engagement in Cattle business by the Natives

The Hausa cattle business flourished but the natives' involvement in cattle business in a large-scale spell doom for the Hausa's business which has been the main source of their living. Harmonious relations quickly gave way for mistrust and misunderstanding. This did not go down well to the settlers who indirectly or directly react violently at a little provocation thereafter.

Effects of Conflicts among Hausa and Yoruba in Sagamu

i. Economic Effects

Even though the crisis was always handled and the town typically saw a return to calm, the crises had a profound effect on the community and its residents. The town's economy was the first area where it was felt. The effects of crises on people's business activity have always been negative, costing millions of naira. The damages suffered were of considerable size. Those who lost will always remember the event. Shops, banks, and other commercial enterprises are always closed during times of crisis. Even drivers of cabs and motorcycles abandoned the road. The commercial trade of kola nuts, which enjoyed widespread popularity, constituted a significant sector that was susceptible to the adverse effects of crises on the local economy. There was a significant decrease in the trade of kola nuts at the Sabo market located in Sagamu. The occurrence can be attributed to the relocation of merchants who had previously procured kola nuts in Sagamu from the Sabo market to alternative locations deemed secure commercial centers.

[12] L. Olagunju. 1999, 20 July. Sagamu: Journey into the Valley of death. Nigerian Tribune. Olagunju,
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[14]K. Olabanji and A. Sobanjo 2009. The 1999 Yoruba/Hausa Crisis of Sabo, Sagamu. Unpublished Bachelor of Arts long essay, Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU), Ago Iwoye, Nigeria.

ii. **Social - Cultural Effects**

Along with having an influence on the economy, the crisis also affected the Yoruba and Hausa socio-cultural interactions in Sagamu. The two groups of people, who had previously co-existed peacefully before the conflict, used to feel dread and mistrust towards one another during crises. It should be remembered that there had been several intermarriages between the two groups of people prior to the conflict. In Sagamu, there were really Hausa who were proficient in Yoruba and vice versa. Unfortunately, the foundation of such inter-ethnic unity and understanding was struck whenever there is crisis, there was a tendency for these social ties to substantially decline.

iii. Demographical Effects

A decrease in the town's population was another consequence of the crises, particularly the one in 1999, on demography. Numerous lives were lost as a result of the tragedy. Over 100 persons were mentioned in a newspaper piece. In addition, hardly everyone who left the town during the crisis returned. The government's attempt to repatriate everyone who left the town during the crisis was unsuccessful since some people returned, while others never did.

iv. Religious Effects

Religious practices were also impacted by the turmoil. Due to people's fear of attending their different places of worship during the crisis, there was a low attendance rate at churches and mosques. In fact, several churches chose not to operate throughout the crisis. It was urged to the members to remain at home till the town was peaceful once again. The same held true for Muslim religious practices. Only until law and order had been restored to the town could Islamic and Christian religious practices restart.[15]

Summary

It is hard to separate religion from Nigerian culture, according to the respondents' comments. The evidence of religious activity was never far from view or the subject of discussion in whatever area visited or with anybody we came into contact with. Nigeria is undoubtedly an exceptionally religious nation and it takes a short time to come to grips with it.

In the light of what has been said above, and with a more in-depth and critical examination of Christian-Muslim relations among Hausa and Yoruba in Sagamu communities, it is abundantly clear that the benefits of inter-religious concord at the vibrancy of stakeholder society will be of no use if adherents of Christianity and Islam in Nigeria do not improve the capability to cope with the questions of heterogeneity. Religious wars must stop under any guises and an acceptance of a brotherly oneness.

With respect to this research, it is established that irrespective of religious beliefs and without considering cultural or party-political background, the struggle lingers, no longer confined to the loose framework of ethno-religious affiliation but now sharply demarcated by the Islamic-Christian dichotomy. A brief examination of the evidence reveals that, despite the multifaceted nature of these conflicts, they nearly always involve Muslims opposing Christians or Christians opposing Muslims. Intra-faith violence is uncommon, whereas interfaith clashes are frequent and have become the norm.

Recommendations

From our findings, the following suggestions, among others, is provided for the consideration of the Yoruba and Hausa in Sagamu communities and Nigeria generally, in light of our study contribution:

i. One of the fundamental principles is that the customs and heritage of a specific group are deemed sacrosanct and should be respected by all individuals belonging to the corresponding community. The failure to respect cultural practices or the violation of established traditions within a community often leads to a state of unrest.

ii. The imperative for inter-ethnic tolerance among diverse groups residing within a given locality or municipality is evident. It is our belief that had both parties involved in the

[15] W. Efunnuga. 1999, 21 July). Sagamu's Day of Blood. Nigerian Tribune.

crisis exercised a certain level of restraint and tolerance, the Sagamu conflict could have been prevented.

iii. Traditional rulers in all pluralistic communities should emulate Sagamu Monarchs both past and present who created an enabling environment for all their subjects to live in peace. This they can do by setting up inter-tribal and inter-religious committees that will be saddled with the responsibility of dialoguing and resolving any inter-tribal and inter-religious misunderstanding at the grassroots. When all and sundry are involved, it will reduce the hindrances to inter-religious relations among the 'host' and 'strangers' in any particular community.

iv. The application of the theology of inter-religious understanding by the Yoruba and Hausa communities would entail viewing each other's religion as acknowledging faith within society. It is imperative that individuals refrain from discussing or categorising another's religion as a lesser faith. Rather, they should approach the discourse with an open mind and attentively consider the perspectives and beliefs of the other religion regarding the divine. The followers of both religions have the potential to gain knowledge and insight from each other.

v. The coexisting Yoruba and Hausa communities ought to acknowledge the reality of their existence in a pluralistic society. Consequently, each ethnic group should be able to exercise their religious duties without hindrance and with due regard for the religious beliefs of others.

vi. Public officials have a responsibility to promote awareness of a diverse society and fulfil their duties with fairness and consideration towards the various ethnic groups in Nigeria.

vii. It is recommended that a course on inter-religious understanding between Christians and Muslims be included in the curriculum of secondary schools and tertiary institutions, with particular emphasis on the religious studies department of all universities.

Conclusion

This research studied the inter-religious relations among Hausa and Yoruba communities in Sagamu. It is established that the city is a multi-ethnic and religiously diverse society like so many towns and cities in Nigeria. While the populations coexist peacefully and get along well, there are still instances of prejudice, lack of goodwill, distrust, and fear between them, as there are many ethnic and religious groups in Nigeria. Drawing from these events, Sagamu present itself as potentially instructive illustrations of the coexistence of religiously diverse groups in certain cases, while also highlighting the possibility of significant conflict. This argument posits that the nature of social and interreligious interactions among individuals from varying ethnic and cultural backgrounds can result in either integration or disintegration. If implemented, our recommendations have the potential to enhance inter-tribal relationships in Nigeria, leading to a harmonious coexistence in the country.

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