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Religion and Federal Practices in Multicultural Societies: A Comparative Analysis of Nigeria and India

by

Umoh A. Kofi

Department of Political Science and Public Administration,
University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

kofiumoh1@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper probed, among others, the phenomena of ethnicity and religion as fundamental problems to federal practices in Nigeria and India; the impact of religious sentiments on socio-political environment of Nigeria and India; and the capacity of both federal regimes to contain and manage ethno-religious crises. The comparative, historical and descriptive methods were adopted for the study. Data drawn mainly from existing sources were subjected to qualitative analytical discussions leading to empirical deductions. Findings revealed significant similarity in the dynamics of religion in the Nigerian and Indian federations serving as instrument of domination, oppression and self-preservation for dominant ethnic nationalities. As vital element of politics in both federations, religion configured within the ethnic banner, have, maximally provided the drive for establishment of powerful central government consciously structured to drive sectional interests at the expense of national interests. This scenario stultified federal practices, thus cogently explicating the failure of these states' regimes to objectively manage ethno-religious crises and other unresolved challenges that have diluted the efficacy of federalism. From these findings, it was recommended that a functional national dialogue of ethnic nationalities be convened to address problems of inter-ethnic and religious relations prior to the amendment of the 1999 Constitution. To stem the tide of religious conflicts, citizens of Nigeria should, by constitution, be accorded full rights as indigenes wherever they reside irrespective of their ethno-religious and parental origins. Orientation and enlightenment agencies should be strengthened to aggressively educate Nigerians in order to change their mental disposition and inculcate in them the need for peaceful coexistence, tolerance and accommodation. On the other hand, the Indian Constitution (1976) should be amended to assert its supremacy, redefine state's secularity and play down on the BJP Party /Hindu influence. People of other religions should be integrated into power-sharing, political leadership and other distributive endeavours for purposes of equity, fair-play and stability.

Key words: Religion, Federalism, Multi-cultural societies, Ethnicity, Social stability.

1. Introduction.

Human formations, homogeneous or multicultural, inherently have marked religious elements in their social fabrics. Religion serves an inevitable phenomenon in any social configuration maximally exerting positive or negative impacts on the political system embedded therein. Basically, Nigeria and India represent two typical multicultural federations that share similar characteristics. First, the two federations under comparison share similar historical and political antecedents as two former British colonies, both countries were partitioned on linguistic, cultural and religious lines. Second, both states have significant religious spread with evidence of secularity conspicuously and expressly provided for in their present constitutions (1999 and 1947 respectively) yet experiencing serious ethno-religious crises. Third, they share some basic demographic characteristics in the sense that while Nigeria is regarded as the most populous nation in black Africa, India remains the second most populous nation in the world after China. Fourth, both federations exhibit unique economic attributes in which Nigeria is ranked second largest economy in sub-Saharan Africa with gargantuan human and natural resources but least developed (World Bank Report, 1997) while India is classified as one of the most robust and established democracies yet a poor country (Kesselman, Krieger and Joseph, 2007).

According to Nnoli (1980: 135-136); “the objective differences in the pre-colonial socio-economic and political life at the time of contact with colonialism by themselves do not constitute a necessary and sufficient condition for the emergence of ethnicity...”. The supposition here is that ethnicity, the matrix in which religion is located, was planted by intrigues of colonial administrations as foundations for wide social divide and rivalry in modern Nigeria. On the other hand, Symonds (1950) blamed the partitioning of ancient India into two-states based on religious lines-the Muslim-majority Dominion of Pakistan (now the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the People’s Republic of Bangladesh) and Hindu-majority Union of India courtesy of British Raj’s divide and rule policy as the root of religious violence. In these two states, there are wide religious divide causing dominant religions to use states’ apparatus to clamp-down on perceived rival religions which often culminate in full scale conflicts. Olson and Shadle (1996) recalled that the Indian Council Act, 1909 (then known as the Morley- Minto Reform Act) established divisive perception among religions by providing for separation of Hindu and Muslim electorates vying for imperial and provincial legislatures. By this British colonial provision, religion was politicised pervasively growing into communalism characterised by hatred and discrimination based on religious identity among communities. What comes out of the foregoing assertions can be translated in an actual sense to mean that the division of British colonies into competing groups, regions and structures created critical junctures with wide-ranging implications for federalism and nation-building in Nigeria and India.

As mechanism for managing the vicissitudes and associated negative dynamics of social diversity, Nigeria (under colonial rule) and India (at independence) officially adopted federalism in 1951 and 1947 respectively. In the nutshell, federalism was adopted in Nigeria to promote political unity, manage undue rivalry among diverse groups in order to regulate ethno-political conflicts which have constituted major challenges to nation-building and development (Jinadu, 2005). On the other hand, federalism was adopted by Indian nationalists to create a strong central government, create separate Muslim state for Pakistan and curb the excesses of local princes who fragmented the Indian society into spheres of influence (Bombwall, 1967). Unfortunately, rather than being contained by federalism as a catalytic mechanism, ethnicity and religion have on the reverse, shaped

federal practices in Nigeria and India. Religious issues in these states are so sensitive to the extent that simple disagreement interpreted as provocation usually degenerate into mayhem and armed conflicts.

While ethnicity has perpetuated identity political culture of mobilisation on particularistic and clientele bases in which religion form an integral part in Nigeria (Forrest, 1987), it serves the banner for religious ideology, particularly of the dominant Hindutva movement, which has since the 20th century politicised religion, a powerful determinant of politics in modern India (Makkar, 1993). Politics of ethnicity and the political involvement of religion in the two federations have so far weakened their equitable distributive capacities while enforcing the dissipation of energies in the quest to control state's resources. Major religious confrontations and conflicts had brewed in scenarios involving Muslims versus Christians in Nigeria while India plays host to major conflicts between Hindus and Muslims on one hand and Hindus versus Sikhs, Buddhists and Christians on the other hand.

In Nigeria, religious and "cultural" fundamentalism characterised by aggressive evangelism, proliferation of Christian and Islamic sects and attempted forced conversions in Nigeria have variously set Muslims against Christians, Northerners against Southerners, Hausa-Fulanis versus Yorubas and Hausa-Fulani versus the Igbos (Ekot, 2011) on war path. Typical example is the Kaduna Sharia crisis (2000) that saw many church buildings burnt and many lives lost, especially, Christians. On the other hand, the major ethnic and communal conflicts in India are largely rooted in perennial rivalry and tensions between majority Hindu majority and Muslim minority communities promoted mostly by Hindu nationalism versus Islamic fundamentalism. The ideology of "Hindutva" driving Hindu nationalism is identified as the major driver of most Hindu-Muslim conflicts in India (Crowne, 2013) and a source of oppression of the lower caste system. Similarly, the resultant Islamic fundamentalism evolved to serve as countervailing force and banners for balance of terror and self-preservation in India. These scenarios have altogether compounded ethno-religious milieu evidently manifested in the spate of conflicts that culminate in substantial loss of lives and property posing serious threats to federal unions.

Having observed that most variables of this study were inter-disciplinary and eclectic in perspectives, we were guided into selectively reviewing extant literature on religion, multiculturalism and federalism. Solomon (1974) echoing Marx view, avered that religion is man-created and not the reverse since it embodies consciousness and inner feelings of man who has either not found his very essence or in search of one. According to Marx and Engel, religion is nothing but a "sigh of the oppressed creature...the opium of the people" (in Solomon, 1974:48). Building on Marx's, Akpuru-Aja (1997:28-29) asserted that "man is the world of man, the state and society which produce religion, a reversed world consciousness, serving the spiritual aroma of the world..." As a "political animal", man is also a religious animal driving Alamu (2014) to establish the nexus between religion and politics. Nnoli (1980:128) claimed that throughout history, religious differences had served the means of "tension, hostility and even war" because of its propensity of separating peoples and groups.

Some scholars describe multi-ethnic societies as diverse, plural, heterogeneous and multi-cultural, others use these terms interchangeably but for Burgess and Burgess (2005:31), a multicultural society is best described as a "salad bowl or cultural mosaic rather than a melting pot". While Lerman (2010:7) promotes multiculturalism to be "... a

fairer system that allows people to truly express who they are within the society, that is more tolerant and that adapts to social issues...”, Lamm (2005:12) abhors multiculturalism when he asserts that, “diverse peoples worldwide are mostly engaged in hating each other-that is when they are not killing each other. A diverse, peaceful or stable society is against most historical precedents”. For a typical melting pot like USA, religion does not hinder federal practice due to a number of reasons. First, the US has peculiar historical and political antecedents. Federalism was not imposed rather it was born out of the peoples’ willingness to form a union as opposed to that of Nigeria and India which was imposed by erstwhile British colonial administration. Secondly, the US has over decades consolidated on federal practice by developing strong institutions and structures that have consummated ethnic and religious sentiments unlike Nigeria and India.

Nigeria “... is not only a pluri-ethnic society, it is also made up of diverse religions and sects within the religions, stressing no common values” (Agi, 1998:13). On the other hand, India also represents a typical society with “highly complex and colourful social mosaic... characterised by a vast spread of cultural diversity and heterogeneity...” Muni (2017:1) combined with being the “birth place of four of the world’s major religions namely: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism” (Basu, 2013: 124). By implication therefore, both federations under review are characteristically heterogeneous.

Whether homogeneous or heterogeneous, Rostow (1990), Pye (1986) and Huntington (1968) concertedly assume that no society, however traditional or developed, is static because some elements of change, positive or negative, are bound to occur.

From its classical context, federalism is “a constitutional arrangement in which law-making powers and functions are divided among tiers of government in such a way that within its sphere of jurisdiction and competence, each government is independent, autonomous and co-ordinate” (Wheare, 1963 In: Amuwo, 1998: 247-248). Davis (1967) dismissed Wheare’s definition as unrealistic since it’s impossible for both the central and constituent governments to be “coordinates, autonomous and independent” but proposed a central government with equalisation grants as empowerment to maintain uniformity and standards. A marked departure from the above notion of federalism is that rendered by Livingstone (1956) who averred that Federalism is a devise by which federal qualities of the society are articulated and protected. Livingstone’s conception of federalism represents a turning point by inextricably linking institutional mechanism of federalism with the society. This aligns with the thrust of this study. According to Venkataraingaiya (1963) federalism is efficacious in managing rivalries and agitations that are likely to breed instability that retards development. It should provide the lubricant for galvanising relationships among ethnic nationalities with divergent aspiration. Deutsch (1957) developed the concept of security community to explain the mechanisms of federalism as a product of social phenomena resulting from groups’ contractual agreement not to fight each other but settle disputes amicably where they arise. This was in line with Livingstone, Friedrich (1968)

Given the complex manifestations of religion, the clash of civilization thesis, a variant of political culture theory will serve our purpose. Huntington’s (1996) clash of civilizations thesis is a modified strand of political culture theory. The central undergirding precepts of this thesis envisages an emerging global system where societies are divided and affiliated to frontline states of their civilizations based on common history and cultural affinities. This thesis appeals to civilization as evolving phenomenon made

possible by globalisation which has de-territorialised culture while gradually diminishing the present world order defined by politics, economic or ideological interests.

Identifying eight major civilizations to include: Western, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American, Chinese and African civilizations, Huntington (1996) maintained that it is difficult to shift societies from one civilization to another. The end of international rift between the US-led West and defunct Soviet Union-led Eastern blocs, according to Huntington, marked a paradigm shift from ideological war to a new regime of international conflict of civilization based on cultural divide. Orchestrating this position, Hague and Harrops (2004) claimed that as globalisation proceeds, interactions and friction will intensify, producing a high potential for conflict. Thus, cultural dynamics rather than states form sources of conflicts due to historical differentiation in the development of their civilizations, hence, little or no room for compromise. Drawing example from Serbs-Bosnia conflict, Huntington defended the position that Russian support for the Serbs was not born out of political or economic interests but motivated by cultural affinity.

Huntington (1996:217) specifically contended that Islam and the West being distinct civilizations are “locked in permanent and seemingly unavoidable conflicts” which are not necessarily religious but more culturally-induced, stemming not from Islam against the Christian faith but against Western civilization which had been the basis of criticism. The bone of contention remains that the West which has materialism underpinning its socialisation process has advanced in science, technology and development exuding power and influence while attempting to foist its claims of superiority and universality on other civilizations which Islam abhors. Debunking this argument, Saikal (2003) averred that though the terrorists used one of Islamic anti-Western chants to justify their actions, most Muslims condemned the September 9/11 attack on the US as unislamic and morally untenable.

The clash of civilization strand political culture is of immense relevance in explaining the Nigerian and Indian social environments in a number of ways. First, the identification of cultural differences as sources of conflicts corroborates the potential susceptibility of multicultural environments to crisis. Secondly, it inextricably establishes that religion is subsumed in the cultural banner which serves a dynamic force that often triggers intercultural conflicts. This is why minor disagreements among ethnic nationalities readily manifest religious prejudices that degenerate into mayhems. Thirdly, major rival religions in Nigeria (Islam and Christianity) and India (Hindu and Islam) belong to different divide of civilizations (Islamic, Western and Hindu) which cogently explains the perennial antagonism against each other. The clash of civilization has provided necessary framework for identifying and explaining religion as a vital component of the complex cultural mosaic making up the two federations under review. Religion is unbundled as instrument that reinforces cultural existence and preservation, frequently unleashed in the promotion and protection of cultural values.

2. Objectives of the Study

In view of the foregoing, the present endeavour engages in focused analytical comparison of Nigeria and India in an attempt to unbundle the hydra-headed challenges posed by religious forces configured in ethnic banner which federalism was meant to grapple with. Moreso, since local conflict is capable of degenerating into full scale war, the prevention and management of religious challenges through the mechanism of federalism becomes imperative. From the foregoing, federalism is corroborated to serve

as an effective mechanism and framework for regulating inter-ethno-religious relations for ultimate achievement of social stability which informs the utility and purpose of this study. At this juncture therefore, we argue that the failure of Nigeria and India to frontally deal with religious crises is probably a function of ethnic-controlled statecraft, not operated on undergirding precepts and principles of federalism.

3. A Comparative Analysis: Religion and Religious Conflicts in Nigeria and India.

Religion has assumed a very delicate, sensitive and dominant factor occupying the front-burner of socio-political and economic spheres of national life in both Nigeria and India. Religious issues have assumed eclectic and ubiquitous forms pervasively becoming too complicated and dynamic for federalism to grapple with.

Below is a table showing the demographic distribution of religion in Nigeria and India thus:

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Religious Composition of Nigeria and India

NIGERIA		INDIA	
Islam	- (48%)	Hinduism	- 79.8%
Christianity	- (45%)	Islam	- 14.2%
Indigenous	- (7%)	Christianity	- 2.3%
		Sikhism	- 1.7%
		Buddhism	- 0.7%
		Jainism	- 0.4%
		Others	- 0.9%

Source: Adapted from: Hagopian (2008), Montero (2007) and Firstpost, 2016.

Generally, the exact ratio of religious spread in Nigeria remains conflicting and uncertain, dissenting statistics have, at one time or the other, put Christians outnumbering Muslims and vice-versa. For instance, Afrobarometer Polls (2008) rendered its result showing 50% Christians, 49% Muslim and 1% others. On the contrary, Democratic and Health Survey (2008) found the numerical strength of Muslims to be 53%, 45% Christians and 2% for others. According to Pew Forum Survey (2010), Muslims constitute 52%, Christians 46% and others 1%. Indications from these statistics show that the gap between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria is significantly not too wide. However, Table 1 above reveals similar trend for 48% Islam, 45% Christianity and 7% others. These statistics are instructive by implicitly explaining the rationale behind the quest for superiority and dominance between the two rival religions constantly antagonistic to each other.

In the case of India, statistics from Censuses of India, US Department of State, 2007 International Religious Freedom Report, 2006 among others, incontestably attest to the overwhelming dominance of the Hindu Religion. Based on table 1 above, 79.8% of the population of India practice Hinduism followed by Islam (14.2%), Christianity (2.3%) and others. With this scenario, it becomes visibly clear that the Indian state apparatus is dominated and controlled by the Hindus. By surpassing other religions, given the wide gap in percentage distribution above, it can explicitly be interpreted to mean that religious sentiments have always influenced Indian state policies, politics, elections and other aspects of national life.

4. Federal Constitution and Religion: Nigeria and India

Nigeria and India represent two secular but deviant cases where federalism remains handicapped in dealing with issues of religion. However, the secular status and

the basis for religious freedom are provided for in Section 38 (1-4) of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria thus:

1. Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion including freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom (either alone or in community with others, and in public or private) to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.
2. No person attending any place of education shall be required to receive religious instruction or take part in or attend any religious ceremony or observance of such instruction, ceremony or observance related to a religion other than his own, or religion not approved by his parent or guardian.
3. No religious community or denomination shall be prevented from providing religious instruction for pupils of that community or denomination in any place of education maintained wholly by that community or denomination
4. Nothing in this section shall entitle any person to form, take part in the activity or be a member of a secret society.

The constitutional provisions (1999) above unequivocally affirm the secularity of the Nigerian state. Prima facie, this provision appears desirable and emphatically designed to maximally regulate the phenomenon of religion. Disappointingly, the lofty ideals of secularity have been bastardised and rendered unrealistic by faithful of the two major Nigerian religions, Islam and Christianity, who have habitually rivaled each other. Such issues as church and mosque location, open air activities of activities, style of Christian evangelism and attempts to proselytize or forcefully win converts have been very problematic. More recently, religious tensions have heightened in some Muslim dominated states of Northern Nigeria that implemented the Sharia Legal System while others place ban on the teaching of Christian Religious Knowledge (CRK) as secondary school subject. Obstructions against the use of public facilities, denials of religious freedom and threats of terror have been commonplace. These stand repugnant to religious freedom provided for in the 1999 Constitution cited above. Thus, the distribution of religion by states in Nigeria is as follows:

Table 2: Distribution of Nigerian States by Religion.

State	Dominant Religion	Islam	Christianity	Others
Abia	Christianity	7%	91.3%	1.7%
Adamawa	Islam	86%	10%	4%
Akwa Ibom	Christianity	4%	95.8%	1.0%
Anambra	Christianity	9%	85%	6.0%
Bauchi	Islam	95%	1.6%	0.4%
Bayelsa	Christianity	2%	90%	8.0%
Benue	Christianity	10%	53.4%	36.6%
Borno	Islam	93%	2%	5.0%
Cross River	Christianity	6%	82%	12%
Delta	Christianity	0%	80%	20%
Ebonyi	Christianity	9%	90%	1.0%
Edo	Christianity	22%	58.2%	0.8%
Ekiti	Christianity	39.5%	59%	1.0%
Enugu	Christianity	9%	89%	2.0%
Gombe	Islam	89.6%	6.2%	4.2%
Imo	Christianity	9%	90%	1.00%
Jigawa	Islam	94%	0.8%	5.2%
Kaduna	Islam	73.5%	20%	6.0%
Kano	Islam	98%	1.1%	0.9%
Katsina	Islam	100%	0.4%	0.99%

Kebbi	Islam	98.4%	0.4%	1.2%
Kogi	Islam	79.3%	15%	4.7%
Kwara	Islam	81.2%	13.6%	5.2%
Lagos	Islam	61%	33%	6.0%
Nassarawa	Islam	86%	13.8%	0.2%
Niger	Islam	91%	4%	5.0%
Ogun	Christianity	27%	35%	38%
Ondo	Christianity	25%	68.2%	6.8%
Osun	Islam	68.6%	30%	0.4%
Oyo	Islam	65.6%	30%	4.4%
Plateau	Christianity	18%	70%	12%
Rivers	Christianity	9.3%	90%	0.7%
Sokoto	Islam	99.4%	0.4%	0.2%
Taraba	Islam	47.8%	13.7%	38%
Yobe	Islam	95.7%	1%	3.3%
Zamfara	Islam	99 %	0.4%	0.6%

Source: *modified from Pew Forum on Religion-(www.pewforum.org)*

As indicated in the Table 2, out of 36 states in Nigeria, 20 are Muslim dominated while 16 show Christian dominance. This distribution consolidates religious divide by jurisdiction indicating the exclusive preserve of religion by territory. While Islamic religion is dominant in Northern Nigeria (comprising North-east, North-west and most of North-central), Christianity holds sway in Southern Nigeria (comprising South-south, South-east and some of South-west geopolitical zones). In recognition of differences in belief systems, the Nigerian constitution provides for separate criminal justice system for Muslims and Christians. While Christians use the Criminal Code, Muslims adopt the Penal Code compatible with the Sharia Legal System to deal with criminal matters. This geopolitical spread of religion portends far-reaching implications for social stability, political and economic development in Nigeria. It is worthy to note that most religious conflicts in Nigeria occurred in Muslims dominated states of Northern Nigeria with only insignificant threats of reprisals in the Christian dominated states of the South.

Similarly, by 42nd Amendment Act of the Indian Constitution, 1976, India is constitutionally a secular state. The said constitution provides for religious freedom at individual and group perspectives. At individual level, Articles 25, 27 and 28 provides in the main are as follows:

1. All persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess, practice and propagate religion (ARTICLE 25 (1)).
2. There shall be freedom as to payment of taxes for promotion of any particular religion by virtue of which no person shall be compelled to pay taxes proceeds of which are specifically appropriated in payment of expenses for the promotion or maintenance of any particular religious domination (ARTICLE 27).
3. No religious instruction is to be provided in the schools wholly maintained by state funding; and those attending any state-recognised or state-aided school cannot be required to take part in any religious instruction or services without their (or if they are minors their guardian's) consent (ARTICLE 28).

At group level, the same constitution cited above provides thus:

1. Every religious denomination or any section thereof has the right to manage its religious affairs; establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes; and own, acquire and administer property of all kinds.
2. Any section of the citizens having distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have right to conserve the same (ARTICLE 29).

3. Religious and linguistic minorities are free to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice, which shall not be discriminated against by the state in a manner of giving aid or compensation in the event of acquisition (ARTICLE 30).

Like Nigeria, constitutional provisions for religious freedom in India, is explicit, meticulously designed and sacrosanct but the realities are direct opposite. Hindus have called the shot from pre to post-independent India. They have exerted their dominance in every facets of national life courtesy of Indian Constitution, 1947 which stated in its preambles “We the Hindus...” By implication, the constitution recognised and encapsulated all religions in a complex whole presented as “Hindu” only. However, by virtue of the Constitution of India, 42nd Amendment Act, 1976, the preamble, “we the Hindus...” was expunged as an anomaly that has set different religions at war with each other. Before the said amendment, the impacts of that preamble had been widely exerted on the politics of India in a number of ways. First, Indian populace had already developed the Hindu superiority psyche overtime from 1946 to 1976 when the preamble was amended. Second, having created the superior mindset, Hindu religion became significant factor in gaining ascendancy to state apparatus. Further explication to this scenario supports the reason why antagonism and all forms of hostilities characterise religious relations leading to serious crackdowns on mostly Muslims and periodically, Christians and Sikhs. The worst hit by religiously motivated conflicts have been the Muslims who have, in the history of India, been the nightmare and obsession of the Hindus. It was for this reason that a political compromise culminated in the creation of the Islamic State of Pakistan. However, religion by state in India is indicated in Table 3:

Table 3: Distribution of Indian States by Religion

State	Dominant religion	Hindu	Islam	Christianity	Sikhism	Buddhism	Jainism
Andaman/Nicobar Island	Hindu	69.45%	8.5%	21.8%	0.3%	0.09%	0.01%
Andhra Pradesh	Hindu	88.46%	9.56%	1.34%	0.05%	0.04%	0.06%
Arunachal Pradesh	Christian	29.04%	1.95%	30.26%	0.24%	11.77%	0.06%
Assam	Hindu	61.47%	34.22%	3.74%	0.07%	0.18%	0.08%
Bihar	Hindu	82.69%	16.8%	0.12%	0.02%	0.02%	0.01%
Chandighr	Hindu	80.78%	4.87%	0.83%	13.5%	0.11%	0.19%
Chahhatti-igarh	Hindu	93.25%	2.02%	1.92%	0.27%	0.28%	0.24%
Dadra/Nagar Haveli	Hindu	93.93%	3.76%	1.49%	0.06%	0.18%	0.35%
Darman/Diu	Hindu	90.50%	7.92%	1.16%	0.07%	0.09%	0.12%
Delhi	Hindu	81.68%	12.86%	0.87%	3.40%	0.11%	0.99%
Goa	Hindu	66.08%	8.33%	25.5%	0.10%	0.08%	0.08%
Gujarat	Hindu	88.57%	9.67%	0.52%	0.10%	0.05%	0.96%
Haryana	Hindu	87.46%	7.03%	0.20%	4.91%	0.03%	0.21%
Himachal Pradesh	Hindu	95.17%	2.18%	0.18%	1.16%	1.15%	0.03%
Jammu/Kashmir	Muslim	28.44%	68.31%	0.28%	1.87%	0.90%	0.22%
Jharkhand	Hindu	67.83%	14.53%	4.30%	0.22%	0.03%	0.05%
Karnataka	Hindu	84.00%	12.92%	1.87%	0.05%	0.16%	0.72%
Kerala	Hindu	54.73%	26.56%	18.38%	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%
Lakshad-weep	Muslim	2.77%	96.58%	0.49%	0.01%	0.02%	0.02%
Madhya Pradesh	Hindu	90.89%	6.57%	0.29%	0.21%	0.30%	0.78%
Mahara-shtra	Hindu	79.83%	11.54%	0.96%	0.20%	5.81%	1.25%
Manipur	Hindu	41.39%	8.40%	41.29%	0.05%	0.25%	0.06%
Megah-laya	Christian	11.53%	4.40%	74.59%	0.10%	0.33%	0.02%
Mizoram	Christian	2.75%	1.35%	87.16%	0.03%	8.51%	0.03%
Nagaland	Christian	8.75%	2.47%	87.93%	0.10%	0.34%	0.34%
Orissa	Hindu	93.63%	2.17%	2.77%	0.05%	0.03%	0.02%

Pudu-cherry	Hindu	87.30%	6.05%	6.29%	0.02%	0.04%	0.11%
Punjab	Sikh	38.49%	1.93%	1.26%	57.7%	0.12%	0.16%
Rajasthan	Hindu	88.49%	9.07%	0.14%	1.27%	0.02%	0.91%
Sikkim	Hindu	57.76%	1.62%	9.91%	0.31%	27.39%	0.05%
Tamil Nadu	Hindu	87.58%	5.86%	6.12%	0.02%	0.02%	0.12%
Tripura	Hindu	83.40%	8.60%	4.35%	0.03%	3.41%	0.02%
Uttar Pradesh	Hindu	79.73%	19.26%	0.18%	0.10%	0.11%	0.01%
Uttarak-hand	Hindu	82.97%	13.95%	0.37%	2.34%	0.15%	0.09%
West Bengal	Hindu	70.54%	27.01%	0.72%	0.07%	0.31%	0.07%

Source: *State Wise Religion Data of India (2011)*

Given the above distribution, of the 35 states listed, Hindus visibly dominate 28 states, Christians 4, Muslims 2, and Sikhs 1. India, by these data, is nothing but an overwhelming Hindu state which explicitly indicates effective domination possessing the capacity to nip in the bud or wipe out perceived rival religions. This expressly explains why series of bloody clashes between the Hindus and Islam (which ranks second among lesser religions) assume commonplace and in most times, protracted.

5. Federal State Apparatus, Politics and Regimes’ Responses to Religious Conflicts

Unfortunately, like Nigeria, regimes responses to calamitous religious situation orchestrated and perpetuated by the Hindus have never been very effective. For instance, the Nigerian government has hardly made arrest and subsequent prosecution of masterminds of religious conflicts. This enforces the argument inextricably providing the nexus between ethnic hegemony and the control of state’s apparatus. When state’s apparatus is dominated by ethno-religious groups, the state rather than serve the interests of the entire country becomes an instrument used to frustrate and victimise other lesser groups. On this note, it becomes evidently clear that having majority Muslims (48%) as in the case of Nigeria and India, predominantly Hindus (79.8%) with landslide superior numerical strength, translate to very high propensity to dominate and control their state’s apparatus. This is empirically demonstrated in the political leadership of states under comparison thus:

Table 4: Religious Distribution of Nigerian/Indian Leadership from Independence

NIGERIAN PRESIDENTS			INDIAN PRESIDENTS/PRIME MINISTERS		
NAME	YEARS	RELIGION	NAME	YEARS	RELIGION
Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe	1963 – 66	Christianity	Rajendra Prasad/ Jawaharial Nehru (PM)	1947 1950	Hindu/Hindu
Alhaji Tafawa Belewa	1960 – 66	Islam	Sarvepalli Radhakrishan (PM)	1962	Hindu
Major-General Aguiyi Ironsi	1966	Christianity	Gulzarilal Nanda (PM)	1964	Hindu
General Yakubu Gowon	1966 – 75	Christianity	Lal Bahadur Shastri (PM)	1964	Hindu
General Murtala Mohammed	1975 – 76	Islam	Gulzarilal Nanda (PM)	1966	Hindu
General Olusegun Obasanjo	1976 – 79	Christianity	Indira Ghandi (PM)	1966	Hindu
Alhaji Shehu Shagari	1979	Islam	Zakir Hussain (PRESIDENT.)	1967	Muslim
General Mohammadu Buhari	1983 – 85	Islam	Varahagiri VenkataGiri (PRESIDENT)	1969	Hindu
General Ibrahim Babangida	1985 – 93	Islam	Muhammad Hidayatullah (PRES.)	1969	Muslim

Chief Earnest Shonekan	1993	Christianity	Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed (PRESIDENT)	1974	Muslim
General Sani Abacha	1993 – 98	Islam	BasappaJatti/ Morarji Desai (PM)	1977	Hindu/Hindu
General Abdulsalami Abubakar	1998 – 99	Islam	Neelam Sanjiva Reddy (PRESIDENT)	1977	Hindu
Chief Olusegun Obasanjo	1999 – 2007	Christianity	Chaoudhary Charan Singh (PM)	1979	Hindu
Alhaji Musa Yar'adua	2007 – 2009	Islam	Indira Ghandi (PM)	1980	Hindu
Dr. Goodluck Jonathan	2009 – 2015	Christianity	GianiZail Singh (PRESIDENT)	1982	Sikh
Muhammadu Buhari	2015 – INCUMBENT PRESIDENT	Islam	Rajiv Ghandi (PM)	1984	Hindu
			Ramaswamy Venkataraman (PRESIDENT)	1987	Hindu
			Vishwanath Pretap Singh (PM)	1989	Hindu
			Chandra Shekhar (PM)	1990	Hindu
			P. V. N. Rao (PM)	1991	Hindu
			Shankar D. Sharma (PRESIDENT)	1992	Hindu
			Atai B. Vajpayee (PM)	1996	Hindu
			K.R. Narayanan (PRES)/ Inder K. Gujral (PM)	1997	Hindu/ Hindu
			AtaiBehari Vajpayee (PM)	1998	Hindu
			Abdul Kalem (PRES.)	2002	Muslim
			Manmohan Singh (PM)	2004	Sikh
			Pratibha Patil (PRES)	2007	Hindu
			P. Mukherjee (PRES)	2012	Hindu
			Ram. N. Kovind (INCUMBENT PRES)	2017	Hindu
			N. Modi (INCUMBENT PM)	2014	Hindu.

Source: *Updated and modified from Ekot (2011) and Almond et.al (2008)*

Without equivocation, the table above speaks for itself, indicating that the control and dominance of the Nigerian state has been mostly in the hands of Northerners who are predominantly Muslims while the Indians state is overwhelmingly controlled by Indians of Hindu extraction. Out of 60 years of Nigeria's corporate existence, the North has altogether ruled Nigeria for 47 years now and the South, the remaining 13 years. On the other hand, the worst case scenario is recorded in India in that since 1947 (independence), Indians of Hindu religion have overwhelmingly controlled state's apparatus only with pockets of unusual situations that paved way for Muslims and Sikhs. It goes to show that no Christian has ever made it as Indian leader for decades now.

A further breakdown of the Nigerian experience in above table shows that from independence, the Old North (Hausa/Fulani) has ruled Nigeria more than three times higher than the Old West and East put together. The Hausa/Fulani leadership was punctuated by military coup which paved way for the Igbo (1966-1966), Yoruba (1976-1979 and 1999-2007) and Ijaw (a minority, 2009-2015) out of circumstance and

necessity. From Igbo, General Aguiyi Ironsi emerged out of necessity due to the first coup that truncated the First Republic before the counter-coup which returned power to the North. General Olusegun Obasanjo's (Yoruba) emergence was out of circumstance following the assassination of General Murtala Mohammed in 1976. Again, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo became the civilian President in 1999 out of the necessity to pacify the Yorubas following the annulment of the June 12, 1993 Presidential Elections and its aftermath. The election was alleged to have been won by Chief M. K. O. Abiola (a Yoruba) but was circumvented by the military junta led by the North. According to Omoruyi (1993:89):

On two recent occasions when the Northern ruling clique hit a dead end in ruling the country, they quickly found ways to 'create' a southerner in their image. This is how General Obasanjo and Chief Shonekan emerged in 1976 and 1993 respectively. What the two cases show is that the military would not support a southerner to rule except the ones they create.

In a similar vein, the emergence of Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, an Ijaw (a minority ethnic group) as Nigeria's fourth elected president was also circumstantial following the death of Alhaji Musa Yar'adua in 2009 (then sitting president). Basically, this imbalance created in the political structure of Nigeria has continued to generate intense agitations and demands for fairness, equity and justice in the federation. The issue of religion and political hegemony are fundamental and critical in the reinforcement of the structural defects of federalism, over concentration of power and disregard for sub-national governments. Issues of economy are treated not on the strategic demands of the market forces but by ethno-religious considerations.

Correspondingly, the Hindus have, since independence in 1947, established their hegemony while dominating national politics. Of the 83 years of democratic rule, Hindus have had shots at the presidency for 71 years now, Muslims, 12 years, nil for Christians and the Sikhs. For the Office of Prime Minister, Hindus had occupied it for 73 years now, Muslim, nil, Christian, nil and Sikhs (10 years). The simplest explanation to this is not far-fetched. The Hindus are the overwhelming majority among ethno-religious groups in India.

Among major national parties, the all-powerful Bharati Janata Party (BJP), a national political party, built on the Hindu ideology and nationalism is a party to beat in the Indian political landscape. It controls the government at the centre and majority of the states. It is believed in various quarters that Hindu nationalism projected by the BJP has been the root of ethno-religious conflicts in India (Crown, 2013). Many states ruled by the BJP adopt laws that made conversion to other religions very difficult on the pretext that people are usually lured or forced and not on their volition (www.bjp.org/today). It has further been alleged to be exploiting the electorates by indulging in "vote bank politics" (giving political support to issues in order to gain votes) (Times News Network, 2002). Specifically, powered by Hindu fundamentalism, the BJP has as its major target, to check the growing influence of Islam. Correspondingly, this antagonistic posture towards Muslims is a significant factor in the renaissance of Muslim fundamentalism (BBC News, 2007).

Due to the politicisation of religion by political leaders, the states of Nigeria and India have been cut-up in a web of sectional interests with accompanying propensity to play to the tune of dominant religious groups. Below indicate major religious conflicts in both states as follows:

Table 5: Survey of Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Nigeria and India

NIGERIA			INDIA		
Cases	Period	Fallouts	Cases	Period	Effects
Biu ethno-religious conflict-Borno State	2000	Property destroyed. Lives lost, especially, teenagers	Religious riot in Bengal, Calcutta and Noakhali religious riots.	1946	Many injured. Wide spread looting
Reprisal Ethno-religious conflict-Kano State	2001	Lives lost and property destroyed	Religious riots among Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs in Punjab, Bengal, Delhi and other parts of India.	1947	over 500, 000 died and over 12 million refugees scattered around India and Pakistan
Afghanistan-US ethno-religious conflict-Kano State.	2001	People slaughtered in hundreds. 40 churches burnt and billions of Naira lost.	Anti- Sikh religious riot	Sept. 1984	Over 100 soldiers, 250 militants and hundreds of civilians killed
Jos Reprisal ethno-religious conflict-Kano State	2004	Many lives lost and property destroyed	Sikh reprisal riot following the assassination of Hindu Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi by her outraged Sikh bodyguard	Octobe r 1984	Over 15,000 Sikhs killed and over 70,000 people displaced
Book launch ethno-religious conflict-Gombe State	2001	Property of Christians destroyed	Bombay riots following the demolition of Babri mosque	1992	Lives lost, property destroyed and scores injured
Ethno-religious riot – Bauchi State	2001	No. of deaths not confirmed	Gujarat religious violence	2002	Over 2000 Muslims killed, property destroyed
Sharia conflict – Bauchi State	2001	Many lives lost and property destroyed	Religious clashes over Hindu temple and Muslim mosque location	1990s -1991	Lives lost, property destroyed and persons injured.
Dumo ethno-religious riot-Adamawa State	2002	10 civilians, 8 policemen killed			
Dumo ethno-religious conflict-Adamawa State	2003	Mosque, Churches and buildings burnt			
Sharia crisis – Kaduna State	2000	Not less than 3000 lives lost. Buildings and churches burnt.			
Sharia riot – Sokoto State	2000	Few lives and property lost			
Wuse ethno-religious conflicts 1 & 2.	2004	1,500 killed & over 600 persons displaced			

Source: Updated and modified from Ekot (2011), Nicholas (2003), Human Right Watch (1994, 2006), Hindustan Times (2010), Mukhoty et al (1984)

The table 2 presents a gory picture of failure of federalism to provide a sense of mutual tolerance among ethnic nationalities. Religion has become a major springboard for unleashing carnage on non-believers who live in the same state and under same

government at the slightest provocation. Though pockets of religious conflicts occurred in the 1980s, for instance, the Maitatsine sect -masterminded conflict between Christian and Muslim students, conflicts became proliferated after 1999 due to some factors. One of such factors is the “politicisation of the clerics”. During the military era, religious clerics were united and stood unanimously against repressive regimes but when politicians took over power in 1999, there was marked turn-around in their spiritual mandate. As Abati (2017) observed:

...in the last 18 years, one of the most grievous outcomes of our democratic experience has been the manner in which religious platforms have become vehicles for opportunism, alimentary politics and sickening hypocrisy. The consequences could be bizarre as Boko Haram poses a threat to national sovereignty, and as treacherous as clerics becoming government consultants...(cited in Concord News, Wednesday-Thursday, August 07, p. 12)

From 1999 till date, religious clerics have enjoyed cordial political relations with politicians culminating in their appointment as aides, chairmen and members of statutory boards, advisers and commissioners. Some have been made spiritual guides and marabouts to politicians. By this development, clerics have acquired so much powers and wealth. Given this scenario, clerics are now blinded to the truth, pocketed and consumed by dirty politics of their benefactors. They have become stooges of politicians who are in the habit of using them to distort facts, foment trouble and garner support for their selfish ambitions. Relatively, the propensity to use clerics to make hate speeches, incite followers and engage in propaganda that could trigger religious conflicts stands high.

In recent times, a dangerous alliance of religious clerics with the Nigerian state has been established. This interface became necessary to enable the state to manipulate clerics and who, in turn, are expected to effectively muster the support of their followers for state policies and programmes, whether good or bad. It is common to see clerics conspicuously accorded their place in all state functions and enjoying some form of privileges and goodwill. This explains why some of them would support government’s wrongdoing, even in the event of inaction during religious crises. Besides, despite its proliferation, there has never been any known celebrated case relating to the prosecution of the masterminds of religious conflicts which explicitly indicates in the table above that most ethno-religious conflicts occurred in the Northern than Southern part of Nigeria. The fact remains that the state, rather than be an effective regulator of religious activities tends out to promote sectional interests of dominant ethnic nationality reminiscent of the uncompromising stance of frontline leaders like Balewa (1948:54) who reiterated that:

Since 1914, the British Government has been trying to make Nigeria into one country, but the Nigerian people themselves are historically different in their background, in their religious beliefs and customs and do not show themselves any sign of willingness to unite ... Nigeria’s unity is only a British intention for the country.

Just as Karl Marx likened religion to “opium of the people”, religion assumes much dynamism than ethnic identity. The British understood the implications of religion and therefore, drafted a religious map for Nigeria restricting early Christian missionaries to Southern Nigeria and Islam to the North (Aborisade and Mundt, 1999) while also setting up settlements (Sabongari) in the North for non-Muslim settlers to avoid catastrophic consequences.

Although Christian and Muslim missionaries, over time, pervasively infiltrated the other's territory establishing churches and mosques, religious divide in Nigeria became pronounced in the 1980s. Citing the rise in fundamentalism as a factor, Chazan and Levine (1991) opined that there was need for the ruling elite to manipulate religion for political purposes. A typical case in point was the bloody conflict stirred by the Maitatsine Sect in Kano that got thousands of Christians killed and property worth millions destroyed. The Maitatsine action exerted far-reaching consequences on the unity and corporate existence of Nigeria in that it reinforced outright antagonism between Christianity and Islam for dominance, further indicating that it would be difficult for both religions to co-exist.

Religious divide was further deepened following attempts by the Ibrahim Babangida Administration to register a constitutionally recognised secular state of Nigeria in the Organization of Islamic Conference in 1986. Of course, as would have been expected, tension, protests, threats characterised the Nigerian state raising suspicions among Christians about alleged covert Islamic Agenda. Further aggravating the already strained relationship between Muslims and Christians, the Sani Abacha Administration in 1997 made spirited effort to secure Nigeria's membership in the "Developing Eight", a group of Islamic states that claim to pursue industrialisation. During the period, tension overwhelmed many states of the federation as groups, individuals, civil society mustard their resources for possible show-down.

Most problematic and insidious than previous attempts to Islamise Nigeria was the introduction of Sharia legal system in North. According to Nasr (2000), "for traditional Muslims, Sharia represents the concrete embodiment of the divine will and to practice Islam means to follow Sharia". The implementation of the Sharia in Northern states notably, Zamfara, Kano, Bauchi among others has since threatened and deepen hostilities in Nigeria. It is either conflict breaks out as religious and later becomes ethnic or vice-versa. Besides, the introduction of Sharia was initially perceived by non-Muslims as a negation and violation of Nigeria's secularity as provided for in the 1999 Constitution. By extension, it was seen to have grossly damaged the chances of federalism to achieve integration and unity in diversity. Even when the Obasanjo civilian regime sought clarification of the Sharia imbroglio at the Supreme Court of Nigeria which ruled in favour of the Northern states, tensions and suspicion are yet to recede.

According to Galadima (2002:67) "religion has taken a toll on Nigerian federalism, religion has most especially become more visible than any other centrifugal force". Obviously, every disagreement between the North and South in recent times crystalises in religious conflicts. Ethnic crisis now finds expression in religion and vice-versa. Ikengah – Metuh (2006:371) noted that:

Most interreligious disturbances usually develop into inter-ethnic conflicts even where they began as purely religious disagreements.

The reverse is also often the case, namely some socio-economic conflicts are deflated and fought under inter-religious banner.

The assertion made above is truly evident in recent conflicts that started as mere religious disagreements but subsequently graduated into ethnic cleansing and accompanying reprisals. Apart from destroying lives and property, these crises served opportunities to burgle and loot shops, especially those owned by Southerners.

In the case of India, religious conflicts as indicated (in table 5 above) mostly involved Hindus versus Muslims. While Hinduism remains an indigenous ancient religion

(Chakravarti, 1991) with about 966 million adherents as at 2011 (www.censusindia.gov.in/2011), Islam was imported into India by Arab traders, popularised and entrenched during Muslim rule of Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire (www.southasiaanalysis.org). Generally, as the second largest religion with about 172 million followers (2011 Census) after Hinduism, the Indian Constitution accords Islam the status of a “National Minority” alongside Christianity, Sikhism Jainism, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism (www.telegraphindia.com) as attempts to decimate or put it subservient to the Hindu religion. In the same vein, being the third largest collection of Shia Muslims of the Ahmadiyya Islam extraction (aggressively fundamentalist) among the Islamic community in India, there is bound to be religious intolerance indicated in the current spate of conflicts which have been protracted.

Moreso, perennial religious conflicts between Hindus and Muslims is also occasioned by the fact that these religions are governed by laws that are expressly personal, exclusive and at variance with each other. While Article 25(2b) of the Constitution of India (42nd Amendment Act, 1976) recognised people “professing the Sikh, Jain or Buddhist religions” (Diwan, 1981) as part of Hindus stock based on similar historical antecedents, Islam, Christianity among others, are treated with disdain and suspicion as alien religions. Expressly, the rivalry between Hindus and Muslims can be safely said to be fallouts of competing ideologies, Hindu nationalism against Islamic fundamentalism. Though a secular state, most secular people in India are pro-Islam and anti- Hindu (<http://www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com>).

Just like in Nigeria where there is no clear evidence of prosecution of masterminds of religious conflicts especially on the part of dominant religion, the Indian experience has been characterised by accusations and counter-accusations between Hindu-led government and rival religions. Typical case in point was the anti-Sikh riots of 1984 when the Hindu-led federal government deployed its military with “heavy artillery, tanks and helicopters” to launch assaults on Sikhs killing them in their hundreds (Nicholas, 2003). On October 31, 1984, another round of four-day massacre of the Sikhs occurred following the assassination of the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi (a Hindu) by her supposed bodyguard (a Sikh) in 1984 to revenge the massacre of his fellow believers (Sikhs). While the India government reported a death toll of 2,700, human right groups and newspaper outfits reported that about 10,000 - 17,000 Sikhs died in the massacre believed to be a politically sponsored genocide especially because no prosecution of killers was carried by government (Human Rights Watch, 1994, Takht, 2010). According to Hindustan Times (2010), the inability of Indian government to hold promoters of religious violence accountable is a great limitation to religious freedom while contradicting the religious secularity provided for in the constitution.

From these conflicts, deductions show that just like Nigeria, the wish of the Hindu- controlled state apparatus is to consolidate power for perpetual control of the society, politics and economy. The Indian political rivalry is also inextricably linked to the perception of violation of the dialogue that led to the granting of independence to the Islamic State of Pakistan formerly part of India. This perception is anchored on the belief among Hindus that Muslims should not be citizens of India, rather, should be restricted to the States of Pakistan and Bangladesh. This has been the source of hostilities and incessant crackdowns.

While the Nigerian situation is a clear battle of superiority between Islamic and Western civilizations, the drive to keep India as undiluted cradle and root of Hindu civilization constitute necessary force in the Hindu-Islam clashes.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Of all major centrifugal forces beclouding federal practice in Nigeria and India, religion appears complex and entangled in topical issues on the front-burner. Among all problems associated with federalism in these two states, religious issues appear most insurmountable. Besides, from statistics of recorded conflicts in Nigeria and India, religiously induced ones are revealed as the most complicated. Having explored the nature and dynamics of religion, it is glaring that its negative impacts have not only created animosity among competing ethnic nationalities but enormously punctuated the achievement of unity in diversity, the primary goal of federalism in the two independent states under comparison.

Despite the lavishly expressed and professed secularity, religious polarisation has generated hate, hostilities and un-abating rivalries that have culminated in bloody clashes among ethnic nationalities in both Nigeria and India. Religious divide along ethnic lines is exploited by politicians who capitalise on the opportunity to capture and maintain state power.

The pervasive advancement of the British-induced ethnicity from its rudimentary form during the pre and post-colonial era snowballed over decades into religion, which in turn, impacts negatively on post-independent politics. In Nigeria and India, political parties, election process and appointments into state offices are based on ethnic considerations. As demonstrated earlier in this paper, statistics of Presidents and Heads of Government in these countries reveal that ethnic nationalities use their ascribed numerical strength to effect the selection of military head of states and elect political leaders as the case may be, who, correspondingly appoint other office holders based on kith, kin and religious considerations. By this scenario, state apparatus becomes the conduit upon which religious agenda of the ruling ethnic group are implemented.

Given this trend, the principles, ideals and practices of federalism are stultified and out-rightly incapacitated. Rather than share power and other distributive values equitably, state institutions are used and controlled by dominant ethnic nationalities in Nigeria and India at the expense of other ethnic groups. As a result, state's machinery driven by ethnicity combined with religion assume effective channel upon which politicians ignite religious wars in pursuant of their selfish and sectional interests. In the two states compared, federal might is never employed to nip in the bud, early warnings of religious crisis let alone staging objective clamp-down on aggressors or perpetrators of conflicts, especially, if they come from the ruling ethnic group. For instance, while calculated and brutal attacks by Fulani herdsmen against Christian farmers is on-going with impunity in Nigeria, incessant crackdown against minority Muslims in Kashmir and other Muslim dominated communities continue unabated.

In view of the foregoing, federalism has performed abysmally low. It has failed to enact the much desired unity in diversity. Perennial conflicts characterised by ethnic and religious undertones have defeated the very essence of federalism. However, if federalism as a form of government is not operated on its original precepts to address conflicts, mere religious misunderstanding in both federations may in future, result in serious armed

conflicts spreading across national borders and regions in solidarity to their different civilizations.

Having identified religion as a hydra-headed anomaly that must be urgently tackled and addressed, it is recommended that Nigeria should convene a functional national dialogue of ethnic nationalities to address problems of inter-ethnic and religious issues. The 1999 Constitution should be amended to incorporate outcomes of envisaged dialogue. To stem the tide of religious conflicts, citizens of Nigeria should, by constitution, be accorded full rights as indigenes wherever they reside irrespective of their ethno-religious and parental origins. Orientation and enlightenment agencies should be strengthened to aggressively educate Nigerians in order to change their mental disposition and inculcate in them the need for peaceful coexistence, tolerance and accommodation

On the other hand, the Indian Constitution (1976) should be amended to assert its supremacy, redefine state's secularity and play down on the BJP Party /Hindu influence. Two, people of other religions should be integrated in power-holding, political leadership and other distributive endeavours for purposes of equity, fair-play and stability. As follow-up, a national commission to promote cooperation and regulate ethno-religious relations should be established by enabling laws.

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