

Review Article

Intra-Religious Conflicts within the Hausa Hausa-folk

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Abstract: Many works have observed how deadly intra-and or inter religious conflicts have been, but hardly, or so to say, minute are works written on how it would thoroughly be curtailed. Intra-religious conflict has had a devastating repercussion to the people living in the Hausa geographical destinations. These conflicts claimed and destroyed many precious lives of the same religion. Hardly a day past without a report of intra-religious clashes. Causes these conflicts abound; the research believed that the major thrust of the conflict is doctrinaire and syncretism. However, the findings showcased that dialogue served as best mechanism for resolution of the Muslim Hausa intra-religious conflict.

Keywords: Hausa-folk; Conflicts; Intra-Religious Conflict.

INTRODUCTION

The practice of Islam in Nigeria experienced dramatic changes as different sects of Islamic movements started establishing their presence in the society especially in the post-colonial period. Intra-religious conflicts and wars are found throughout early and contemporary development of Islam in the world. Disputes involving Muslims settlers are common in modern day Hausa societies; for example, the Maitatsine in Kano State, the Tijjaniyya and the Izala, the Izala and the Shi'a'ites, and the deadly Boko Haram in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States of Nigeria. Each of these conflicts has had devastating effects on the peace and tranquility of the societies concerned.

This research therefore, sets to examine the remote and immediate causes of intra-religious crises in Hausa society as perceived by Hausa culture and deals with some specific cases in the societies, as well as some silent recommendations tilting more on how government and religious intervention could be the source and bastion of hope for Islam as a true religion.

The Concept of Conflict

There have been various views about the concept of conflict among people in social settings. Robin, (2003) has identified three views about conflict, thus, representing three diametrically divergent school of thoughts as follows; The Traditionalists, The Human Relation as well as The Interactionist.

The Traditionalist views all forms of conflicts as bad and therefore must be avoided. While the Human Relation School of thoughts views conflicts as natural and inevitable outcomes in every human setting. Lastly, the Interactionist School views conflicts as a necessary phenomenon for effective performance, innovation and growth. A conflict situation therefore can be described as a sharp disagreement or clash, for instance, between divergent ideas, interest or people and nations.

In his view, Adeyanju, (2004) grouped conflicts into intra-personal, inter-personal, intra-group, inter-group, intra-organizational, inter-organizational, intra-national and international. Imoh, (2008) classified conflicts in terms of causes and effects. According to him, these classes are communal, institutional, ethnic, family, gender, labour, intergenerational, interpersonal, intra or inter-group, armed, environmental, technological or personality. Jabnoun, (2012) also classified conflict into functional and dysfunctional. According to him, a functional conflict enhances the performance of an organization. It usually arises when different groups within an organization agree about achieving a certain goal but differ on the means to achieving it.....When the conflict is settled, the goal can be achieved in the most effective manner. A dysfunctional conflict is usually the one that individuals and groups take personally.

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Gurr, T. (1994) defines conflict as an opponent centered episode or series of episodes base upon incompatibility of goals, aims or values. It involves direct and personal interaction in which opposing party is perceived as controlling the desired goal. Conflict situation is therefore the direct result of the pursuit of incompatible goals by individuals or states or the use of incompatible means to pursue personal or national goals. Godwin, (2009) defined conflicts as:

A confrontation between one or more parties aspiring towards incompatible or competitive means or ends (which) may be either manifest through actions or behaviors or latent in which case it remains dormant for some time, as incompatibilities are unarticulated or are built into systems or such institutional arrangements as governments, corporations, or even civil society.

Conflict is universal yet distinct in every culture. It is common to all persons, yet experienced uniquely by individuals. It is a visible sign of human energy and often the result of competitive endeavor for the same goals, rights and resources (Mohammed 2006). Simply put, conflict involves a situation in which two or more parties in an interactional process are involved in hostile activities against one another.

Intra-religious conflict on the hand is conceptualized as a specific form of conflict between groups which differs ideologically along religious lines within a setting with each striving for political relevance (Gofwen, 2004). Religious interest therefore is like political interest that must operate along the principle of divide and rule (Ugwu, 2009: 519). This division is essentially on the ground of doctrine and is faith based. This refers to those who do not belong to the same faith and who ostensibly are guided by some classified or unclassified doctrines.

The Hausa Society and Islam

Hausa is a name of language by which a group of peoples who shared common beliefs and cultures are known in Nigeria. It could be defined as:

*The name by which the people of the Hausa ethnic group call themselves, and are understood as such by many other people, though of course different peoples had different local names for them. Hausa is also the name of the language of the people, and in their literature they have no other word for their country but **ƙasar Hausa**, the land of the Hausa people/language (Adamu, 1978:1).*

The Hausa population resides mostly in the northern parts of Nigeria and southern part of Niger. They are predominantly Muslims but some are Christians and Pagans (The Maguzawas). Hausas are about half of Nigerian population and speak Hausa language, though different tribes among the Hausa have

local languages. However, the origin of the Hausa people is still controversial among historians. The Bayajidas legendry traced the origin of the Hausas into two distinct groups: Seven original and seven non-original Hausa. With this, we can come to the conclusion that Hausa is a language that unified a great number of people who have different values rather than a common term denoting a nation or race. It is a lingua-franca to many people in West African countries, in spite of their cultural diversities. These people use Hausa as their vehicle of communication in their day-to-day activities and it serves as a common factor that binds them together (Musa, 1991:221-234).

Scholar's view differs about the emergence of Islam in Hausa society. Islam in Hausa society was introduced by some Fulani Torankawa and Sullubawa scholars under the leadership of prominent scholar called Musa Jakollo from Futa Toro of Morocco during the reign of Sarkin Kano Yakubu (1452-1463) (source?) They first based in Konni town in Niger Republic for Islamic propaganda before they spread into different parts of Hausa society. It's in the descendants of these Fulani Torankawa Usmanu Bn Fodiyo came up, who led for Islamic Jihad in Northern Nigeria. In another version, Islam was introduced in Hausa society by some Wangarawa immigrants from Senegal in the fourteenth century with intension to perform Hajj (Pilgrimage), under the leadership of a great scholar called Abdurrahman Zagaiti. Some of them went ahead to Gobir and Katsina, and about forty of them went to Kano during the reign of Sarkin Kano Muhammadu Rumfa (1463-14199) (Yahaya 1988).

However, in the book *Kano Ta Dabo* was stated that Wangarawa came to Kano during the reign of Sarkin Kano Aliyu Yaji (1349-1383) before Muhammadu Rumfa. Before this period, the successive rulers of Kano were at best nominal Muslims (Paden 1973:47) and it was Rumfa who played host to Al-Maghili, a prominent North African scholar from Tlemcen who first introduced Kano to Islamic fundamentalism. His visit to Kano was motivated the ideological conflicts that arose in the western Mediterranean and North Africa as a result of the colonial offensive of Portugal and Spain and the call by Pope Martin V and Pope Eugenius for Christian Monarchs to eliminates Muslims, considered to be infidels from their domains in the early fifteenth century (Albert 1999:275).

Al-Maghili's visit to Kano, like the visit of many other Islamic scholars to different parts of Sahara and South Equator, was to conquer the Christian propaganda and, on the hand, make the Muslims see the Christians as infidels. The major task of Al-Maghili in Kano was that of confidence-building. He encouraged the Muslims to have more faith in their religion and established various frameworks upon which the true

practice of Islam could rest in the society (Yahaya 1989).

Causes and Sources of Intra-Religious Conflicts

Conflicts; whether ethno-religious, intra-religious, political or social, are always caused by plurality of factors. The immediate and remote causes of intra-religious conflicts in Hausa society will not be treated in isolation. It therefore means that the causes will be holistically dealt with. The situation in Hausa society appear to agree with the views of Kraemer (1938:393) who wrote to say that “the age we are in is the age of perpetual conflict and turmoil”. The constant and incessant crises engineered and supported by religious factors in Nigeria especially in Hausa society need much to be desired. These are caused by a number of factors ranging from governmental support, long standing disagreement, unfounded rumors, distortion of history, which is bother on needs and value judgment to poverty (Boer 2004:6). Thus, the following are some of the factors causing intra-religious conflict in Hausa society:

Syncretism

The Ahlus-Sunnah popularly known as Izala consistently accuses the Darika (Tijjaniya) sect of innovation (Bidi'a) into the fold of Islam. They believe such innovations by the Tijjaniya constitute deliberate attempts to undermine the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and Tradition of Prophet (S.A.W). The Izala adds that introduction of things like, Celebrating Maulud Nabi (Birthday of the Prophet), participation in Wurd (Tijjaniya Litany), recitation of Salatil-Fatih (special Tijjaniya prayer) and Dala'ilul-khairat (special book in praise of the Prophet), Singing and Dancing while Zikr (praising of God) organization of special prayers to the deceased on the third, seventh, fortieth and one year of the dead, spirituality and the efficacy of using the Qur'an to solve diverse needs of humanity are semblance of African traditional customs which are Bid'ah (innovations) and Shirk (polytheism) and should be condemned outright before they pollute Islam.

Allowing such grievous acts to be practiced by Muslims manifest weak faith, which is by itself condemnable by Islam. Responding on the accusations of those Tijjaniya practices that seen syncretic to the Izala, emanate purely from little comprehension of the shari'ah (Islamic law) and the deliberate refusal of some Izala scholars to tell the truth for the fear of losing some of their followers. The Tijjaniya on their side have basis for all their practices from the Qur'an and Sunnah. They also think those practices do not violate the right of anybody but rather benefit the people. The attempts by the Izala to address these lapses of Tijjaniya innovations might have not been done well leading to many violent clashes among Muslims in Hausa society, which mostly claims un-justifies lives of many people.

Doctrinal Differences

The sources of Islamic laws are the Qur'an and the Sunnah. In the case where the Qur'an and the Sunnah are silent or do not address an issue, other sources such as logic and consensus are contacted for guidance or explanations. Among such complimentary sources are the people who have established themselves in Islamic knowledge and sciences that they could employ and analyze from the Qur'an and the Sunnah alongside the history of Sahaba (Companions) and their own personal experiences to make suitable rulings or judgments on all matters relating to Islam and Muslims. (source here).

These personalities expressed varied ideas on different Islamic matters according to their levels of understandings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. They developed their own schools of thought based on their understanding of the shari'ah, and propounded different theologies and doctrines that attracted massive following. Some scholars compile Da'if Ahadith (weak Traditions) to make bias judgments in favour of some individuals in authority. This explains why we have some Ahadith that contradict the Qur'an, upon which some scholars depend to justify their actions or condemn others (source here). For instance, on performing ablution, the Shi'ah don't wash thrice as the Sunni does but washes only the face and arms after which parts of the head and feet are wiped. On marriage the Shi'ah permit Mut'a (Temporary Marriage) while other Muslims forbid it. These are some instances of doctrinal differences among Hausa Muslims in Hausa society are usually mishandled, which led to conflicts while trying to address.

Leadership Struggle

Leadership struggle in Islam traced its origin since during the Sahaba (Companions) after the departure of Prophet (S.A.W) which led to intra-religious conflict that claimed hundreds of lives. A typical Islamic community like Hausaland, when it comes to selecting leaders of a particular sect like Izala, Tijjaniya and Shi'ah, most often unqualified persons make their way in through wealth, tribal or age considerations. Following such debatable methods of selecting leaders among Muslims, the leaders normally do not put up their best since they are not accountable to anybody and will cling to their positions whether they are performing well or not. Many people believed that, most of the troubles among Muslim leaders in Hausa society emanate from the drive to be in better position, to manage or 'mismanage' the resources of Muslims. They alleged that majority of Muslim leaders are corrupt and not trustworthy. They stated that some leaders receive huge sums of money from donors to execute projects such as building of schools, Mosques, health institutions, boreholes or supporting the needy scholarships at home and abroad but mostly end up squandering or misdirecting the funds. This problem of leadership among Izala sect led to the breakdown of the

sect into two distinct side, Izala of Kaduna and Izala of Jos. Efforts have been made several times to bridge the gap of these misunderstanding but failed, disputes still continue time and again.

Accusations

Accusation amongst Izala, Tijjaniya and Shi'ah is the major factor causing intra-religious conflict in Hausa society. The sects accuses the practices of each other in their congregation and considered them as Bid'a (innovations) or even shirk (polytheism). For instance, Izala sect accuses Tijjaniya with some innovations into Islam like Salatil Fatih (special prayer for Prophet) Maulud Nabiy (Birthday of Prophet) believe in Sheikhs (special men of God) who will rescue them in the hereafter among others. The Izala and Tijjaniya sect also accuses some doctrines and practices of Shi'ah like accusation of some Sahaba (Companions) and wives of the Prophet. They viewed that anybody whose heart believed and agreed that such accusation is lawful and legitimate he/she is no longer a Muslim... no matter what. On the other hand, Tijjaniya accuses Izala with disrespect of accusing the priority of Prophet, therefore they considered them as enemies of Prophet. Several conflict between these sects has been reported to occurred which led to destruction of properties and even loss of lives.

Accusation of Sahaba (Companions) by the Shi'ah

The Sahaba (Companions) of Prophet are the people of integrity, the Islam pioneers who struggled for the development of Islam throughout the world. They are being respected with special regard by all true Muslims with no exception as a result of their true faith and contribution to Islam. But Shi'ah sect in Hausa society screened out some companions like Abubakar, Umar and Usman, and wives of Prophet especially A'isha and considered them as enemies of Islam, and unjust people. Therefore, Izala and Tijjaniya challenged them that who so ever accuses or curses the Prophet's Companions and wives and agree with Mut'a practice (Temporary Marriage) is a disbeliever (source here). This problem creates lasting disputes between the sects which usually led to confrontations.

Da'awah (Calling to Islam)

Da'awah or Tabligh is one of the immediate causes of intra-religious conflicts in Hausa society. Da'awah is so important in Islam that it has been mentioned several times in the Qur'an. Also Allah in the Qur'an commanded the Prophet to preach when He said: "Preach to them the truth, for preaching proves very beneficial for the believers (Qur'an 55:51). The verse abovestates the virtues of preaching and also states the contents of preaching. It urges preachers to say the truth for in the truth come many beneficial things. It is clearly stated in the Qur'an, the Sunnah and history that peace, love, unity, and respect for one another's rights are all good and beneficial to mankind. By implication any preaching that does not lead to these

good virtues but brings about conflicts and destruction of life and property is not what Allah prescribes in His Holy Book. Many Muslim embrace the call from Allah to preach but they do not embrace the kind and modalities of Da'awah Allah recommends.

On how to preach, or call others to Islam, Allah says in Qur'an chapter (16:125) "call on to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good preaching and argue with them in the best and gracious ways, for your Lord knows those who have strayed from His path, and those who receive guidance". The injunction here is that Allah did not command Muslims to preach in a way that the preaching will tear the ummah apart and breed conflicts among people but instructed Muslims to unify themselves through His words and interact with one another in better ways. In the Hausa society preaching could be held and heard during Tafsir in the month of Ramadan, during annual Maulud of Tijjaniya, and during Da'awah of Ahlus-Sunnah. Other places where preaching could be heard include the electronic and print media, during naming ceremonies, weddings and funerals. On such occasions meant for the enlightenment of the faithful, some scholars indulge in polemics. They make derogatory comments aimed at bringing down other scholars as well as condemning other doctrinal believe. These, therefore, attract responses that gradually lead to confrontations between their supporters and eventually the destruction of lives and properties.

The research has come to establish that; Da'awah is usually the immediate cause of most of the conflicts that occur in the Hausa society. According to Imam Aminu of Magama Hudu Sokoto, most scholars do not research well and so go about preaching with little knowledge especially of other denominations. Such myopic preachers are those who hastily condemn anything they do not know. Most of them are not sincere and bold to tell their followers things they have not come across. They therefore give personal meanings and interpretations of issues that turn out to be false and offensive to others. Scholars in Hausa society are too proud to come back to their people and tell them they made mistakes in their earlier submissions for fear of losing trust of the people. As such, anything said by a scholar is said forever even if it causes a problem or misleads the public. Such are serious matters that affect Islam and Muslims relationship. When allowed such convictions it will only breed violence and ignite conflicts that will claim lives and properties among Muslims and between Muslims and members of other faiths. Da'awah or all forms of preaching should be structured to tackle issues and not personalities. Da'awah according to majority of Muslims interviewed from all the Islamic denominations in Hausa society should be devoid of insults and provocations since they are the very reasons why Muslims fight against one another every now and then.

Cases of Intra-Religious Conflicts in the Hausa Society

The Izala-Tijjaniya Conflicts

On the 19th of June 1978, Izala sect led by one scholar Isma'ila Idris, clashed with Tijjaniya group in Gombe metropolis amidst little misunderstanding. The violence was caused as a result of the criticism waged by the Izala group; the conflict extended to the next day. Consequently, three vehicles were reported damaged. The October 24, 1980 intra-religious conflict between Izala and Tijjaniya sects in Anchau in Ikara Local Government Area of Kaduna State was alleged to have been sparked off by the verbal attack on the Tijjaniya sect when the Izala group was preaching. During the violence, many houses were set ablaze and Government forces (police men) were also injured.

On the 15th September 1983 conflict had broken between Izala and Tijjaniya at Yalwan Shandam of Kaduna State where Tijjaniya attacked Izala which led to loss of two Izala members and many injured. The Tijjaniya claim that the Izala were always accusing their activities and doctrines and government did nothing to tackle the problem.

Shi'ah and other Muslims Conflicts

On the 10th of March 1996, members of two rival groups of the Shi'ah sect clashed over ideological differences. The Jama'atul Tadjud Islamiyya, a rival sect to the Shi'ah group led by Sheikh Ibrahim El-Zakzaky, was said to be angry with Zakzaky over his alleged slow, diplomatic and uninspiring approach to Islamic revolution in Nigeria. The March 10, 1996 Shi'ah lecture, gave this group the needed opportunity to exhibit their friendship barbarity. On that day, the Shi'ah had slated a lecture for "Muslim Sisters" at the Kano State Polytechnic. While the lecture was going on, the group stormed at the venue and threw stones and broken bottles before the police men intervened.

In February 1997 also, conflict had broken between Shi'ah and other Muslims in at Eid Mosque at Kofar Mata Kano. The Shi'ah attempted to denied performing prayer at the Mosque. But before the combat, police men arrived and intervened, the Shi'ah turned their wrath to the police ...the situation which led to loss of four members of Shia'h and many injured.

In May, 2014, conflict occurred between Shi'ah and other Muslims in Yauri Local Government Area of Kebbi State, where one Muslim Preacher; now Chief Imam of Emir's Juma'at Mosque, Malam Shehu Yahaya who on his preaching... talked about the effects of Shi'ah doctrines which according to him; was totally contrary to the teaching of Islam. Thus, the Shia'h reacted and waged war against the Imam and many innocent citizens lost their dear lives.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The disputants have to be made to know that conflict can be a learning process. It creates opportunity for people to understand each other better, and to live together; tolerating and accommodating each other's strengths and weakness. However, it has also been discovered that too strong attachment to positions by each group makes it difficult for them to satisfy each other's interests and needs. Muslims needs to come together to find a common ground. To this end, there is the need to create an enabling environment for Hausa Muslims sects to consent; to come together to find the common ground that can bring enduring peace to the society.

Harmony amongst the Muslims sects in Hausa society needs a highly conducive atmosphere for the representatives to engage in dialogue, so that peace and unity amongst Muslims in Hausa society will regain. With dialogue every dispute will be curbed, for, experts in conflict resolution sees dialogue as the best mechanism to resolve any crisis that were arose among people of any given society.

Government should provide a strong policy that every Muslim sect in the Hausa society must adapt or abide by during their preaching or any form of congregation. Any sect that violates the said regulations should be penalized accordingly. Government should also gather leaders' sects and sensitize them against violation of law and order.

This paper analyzes the peaceful methods as options for the intra-religious conflicts in the Hausa society. It presents these methods as a starting point for organizing responses to the conflicts. The paper looks at the concept of conflict in different perspectives, followed by a brief explanation on Hausa society and how marriage is being conducted. The paper similarly discusses the causes of the conflicts as well as recommendations as a way out to the intra-religious (Muslims) controversies in the Hausa society.

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