

**ETHNO-RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS, MASS MEDIA AND NATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT: THE NORTHERN NIGERIA EXPERIENCE**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this work is the product of my own research efforts; undertaken under the supervision of Professor Cyril O. Imo and has not been presented elsewhere for the award of a degree or certificate. All sources have been duly distinguished and appropriately acknowledged.

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the research work for this thesis and the subsequent preparation of this thesis by Raphael Noah Sule (UJ/2012/PGAR/0294) were carried out under my supervision.

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Abstract

This study has examined the extent to which the mass media serves as instrument of escalation, generation and de-escalation of religious-related conflicts in the Northern part of Nigeria and the consequent effects of the role of the mass media in the development of the region and the nation as a whole. The secondary sources of data were the main method employed in the collection of data. The study examined critically news reports and analysis, editorials, advertorials and special columns' contents of some newspapers and news magazines. Also radio broadcasts, television news and International News Agencies' reports on ethno-religious conflicts were examined. From the analysis, the study showed that the role of the mass media during the period under study did contribute immensely to the escalation of these conflicts which consequently affected the socio-economic development of northern Nigeria in particular and the nation at large in the past three decades. The study has in addition, established that even in some instances when conflicts arose as a result of other factors, they usually assumed religious colourations thus making them intractable. The study further discovered that the mass media in Nigeria in these instances of reportage of ethno-religious conflicts played roles as diverse as the interests of their owners and editors, geographical locations, ethnic and religious affiliations of the owners or editors. The study therefore recommends a paradigm shift in ethno-religious reportage by the mass media in order to play down conflict situations rather than escalating them in order to promote national development. This is because, conflict generally is complex in nature and so its reportage should be handled with care to avoid the generation and escalation of further conflicts.

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Conflicts of varying scales and intensities have been witnessed in this century in different parts of the world. It is difficult to ascertain the exact number of these conflicts but it is safe to say that these social unrests have taken a toll on humanity in terms of deaths, displacements and disruption of economic and social activities. Indeed massive violent conflicts on a scale previously unimaginable have come to stare humanity in the face with their attendant adverse effects on the socio-economic development of the society.

Conflicts in general are not new to human societies, they are as old as human society because they have been in existence in all spheres of human life since the beginning of history. According to Otite and Albert, conflicts are necessary characteristics of every human society- a “normal process of interaction particularly in complex societies in which resources are usually scarce” (1). A conflict however, becomes an abnormality when it results to violence. The religious dimension in conflict is also not a new phenomenon, as casual checks of some religious texts reveal accounts of bloody conflicts fought in the name of religion. Religion has the capacity to serve as both a force for good and for evil in violent conflict situations. However, experiences have shown that many of those involved in violent conflict situations have used religion or ethnic identities to rally support, justify their actions and proclaim a “moral superiority” over others. Whereas religion was once the preserve of specialists, it has become the concern of all and sundry including journalists and academics across various areas of study after the New York World Trade Centre

terrorists' bombing of 11th September, 2001. Nowhere is this shift more significantly witnessed than in the area of religious, ethnic, social, and political conflicts.

Scholars from various areas of study have written so much about conflicts in general and ethno-religious conflicts in particular. It is however worthy of note that many violent conflicts still remain unrecorded. So also, scholars of various fields have proffered solutions to violent conflicts, yet violent conflicts continue to afflict mankind.

Nigeria has recorded bitter experiences of violent conflicts in various forms and ethno-religious conflicts in particular. Since the early 1980s, ethnic and religious crises have become a re-occurring decimal, especially in northern Nigeria. Amongst the 19 states that constitute Northern Nigeria, there is virtually none that has not witnessed one form of conflict or the other. The spate of violence has been on a steady increase. Some of the conflicts include: *Maitatsine* crises in Kano, 1980, Zuru 1980, Maiduguri 1982, Yola 1984, Ilorin 1984, Bauchi 1984 and Kano 1984. Others are the crises in Kafanchan 1987, Gure Kahugu 1987, Birnin Kebbi 1990, Katsina 1991, Tafawa Balewa 1991, Kano 1991, Jalingo 1992, Kaduna Polytechnic 1992, Kasuwar Magani (Kaduna) 1994, Kaduna 2000, Jos 2001, Kano 2001, Tafawa Balewa (since 2000) and Nasarawa 2001, Jos 2004, 2008 and 2010. There have also been the Chamba-Kuteb crises in Taraba State 2013, Tiv-Jukun crisis 2013, Bassa-Igbira crisis in Toto 2012 and a host of others.

Ikenga Metuh identified three broad types of religious conflicts, namely:

...intra-religious which occur between different denominations or sects; inter-religious conflicts prevalent between adherents of different religious beliefs, but capable of assuming socio-ethnic dimension; and inter-religious conflicts

which though have socio-economic origin end up in the form of religious conflicts (111-112).

With particular reference to Nigeria, Metuh observes further that most inter-religious conflicts usually developed into inter-ethnic conflicts even where and when they begin as purely religious disagreements. The reverse is also often the case that some socio-ethnic or political conflicts are deflected and fought under the inter-religious banner (112). Conflicts according to Alemika are “often categorised in terms of their origin, domain of expression and issues or grievances that are canvassed” (3). However, such categorization according to him

...are not mutually exclusive, because issues that are at stake in any conflict may traverse several domains, culture, ethnicity, religion, economy, politics, race and gender. Nonetheless it is common in the literature to classify intra-group or inter-group antagonism and aggression as class, political, cultural, racial, ethnic and religious conflicts (3).

There are many types of social conflicts. However, in practice it is very difficult to isolate which conflicts are primarily provoked by political, ethnic, religious, cultural or economic factors. Experiences from the past have shown that most violent conflicts result from interplay of ethnic, religious, political, socio-economic and cultural differences. Therefore, according to Alemika, “classifying the conflicts as solely religious, economic, ethnic, cultural or political may turn out to be misleading” (117). This is because ethnicity and religion are two broad concepts that could be treated on their own merits. In Northern Nigeria however, the two concepts are so interwoven to the extent that conflicts between groups in the region tend to be quickly interpreted as ethnic or religious conflicts. This tendency of not establishing the boundary between ethnic, religious, cultural or political issues especially during

moments of conflicts and violence has for want of a better expression been captured by some scholars as “ethno-religious conflicts” (Egwu 4; Alemika 3) or identity conflicts. This study therefore, subsumes religious conflicts in northern Nigeria because in such cases, the ethnic nationalities usually involved are predominantly of one religious group - Christianity or Islam. Thus a religious conflict eventually assumes ethnic dimension and vice-versa.

These concepts of ethnicity, religion, culture and politics are closely associated so much so that the boundary is sometimes difficult to draw. Therefore, the concept “ethno-religious” is used in this thesis to refer to these various identity-based violent conflicts which are ethnic, political, religious or economic in their manifestations. It is in this sense that the coinage “ethno-religious” is used in this study (Egwu 3).

Nigeria as a nation state has had and continues to have its own share of ethno-religious conflicts. The first major violent religious conflict in post-colonial Nigeria occurred in Kano between December 18th and 29th 1980. Since then the relative peace and harmony in the country has been shattered. Ostensibly, after several years of independence, one of the major problems retarding the socio-economic and political development of Nigeria has been the recurrent incidences of ethno-religious crises and the attendant destructive effects. The growing propensity of protracted ethno-religious conflicts is potentially destructive to the extent that if nothing is done it can compromise the corporate existence of the country. So far, there appear to be no singular phenomenon in the history of Nigeria that shows the inability of the various identities to live together peacefully and pursue the goal of development than the regular occurrence of this monster called ethno-religious conflict.

What the country is experiencing is a recurring decimal of violence that is deeply rooted in mutual suspicion and hatred among the various ethnic and religious groups in the country. The aftermath of these violent conflicts and indeed “religious wars” bears destruction, physical and mental devastation, death, deprivation, dislocation of people, destruction of property and massive economic stagnation.

In the last three decades alone, Nigeria has witnessed so many incidences of ethno-religiously based violent conflicts that it is difficult to keep proper track of the number. These violent occurrences have resulted in the destruction of lives and property worth several trillions of naira. As a result, many have lost their lives while many more have suffered injuries including permanent disabilities.

According to Samuel Kunhiyop, while countries like Tanzania, Switzerland, India, Belgium and the United States of America have taken advantage of their multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-cultural diversity, it has remained a divisive factor in Nigeria (151). The nation’s diversity has continued to threaten its progress and even its existence. This is because of our orientation of non commitment to the ideal of the nation but rather to our various ethno-religious identities. This is reflected in the frequent occurrence of ethno-religious and other violent conflicts that have afflicted the country since independence and particularly in the past three decades.

Although the exact number of violent ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria may not be accurately ascertained, it is on record that between 1999 and 2004, over 100 violent conflicts occurred in different parts of the country. This has resulted in the deaths of over 10,000 people and the displacement of over 800,000 people. It is estimated for instance that the *Maitatsine* riots in Kano in 1980 on its own claimed over 4,177 lives, while that of Jimeta-Yola in 1984 and Rigasa in Kaduna in 1992 led to 763 and 175 recorded casualties respectively (Egwu 3). In February 2006, as many

as 50,000 people were internally displaced and several others killed in a wave of violent conflicts across the country sparked off by protests against Danish newspapers' cartoons of Prophet Mohammed (Elaiwu 52; Ali et al. 50).

The humanitarian tragedy in terms of loss of lives and property in this chain of violent encounters can only be imagined. For instance, many Nigerians were surprised why a cartoon in far away Denmark should lead to so much destruction of lives and property in Nigeria. Also, on 16th November, 2002 *ThisDay* newspaper published a story on Prophet Mohammed seen by Muslims as blasphemous. This resulted in widespread violence that led to the destruction of several lives and property in many parts of northern Nigeria. The question is why is it so?

Ethno-religious and political conflicts seem to have strong implications for the socio-political and economic development of Nigeria. This fear was expressed by the statement of former Nigerian President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo while declaring a State of Emergency on Plateau State after the 2004 violent conflicts. According to him, "...violence had reached unprecedented levels and hundreds had been killed with much more wounded or displaced from their homes on account of their ethnic or religious identification." He further observed that schooling for children was disrupted and interrupted; businesses had lost billions of naira and much more property destroyed. Aside from these, the former president observed that these violent conflicts made investors to flee the troubled spots particularly Plateau State and the volatile Niger Delta Region. Further more, neighbouring states had their economies and social life disrupted by the influx of internally displaced persons as a result of the incessant conflicts (24).

In a research report presented by participants of the Senior Executive Course 26 of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), Kuru, the economic consequences of religious and communal conflicts are as follows:

In addition to the irreplaceable loss of lives, losses in terms of property (goods, houses, business premises) have not yet been fully ascertained. Some survivors have permanently lost all they laboured for in their lives. As a result, one can safely argue that the aggregate of such instances negatively impact on the overall economy of these communities and by extension, the rest of the country. New armies of the unemployed, the destitute and highly aggrieved are added on the streets with its attendant consequences. Victims are also generally male and belonging to the economically active segments of the society (2).

From the foregoing state of affairs, a lot of issues arise because as a result of these incessant conflicts many lives and property have been destroyed. Ethno-religious conflicts have disrupted the educational development of northern Nigeria with frequent closure of schools during crises.

This incessant violent conflicts, according to Ogoh Alubo points to “undeclared civil war, which unlike the 1967-1970 civil war has fronts in virtually all regions of the country” (4). This comparison to civil war according to Alubo “...underscores the gravity of the situation, ...the parallels between the current situation and a civil war is more vividly rendered by images of burnt out buildings and desolate communities” (4).

In the face of these recurrent ethno-religious conflicts, how can Nigeria attain sustainable social, economic and political development? What are the causes of these ethno-religious conflicts? What can be done to reduce and prevent these persistent

violent conflicts and sufferings, death and destruction that attend these violent conflicts? Conflicts according to Yoroms et al, do not lend themselves to easy solutions as “a given conflict encompasses both manifest and hidden cause” (2).

Unless the complexity of violent conflicts is discovered and understood, no meaningful conflict management can be achieved. Therefore, it becomes important to look at the mass media as one of the institutions in conflict management and to investigate how their activities might contribute to the escalation or de-escalation of ethno-religious conflicts in northern Nigeria and its effects on national development. What have been the roles of the mass media in the perpetuation or resolution of these conflicts? In other words, do the mass media affect ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria? According to Mu-azu:

...conflicts often generate media attention because they fit into the definition of what is considered news by professional journalists: timeliness, unusualness, drama, consequence and proximity, and the involvement of personalities who become important definers of the conflict. These elements help the media to define news in negative terms, and conflicts tend to provide the raw material that fits this definition (10).

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Considering the protracted nature of ethno-religious conflicts in northern Nigeria and the attendant destructions of lives and property, many questions arise as to: On the whole, what have been the negative effects of ethno-religious conflicts on the economic, social and political development of the region and Nigeria as a whole? The issue at hand is the degree to which the mass media handle conflict issues and how that affects conflict escalation or de-escalation. How did mass media reportage contribute to the escalation or de-escalation of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria and

northern Nigeria in particular in the past three decades? What factors compelled the mass media to take sides or not in the coverage of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria? Do the nature of mass media ownership, location, ethnic-religious affiliation of proprietors or editors affect the way the mass media report ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria during the period under study? What can the mass media do to contribute positively to the process of conflict resolution and national development?

The question, further, is what makes the role of the mass media more problematic in a pluralistic society like Nigeria? What are the differences in covering ethno-religious conflicts and other non-religious based conflicts? How can media practitioners detach themselves from being influenced by their religion or ethnic background in the discharge of their duties during ethno-religious conflicts and other types of conflicts? What role can the mass media play in promoting religious tolerance and dialogue to enhance co-operation and development of a pluralistic society like Nigeria?

It is against this background that this thesis examines the incidences and prevalence of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria, the causes, the role of the mass media and the threat that ethno-religious conflict poses to national development of the nation state. These and other related issues are the main thrust of this work.

1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The major aim of this study is to examine the mutual interactive effects of ethno-religious conflict and mass media in northern Nigeria and how the consequences of such relationships affect the development of both the northern part of the country and the nation as a whole. In the light of the above, the following are the specific objectives of the study:

- 1 To examine the nexus between ethnicity and religion and the crises that have engulfed Nigeria in the past three decades.
- 2 It also intends to look at the effect of ethno-religious crises on the development of Nigeria as a nation.
- 3 Also to show how the mass media can serve as a viable tool/instrument in the management of ethno-religious conflicts for the development of Nigeria.
- 4 To see how the patterns of ownership, geographical locations, religious affiliations of editors and media ownership affect the role of the mass media in their reportage of ethno-religious conflicts.
- 5 The study is expected to make modest recommendations on how the mass media can be a useful tool in peace building.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

From the statement of the problem, it is very clear that the issue at stake is a very serious one because it has to do with peaceful co-existence and national development of Nigeria as a nation. The significance of this study therefore cannot be overemphasized because there cannot be development if there is no peace. Because of their importance, studies of conflicts in general and ethno-religious conflicts in particular have attracted the attention of scholars from different academic disciplines in Nigeria and beyond. These include conflict management scholars, theologians, sociologists, economists, political scientists, psychologists and many others. They also include scholars of Marxist orientation who see ethnicity and religion as products of class and economic relations. These few examples attest to the importance of the effect of ethno-religious violence on socio-economic and political development of Nigeria. There is also the need to examine more closely the interrelationship between

ethnicity, religion, the mass media and national development, given that their concrete manifestation in the social process appear to have defied all solutions.

Also, the study has social and political significance. This is because the consciousness generated as a result of these persistent ethno-religious conflicts does not only foster a sense of social distance, but also retards the socio-economic and political development of the nation. Therefore, this study serves as an eye opener to political leaders on how to regulate the use of the media to serve as agents of conflict management and peace building. Scholars and students of communication will equally benefit from the findings as a result of additional literature in the study of the media and conflict reportage. The study also has policy significance because there is a gap in public policy for both government and the mass media in the management of ethno-religious conflicts in a pluralistic society like Nigeria. The challenge is to specify which policies and actions can be put in place to address the growing incidences of ethno-religious crises that have bedevilled Nigeria in the past three decades, their effects on national development and the role of the mass media.

Even though much has been written on ethno-religious crises, emphasis have been on their origins. This thesis further advances the fact that the mass media has a great role to play in escalating or deescalating ethno-religious crises whenever they occur. The thesis therefore, adds a new insight into finding solutions or curtailing ethno-religious conflicts.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objectives of this study, secondary data materials were mainly relied on. In sourcing for secondary materials, books, conferences and seminar papers, the internet and journal articles were used. Also the study surveyed and analysed contents of editorials, news analysis, news items, readers' opinions, advertorials in

selected newspapers and magazines. It examined some of the headlines, cover stories, and features published in the selected media and compare the ways and manner the media analysed, interpreted and reported these conflicts. Also some radio and television broadcast and commentaries were analysed. The study evaluated what the selected media reported on the selected major incidences of ethno-religious conflicts in the last three decades.

In selecting the newspapers and magazines for the survey, the study was guided by the geographical base of the newspapers, news magazines or television/radio stations, ownership and control including religious affiliations of media owners and editors. The primary focus of analysis of this study is the print media. However, occasional references were made to local and foreign electronic media like the *Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN)* Kaduna, the *Voice of America (VOA)*, the *British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)*, the *Cable Network News (CNN)*, the *Al-jazeera* and some International News Agencies.

The following newspapers and magazines were surveyed for this purpose. The *New Nigerian Newspapers*, the *Vanguard* newspaper, the *Saturday Vanguard*, the *Sunday Vanguard*, the *Daily Trust*, the *Weekly Trust*, the *Sunday Trust*, the *Nigeria Standard* newspapers, *The Punch* newspapers, *ThisDay* newspapers, *The News* magazine, the *Tell* magazine and the *Newswatch* magazine.

1.6 SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

From the topic of the study, one may think that it is too wide an area to embark on. Be that as it may appear, this study does not pretend to cover everything about ethno-religious conflicts. This study has examined another angle of various efforts that have been made in finding lasting solutions to incessant ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria in the past three decades. This segment has to do with the role of

the mass media in generating, escalating or deescalating ethno-religious conflicts whenever they occur. The effects of these crises on the peaceful co-existence of citizens of this country, the attendant effects on the survival of the nation and national development were equally examined. The study therefore, confines its scope from 1980 to 2011, with northern Nigeria as the primary area of concentration. This period also arguably can be regarded as one of the worst periods affected so far in the occurrences of ethno-religious conflicts in the history of Nigeria. Secondary data were mainly relied on, as the study concentrates on the analysis of relevant contents of the selected mass media.

1.7 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The discussions so far suggest a massive resurgence in ethno-religious identities and crises in Nigeria which in turn undermine national development and the survival of Nigeria as a nation state. Though ethno-religious conflicts, mass media and national development have generated mounting intellectual discourse, and a sizeable amount of literature developed therefrom, there still exists a vacuum that is yet to be filled, that is looking at the role of the mass media in finding solutions to the crises. For over three decades now, ethno-religious conflicts seem to have been one of the major problems retarding the development of this country and threatening the peaceful co-existence of the citizens of the country. It will not be quite correct to say that because much has been written, therefore, there is nothing new to be discovered again. This is because the issue under focus has continued unabated. For instance, since August, 2009 when *Boko Haram* crisis erupted in some states in northern Nigeria it has continued till date without solutions in sight. In all these crises, the level of destructions can only be imagined. In these instances too, the media came under

critical scrutiny from various segments of the population for its role in the reportage of these crises.

Therefore, this study examines the role of the mass media and suggests ways to report sensitive issues like ethno-religious conflicts. The thesis adds insight into the quest for solutions to the spread of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria. The development of the nation is at stake and all hands must be on deck to encourage peaceful coexistence because there cannot be any development in the face of frequent violent ethno-religious conflict.

This study will therefore, be useful to policy makers on how to legislate on laws that will regulate the use of mass media whenever ethno-religious conflict erupts. Also students of communication will benefit much from the findings and it will serve as a guide to their study in communication and conflict resolution in a multi-religious society like Nigeria. Among others, this study therefore, serves to fill these gaps.

1.8 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This thesis is organised into six chapters. Chapter one examines the general background to the study and posits the statement of the problem and the methodology for gathering data for the study. Chapter two reviewed the relevant literature, where the study identified gaps yet to be filled that warranted this study.

Chapter three chronicles, categorised and analysed some of the major ethno-religious conflicts in various parts of the country and northern Nigeria in particular. Chapter four examined the pattern of media reportage of the various ethno-religious conflicts in the past three decades and the effects of these conflicts on national development. To be able to do this, the study critically examines media ethics and reportage of conflicts, objectivity and balance reporting in conflict settings, and

factors affecting the role of the mass media. Chapter five examined critically the effects of ethno-religious conflicts and media reportage on national development in Nigeria. Chapter six is the summary, conclusion, recommendations and contribution of the thesis to knowledge.

1.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study focuses on the relationship between religion, the mass media and national development, with the northern part of Nigeria as the main area of focus. The purpose is to understand the extent to which religion affects the different institutions especially the mass media in the society and how the media reportage of ethno-religious conflict in turn affects conflict escalation or deescalation. It is for this reason that the theoretical framework of the study is based on theories of religion and society. Although there are different theories of religion and society, this thesis concentrates on three of these theories as they relate to the focus of this study. The study also examines the theory of “mediatisation” which dwells on the role and influence of the mass media on other social institutions such as politics, family and religion. Three great scholars can be identified with their various positions on religion and society. These scholars propounded different theories in their efforts to address problems associated with the interaction of religion and society. Fredrick Hegel, Karl Marx and Max Weber all offer a wide array of thoughts and ideas regarding how religion influences the society and vice versa.

The theory of mediatisation as propounded by Stig Hjarvad enables us to understand the interplay between religion and the mass media. It asserts that the mass media is an important source of information about religious issues and that religious information and experiences are influenced “according to the demands of popular media genres” (119) This theory postulates that the mass media have taken over many

of the cultural and social functions of institutionalized religions and provide spiritual guidance, moral orientation, ritual passages and a sense of community and belonging (1). Therefore, as we rely on the theories of religion and social change, the study will equally be guided by the “mediatisation” theory to establish how the nature of media reportage of ethno-religious issues can be central to escalation or de-escalation of ethno-religious conflicts during the period under study.

1.9.1 Friedrich Hegel

One of the categories for grouping classical theories of social change is the theory of “dialectic” as propounded by Friedrich Hegel. Hegel holds that it is ideas that determined the material condition of existence. For Hegel, our material existence is rooted in idea and that every idea and all of history go through the “dialectic” process whereby an idea (thesis) develops, is challenged by an opposite idea (antithesis), and merges into a new form (synthesis). The synthesis then becomes the thesis and the process, according to Hegel, begins all over again. According to Hegel, religion is autonomous and therefore, above the society (qtd in Mohammad 28). This is the logical conservative view. According to this view religion is given by God and as such cannot be affected in any way by society. In other words, religion like other ideas is static and cannot be affected by the material world, because the material world is shaped and influenced by ideas.

For Hegel, idea is the underlying reality of the entire universe. History then is the progress of ideas shaping the actions of individuals and communities. Ideas themselves, Hegel believed, were the products of consciousness. Hegel termed consciousness as an active force in the universe as Spirit, which he also identified with God (Rockwell 143). If we substitute idea with religion, Hegel’s position can also be clearer. Hegel’s view is an extreme position that was disputed by later

scholars like Karl Marx who went another extreme in the relationships between idea and the material world.

1.9.2 Karl Marx

Karl Marx's general perspective is that ideas are reflections of the true causes which he identified as the material condition of man (Kaleb Shimp 43). According to him, it is the material conditions that shaped the ideas or determine the form of religion of a people. To Marx, religious beliefs arise out of the material condition of people's existence. He argues that the material world shaped the peoples' beliefs. Thus, to Marx, the economic system largely determined the beliefs that are held by individuals. In Marxist term, the mode of production determined the type of religion that is dominant in any society. Karl Marx did not argue that religion has no effect but he did not see religion as a source of social change (qtd in Haralambos 346). Marx believed that a change in infrastructure of society would lead to changes in the superstructure such as religion. Marx asserts that religion helps to maintain the status quo and that change in religion result from changes in the wider society. To Marx, religious beliefs grow out of the conditions under which people experience the social world.

Marx, like Durkheim, viewed religion as an integrative force that represents a means of creating feelings of togetherness, common bonds, shared values and the like. Unlike Durkheim however, Marx did not see this ideological aspect of religion in terms of its integrative function for society as a whole. On the contrary, he saw religion as one aspect of the social control mechanisms seized upon by the ruling class to enforce their ideological domination of other classes in society (Chris Livesey 5). In this respect, religion is not just an integrating ideology, it also serve the purpose of justifying the unequal distribution of rewards in the society.

Karl Marx and Emile Durkheim have generally dismissed the possibility that religion can cause changes in society. They believe that religion acts as a conservative force and that it is changes in society that shape religion not vice versa. In his attempt to dispute the Hegelian stand on the supremacy of idea over the material world, Marx took another extreme position by saying that religion is conservative and a mere tool for use not for the benefit of the larger society as explained by Durkheim but for furtherance of the interest of the ruling class in any society (Livesey 15). This is what Marxist scholars refer to as the manipulative role of religion.

1.9.3 Max Weber

Max Weber's position is that religion can be a dependable variable and that in some instances be an independent variable that can cause social change. By this, Max Weber took the middle path position between Karl Marx's extreme materialism and the Hegelian position that idea is supreme and the cause and source of social change. However, unlike Freidrich Hegel and Karl Marx, Max Weber asserts that religion and society are mutually related, that is, they are interactive (Haralambos 447). This means that society does influence the development of religion and religion on the other hand influences society.

Whereas Marx and Durkheim emphasize the role of religion in promoting social integration and impeding social change and Hegel emphasises the supremacy of ideas, in contrast, Weber argued that in some circumstances religion can lead to social change. Unlike Marx, Weber rejected the view that religion is always shaped by economic factors. He did not deny that at certain times and in certain places, religion may be largely shaped by economic forces, but he denied that this is always the case. According to Weber under certain conditions, religious beliefs can be a major influence on economic behaviours (Haralambos 448).

Asserting his argument that religion can in some instances hinder social change, Weber pointed out some of the ways in which religion contributed to change in the society. In his famous book – *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber examined the relationship between the rise of Calvinist Protestantism and the development of Western Industrial capitalism (Metta Spenser and Alex Inkeles 451). He tries to prove in this book that the growth of capitalism was started by Protestantism which is a religious sect. He asserts that the character traits encouraged by the Calvinist protestant value system were precisely those traits that a person would need to succeed in business (Haralambos 448). According to Weber, other areas of the world possessed many of the necessary prerequisites for the development of capitalism yet they were not amongst the first area to develop capitalism. What they lacked, according to Weber, was a religion that encouraged and facilitated the development of capitalism.

Weber believed that he had discovered and demonstrated that religious beliefs could cause economic change. He claimed that he had found a weakness in Karl Marx's materialism which implied that the economic system always shaped ideas. According to Weber, religion is not merely a result of social system, but that religion is energy, stimulator and has significant influence on human beings.

This does not mean however, that Max Weber is denying that in some instances religion can be dependent on other aspects of the social system. Weber understands that religion is not the sole factor influencing one's state of economic being, (Metta Spenser and Alex Inkeles 451) as there might be other factors like economy, politics, and culture. However, it cannot be ignored as well that religion can play crucial role in social change. Religion he said, can lead to social change, can form a culture, and play a role as independent variable in explaining social life.

According to Weber, the Protestant ethics did not cause capitalism but it provided the necessary moral and economic climate which encouraged capitalism (Metta Spenser and Alex Inkeles...451).

Weber argues that Ideas, material conditions are interactive and so no general perspective is adequate. According to Weber, religion serves as one system that helps the society as an organism to regulate and change itself to survive. For Weber, people's ideas are the initiating factors in social change. Religion therefore provides an ethical framework in which social change can take place.

Having examined the stand of Karl Marx, Fredrich Hegel and Stig Hjarvard, this study agrees with John Milton Yinger that "no one theory of religion and society is adequate for all purposes because every theory starts from certain assumptions useful for the purposes of the theorist" (49). For proper understanding of the role of religion in Nigeria therefore, this study is anchored on the theory of religious change and social change as championed by Max Weber who combined the ideas of Hegel, Marx and Durkheim to form a middle path. This position is necessary because many scholars today will agree with Weber that religion can be a force for change and a hindrance to change (Metta Spenser and Alex Inkeles 451). The study takes this stand because in spite of the positions of Marx, Hegel and the functionalist that religion promotes stability, the incidences of religious fundamentalism and ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria and other parts of the world in the past three decades contradict their claims. The study also is guided by the theory of mediatisation which among other things denotes the social and cultural process through which an institution like religion can be influenced by the mass media or vice versa.

1.10 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

The following concepts shall be used in this research study regularly. However, since some of them have other usages, for the purpose of this research work, they will be used as defined below:

1.10.1 Conflict

Conflict has been defined in many different ways. Historically, attempts by scholars to conceptualize conflict have “been conflictual.” One of the most quoted traditional definitions of conflict regards conflict as “... a struggle over value and claims to scarce, status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals”(Onigu Otite 1). Conflict, according to Shedrack Best is an intrinsic and inevitable part of human existence. However, violent conflict is not inevitable and as such is an anomaly. Best defines conflict as: “...the pursuit of incompatible interests and goals by different groups...armed conflict is the resort to the use of force and armed violence in the pursuit of incompatible interests and goals” (20). The emphasis is on the divergence of interests and aspirations of the parties. The perspective of Shedrack Best on violent and non violent conflict as quoted above guides this study.

1.10.2 Ethnic Conflict

Ethnic conflict, according to Princeton University “is an armed conflict between ethnic groups often as a result of nationalism”(1). It is a form of identity based conflict and like religious conflict, it is intractable and therefore, difficult to resolve. This is the sense in which this study has used the concept of “ethnic conflict” in this thesis.

1.10.3 Religious Conflict

Essentially, conflicts based on religion tend to become dogged, tenacious and brutal, intractable and a threat to the meaning of life. Conflict is said to be religious if

the reason for the conflict is based on religious disagreement. When conflicts are couched in religious terms, in most cases they become transformed into value conflicts. Unlike resource conflicts, which can be resolved by pragmatic and distributive means, value conflicts have a tendency to become mutually conclusive. They entail strong judgements of what is right and wrong, and parties believe that there is no common ground to resolve their differences. Ikenga-Metuh identified three forms of religious conflicts thus (Egwu 3): Intra-religious which occur between different denomination or sects, Inter-religious which is between adherents of different religious beliefs, but capable of assuming socio-ethnic dimensions and inter-religious which is between adherents of different religious beliefs, but capable of assuming socio-ethnic dimensions. This study uses the term “religious conflict” from this perspective in this thesis.

1.10.4 Ethno-Religious Conflict

Ethno-religious conflict is a conflict that combined both religion and ethnicity as the basis of disagreement. As Ikenga-Metuh has noted with particular reference to Nigeria’s “most inter-religious conflicts usually develop into inter-ethnic conflicts even where they began as a purely religious disagreement. The reverse is the case: namely, some socio-ethnic conflicts are deflected and fought out under inter-religious banner” (qtd in Egwu 4). It is hardly surprising because there is a very strong correlation or overlap between ethnic and religious boundaries in Nigeria’s plural setting. According to Egwu: “this tendency for the boundary between the two forms of identity to collapse during moments of conflicts ...has been captured in the phrase “ethno-religious” violence (4). This study adopts this perspective on ethno-religious conflict.

1.10.5 Mass Media

Mass media, according to Collins English Dictionary online is a medium of communication that is designed to reach the mass of the people. Mass media is the means of communication that reach large numbers of people in a short time, such as television, newspapers, magazines, and radio. Mass media is also seen as diversified media technologies that are intended to reach a large audience by mass communication. Mass media consists of the various means by which information reaches large number of people such as television, radio, movies, newspapers, and the internet (Sociology.org).

1.10.6 Peace Journalism

Peace journalism, also called conflict solution journalism or conflict sensitive journalism according to Jake Lynch is when editors and reporters make choices about what to report, and how to report it, that create opportunities for society at large to consider and to value violent responses to conflict (1). Peace journalism is an advocacy approach to the traditional form of reportage that is oriented toward truth, people, and solutions. While the aim of traditional journalism is simple coverage of the facts of conflicts, the goal of peace journalism is to promote conflict resolution, peace initiatives, and the reconstruction of conflict-torn societies. Peace journalism thus offers a cautionary tale for any effort to establish a formal model of constructive conflict coverage. It is a reminder that the coverage of conflict and disputes takes place in a real world of deadlines and organizational, professional, societal, and other pressures on news reporting-forces that must be respected by any formal model of constructive conflict coverage.

1.10.7 Development

Development is a term with a positive connotation associated with a better future. However, development is a complex issue, with many different and sometimes contentious definitions. A definition of development has therefore, been a major area of controversy and unstable over time- “a victim of definitional pluralism” (Tolu Lawal and Abe Oluwatoyin 2). However, attempts have been made by scholars to conceptualize development. A basic perspective equates development with economic growth. Traditionally, economists have measured development in terms of increasing per capita income, or gross domestic product. But if the distribution of income is skewed and the poor part of the population is getting poorer even while average income increases, many people would hesitate to call this development (Measuring Sustainable Development 2).

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP 1994), development entails leading long and healthy lives, knowledgeable, access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living and to be able to participate in the life of the community (13). Thus the UNDP sees development as an increase in well-being across the members of a society between two points in time. Achieving development therefore means freeing people from obstacles that affect their ability to develop their own lives and communities. Thus, development entails empowerment; it is about local people taking control of their lives, expressing their own demands and finding solutions to their problems (UNDP 2).

According to Dudley Seers, the questions to ask about a country's development are: What has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all of these three have become less severe, then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the

country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result ‘development’, even if per capita income has soared (24), Seers questioned the basic issue of whether growth in the average level of per capita incomes would be an adequate measure of development if development was defined in terms of the satisfaction of basic needs.

Another perspective in the definition of development is directly related to the achievement of poverty reduction and of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). There is no doubt, considerable confusion over the wide range of divergent conceptualization of development. A common theme however, within most definitions is that ‘development’ encompasses ‘change’ in a variety of aspects of the human condition. According to Tolu Lawal and Abe Oluwatoyin, for a nation to be in a phase of development there must be some pre-requisites, which include socio-political and economic stability. To them development is an idea that embodies all attempts to improve the conditions of human existence in all ramifications. It implies improvement in material well being of all citizens in a sustainable way such that “today’s consumption does not imperil the future,” it also demands that poverty and inequality of access to the good things of life be removed or drastically reduced. It seeks to improve personal physical security and livelihoods and expansion of life chances.

Indicators of Development

How then do studies determine, measure or assess whether a nation is developing or not? Development indicators have evolved considerably since the 1960s. This evolution has been inter-woven with disputes on the meaning of development. A major feature of this has been the contrast between economic indicators such as per capita and broader views of development and wellbeing which

include social and psychological dimensions at their centre. According to UNDP, the search for what constitutes development has involved so many problems. Development indicators were needed for elements of basic needs – physical necessities such as food, shelter and public services, as well as the means to acquire these through employment and income. Progress in these broader measures was reflected in the greater availability of data on health and education for many developing countries during the 1970s (22).

National Development

National development involves changes or advancement in a nation aimed at improving the political, economic and social lives of the people. It covers political, economic and social issues. National development can be described as the overall development or a collective socio-economic, political as well as religious advancement of a country. It is the ability of a country or countries to improve the social welfare of the people, namely, by providing social amenities like good education and pipe-borne water (Lawal and Oluwatoyin 239). In discussing national development, one needs to look at economic development, socio-cultural integration and development and how these flow to human development. Without human development, which is the development of the human capital of a nation or its citizens, national development can be thwarted or defeated. In fact, human development is one basis for judging the effectiveness of the economic development component of national development (UNDP 1). It is reasonable to know that development is not only an economic exercise, but also involves both socio-economic and political issues and pervades all aspects of societal life. Development is understood from this perspective in this thesis.

1.10.8 Northern Nigeria

Northern Nigeria as a geographical region was a British colony formed in 1900. The basis of the colony was the 1885 Treaty of Berlin which broadly granted Northern Nigeria to Britain, on the basis of protectorates in Southern Nigeria. At independence in 1960 Nigeria emerged as a Federal System with three regions, North, South and West. Not long after independence the country became a republic and the regions were increased to four with the addition of Midwestern region. The four regions in the post independence period were increased to 12 States in 1967. Presently, Nigeria has a total of 36 States with a Federal Capital Territory. The following 19 states came out of the former Northern Nigeria: Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, Yobe, Kogi, Plateau, Benue, Nasarawa, Kwara, Niger, Taraba and Zamfara. Northern Nigeria in this research work therefore, refers to these states. By Northern Nigeria the study also alludes to those states in Nigeria that have witnessed one form or the other of religiously based conflicts.

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

The destructive connection between protracted violent conflicts and development in any human society has been the focus of critical discourses among scholars and policy makers for quite some time now. That is why scholars from various areas of study have written so much on conflicts, conflict management and transformation for a peaceful society. The fact is that intractable conflicts are hard to resolve because their underlying causes are often deeply entrenched and closely interwoven. However, one common denominator of all protracted conflicts is that they are all based on long-standing deep divisions.

Some studies have focused on causes of these violent conflicts, types, management and resolutions. Also much of these earlier works were on the adverse effects, nature and description of these conflicts and ways to mitigate and resolve them. Available media studies in Nigeria in particular, pay little attention to the role of mass media, in the ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria. Also, these various attempts by scholars especially in Nigeria did not focus adequate attention on ethno-religious conflicts and the effects of such conflicts on national development. This review therefore, analyses the opinions of scholars who have written on the causes, dynamics and effects of these conflicts on national development, the role of the mass media in escalating or de-escalating these violent conflicts and identified existing gaps that need to be addressed.

The methodology adopted in this review enables the study to organize the literature on topics or issues. This review is therefore, undertaken under the following sections: causes of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria; ethno-religious conflicts and national development; ethno-religious conflicts management in Nigeria; ethno-religious conflicts and mass media; ethno-religious conflicts, mass media and national

development, ethno-religious conflict and mass media and summary of literature reviewed and gaps identified.

2.1 CAUSES OF ETHNO-RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS

Violent conflicts have their historical forebear in Nigeria. In many ways, it can be postulated that the creation of Nigeria as a country was an outcome of many conflicts and compromises. Nigeria is a pluralistic society; culturally, politically, ethnically, religiously and otherwise. Of all these pluralism, it appears that ethnicity and religion are the most dominant and problematic. Thus ethnicity and religion have provided the pattern and potential for the protracted violent ethno-religious conflicts this country has experienced in the past three decades. Scholars have attributed the causes of these conflicts to various factors like struggle for land resources, traditional authority, competition for economic and political spaces, clash of values and way of lives, religion and ethnicity and religious manipulations (Egwu 29, Ukoha 4, Alemika 28).

In his work, Emeka Okafor, examines the ethno-religious and communal conflicts that has befallen Nigeria since the return to civil rule in 1999 (1). Using Marxist conflicts perspective, Okafor argues that these violent conflicts are inbuilt in socio-economic and political management of post colonial Nigeria. However, according to him, with the renewed attempt at entrenching democracy, struggle for political and economic spaces has intensified between and among the various ethno-religious and political groups, thus making these conflicts inevitable (2). The paper also identifies poverty in the country occasioned by social and economic dislocation, ethnic and religious manipulations by the elite as the brain behind this spate of ethno-religious conflicts. He further argues that pluralism and diversity in Nigeria, abundant human and natural resources have deepened suspicion, hatred and distrust among the people (3).

Musa Daura examines violent conflicts in northern states using Bauchi, Plateau and Taraba States as case studies. Violent conflicts, he said, have become a recurrent and incessant feature in the past three decades in Nigeria and that no part of Nigeria is left out in these violent conflicts. He explored various theoretical perspectives to provide an insight into the ramification of violent conflicts in Nigeria especially in Bauchi, Plateau and Taraba States (2-3).

The work assesses the causes, effects, dynamics and mechanisms for managing conflicts with a view to finding solutions to the problem of ethno-religious conflicts. The study asserted that religion, ethnicity and the manipulative roles of the political elite are mainly responsible for the spate of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria. It also identifies ignorance, poverty, marginalization, and fear of domination as equally responsible for these conflicts (3-16).

Ukiwo Ukoha, in his work, examines the explosion of violent ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria contrary to the expectation that the inauguration of civil rule will usher in stability and peace. He argues that the nature of the politics of the transition programme and the reluctance of the civilian regime to address the national question led to the resurgence of social groups that make demands for incorporation and empowerment (1). According to him, the central argument is that competition for power and the inability of government to deliver dividends of democracy have resulted in violent conflicts between ethnic and religious groups (4).

Etanibi Alemika and Festus Okoye agreed with the dominant view among scholars that ethno-religious conflicts occur in the Middle Belt area because of several socio-economic factors. The causes of ethno-religious conflicts, they argue, include but not limited to poverty, economic crisis, structural adjustment and political manipulation (28). They further argued that the pluralistic nature of Middle Belt area

provides the basis for state policies that influence the dynamics of conflicts in the area. According to these scholars, because various complexities are involved in the area, these undermine the values of ethnic and religious groups in the area which in turn have the tendency to fuel conflicts.

The nature of social relations they said, informs the character of cleavages as “people return to their families, kindred tribes and villages in search of ethnic security” (28). This, to them, is why religion and ethnicity become platforms and channels for expressing grievances. This is in line with the argument of Idowu Ojelade that in the midst of the crisis of state and governance, the people find succor in “fissiparous” ethno-religious groups. Such groups take over the functions of state and its legitimacy because “citizenship is precarious.” Alemika and Okoye further emphasized that “the subjugation of minority ethnic groups in the Middle Belt area” under the Emirate systems by the colonialist as one of the major reasons for the persistent ethno- religious conflicts in the area (42). This they refer to as “internal colonization.” They further submitted that ethnic, religious, political and economic conflicts are “communal conflicts” (42). Other factors such as long period of military rule, shrinking democratic space, and “communal entrepreneur” (60) are also responsible.

In line with the argument of Alemika and Okoye, Lewis et al. reported in an earlier survey that a good number of Nigerians prefer ethnic and religious identity respectively to occupational, class and individual’s identities and that in times of problems most Nigerians prefer to meeting religious leaders, influential persons and traditional rulers in order of preference. This they said explains the “messianic attraction of leaders of ethno-religious groups” (29-30).

In a paper presented in 1988, the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) Kuru, Alumni Association examines the causes of religious crises and their adverse effects on Nigerian unity and development. According to the paper, ethno-religious crises are caused by provocative preaching, references to others as “infidels,” “unbelievers,” “pagans,” economic down turn, manipulation of religion, ethnicity and proliferation of religious bodies in schools.

Samuel Egwu, in his work which covers decades of the genesis and causes of violent ethnic and religious conflicts, traces the beginning of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria to the 1980s (4). Using a political economic approach, Egwu stresses the inter-twin character of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria. As a result of this he argues, the “boundary between religious and ethnicity-motivated violence becomes difficult to draw during conflicts” (4). He argues further that economic reasons are the primary causes of these violent conflicts that became more frequent from the 1980s. He identified Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and the inability of the state to carry out its traditional role of meeting the needs of the people as one of the causes of conflicts. Egwu argues further that the Nigerian State “is inherently violent and crises generating” (29) and that because of this, repression, suppression and intimidation are its essential attributes. To buttress his point, Egwu states that the economic and political deprivation of majority of Nigerians is the reasons that make them susceptible to religious and ethnic manipulation by the elites. Egwu also in this work outlines the various ethno-religious conflicts that took place between 1980 and 2001, and the threat these posed to unity and the development of Nigeria.

Egwu in another article argues that to be able to comprehend the resurgence of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria, there is a need for one to take into cognizance the different forces at work not only in Nigeria but globally. He argues further that these

forces either acting alone or in combination have sharpened the crises of the nation-state project in post colonial Africa (16). These forces according to Egwu include:

...the accelerating process of globalization and democratization, the deepening economic crisis and social inequality, the resurgence of neo-liberal ideology seeking to enforce market reforms, and the consequent whittling down of state legitimacy and capacity, all of which have led to the emergence of different individual groups refining and re-inventing their identities (16).

The above quotation summarises the central theme of Egwu's articles, for he recognized that religion and ethnicity are closely related in the social process and that more often the boundary is difficult to draw (17). He argues strongly that economic factor is solidly behind the increase of ethno-religious conflicts since the 1980s among groups that had lived together for several years. According to Egwu, these conflicts coincided with the introduction of various economic measures like SAP, modernization policies which led to closure of industries and the attendant loss of jobs by workers. He further asserts that be that as it may, ethnicity and religion must be acknowledged as existing identities that should not be waved off, but can be politically activated and used by the elite. His solutions to this spate of ethno-religious crises is that government should address the question of economic crisis presently in Nigeria by continuing to expand provision of social services and support for the poor.

Egwu's works like that of Alemika and Okoye are classical works in ethnic and religious identities as factors to be considered seriously if Nigeria is to know peace and attain economic development. Egwu concludes by stating that economic and political contestation are central to the spate of violent ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria in the past decades.

Abdullahi Adamu, in his paper at the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) Kuru traces the genesis of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria to 1999 and that these conflicts have turned thousands of people into “pitiable” refugees in their own homes and communities. He argues further that though there are religious colorations to the conflicts especially in Jos and Kaduna, “it seeks to mask the underlying fundamental cause or causes of these crises” (3). Religion, he said is quite a ready weapon employed to gain advantage or obtain a victim status in the unending ethnic quest for social, political and economic advantages. This view agrees with the paper of Yusuf A. Obaje at the same event in NIPSS when he asserted that religion is only being misused and manipulated. According to Obaje, as an agrarian society, the major cause of these protracted ethno-religious conflicts are claims to land (2-3).

The NIPSS Research Final Report on “Religious Disturbances in Kano and Kaduna States” maintains that religious conflicts are not new to these areas. The thirty one page report chronicles the causes of various religious conflicts in the two states from 1980–1982 (11).

In a report on internal conflicts in Nasarawa, Benue, Plateau, Taraba, Kaduna, Adamawa and Bauchi States, submitted by the Federal Ministry of Information in 2002, conflicts in Nigeria were traced as far back as 1960, but that their propensity increased in the last ten years and particularly from 1999. The reason for this increase, the report states, is freedom of expression provided by democracy. The report categorizes conflicts in the area to ethnic, religious and land/boundary conflicts. However, according to the report, in practice it is difficult to clearly distinguish between religious and ethnic conflicts because in most cases, these conflicts begin as ethnic and then turn religious or vice versa (2). The report lists causes of these violent

conflicts among others as poverty, unemployment, fear of political domination, implementation of Sharia, increased pressure on land, neglect of responsibilities by leaders and perceived marginalization (33).

In his quest to understand the causes of these conflicts, Rotgak I. Gofwen subscribes to the dominant manipulative thesis as he identifies the struggle for power and position as leading to the manipulation of religion and ethnicity (9). He also identifies religious intolerance, misinterpretation of doctrine and conversion campaigns as some of the causes of religious crises in Nigeria. He therefore, concludes that ethno-religious conflicts are caused by a combination of several factors of which “the prominent is economic depression” (187).

Bala Usman stresses the manipulative role of religion to serve “both domestic and international elites and their interests” (12). He cites instances like the death of General Murtala Muhammed which was presented in religious terms “in order to foster violence” (62). According to him, there were those that “wanted to present Murtala as a Muslim Martyr and his assassins as Christian villains.” He stressed further that there was a “condolence message by a foreign organization to Nigerian Muslims for the loss of a Muslim leader” (12).

Usman goes further to state that right from the *Sharia* debate in the Constituent Assembly in 1977 to the *Maitatsine* and Kaduna crises in 1980, all we have been witnessing are smokescreens in the name of ethno-religious conflicts. He argues that in actual fact, it was nothing but a manipulation of religion and ethnicity by both internal and external forces for economic and political gains. According to him therefore, there is urgent need to “expose this deceit called ethno-religious conflicts” for what they really are, a cover up by the ruling elites for their economic benefits (87). He concludes by saying that

...the manipulation of religion in Nigeria today is essentially a means of creating the context for this fancy dress ball, for this charade of disguises.... It is to enable this class to cover themselves with religious disguises in order to further entrench division among our people, slow down their awakening at any cost; even the unity of our country for which so much has been sacrificed (88).

The NIPSS Special Report (8) on conflicts and integration in Nigeria traces the origins of these conflicts to geographical divisions, regionalism and the struggle for the control of state power. In line with this dominant view, the report stresses that though some of these conflicts present themselves as religious conflicts, they have beneath them “crucial social forces at play” (31). This is so because occurrence and escalation of religious conflicts have a linkage with “harsh economic condition arising from the decline of the living conditions of the people” (31).

Sunday Iduh attributes the causes of incessant conflicts in Nigeria to the introduction of *Sharia* in 2002 in Zamfara State, because to him, this undermined the secular nature of the Nigerian Constitution (3). He concludes his thesis by referring to the Odi and Zakibiam military invasion in 1999 and 2001 respectively as “massacre” which he said the federal government failed to bring the perpetrators to book (3).

In their article, John Ime and Aminu, Z. Mohammed, et al investigated small arms and light weapons (SALW) in Africa by reviewing the situation in Nigeria. They argued that several social, economic, and political factors have caused a marked increase in gun-related violence, including ethno-religious crises, the response of security forces to criminal activity, and growing economic disparity. According to them, Kano has been the focal point of communal riots between Christians and Muslims, and that firearm injuries are linked to these riots (1).

Hussaini Abdu in his article on ethno-religious conflict in Kaduna State affirm that though Kaduna as a state is known to be volatile in ethno-religious conflicts, Kaduna town is not prone to crisis (117). While tracing the causes of ethno-religious crises in Kaduna State to what he refers to as “historical animosity” between the Christian and Muslim groups, he says that this animosity has its root in pre-colonial political structure of “Hausa land and the politics of Colonization” (130). He has stressed the adverse consequences of these conflicts on the society especially on women and children in particular (130), and the urgent need to guide against it.

On the same account, Abdu states that crises affect democracy and national integration. He looks at the sensitivity of religion and the need for caution in handling religious issues. He argues that there is a strong and overlapping relationship between ethnic and religious identities (148). He traces the origin of ethno-religious conflicts to economic down turn since the 1980s and that this made it difficult for the state to meet its obligations and that this “sharpened” religious cleavages. Another factor responsible for ethno-religious conflict according to him is military rule in Nigeria which gave rise to “religious fundamentalism” among both Christians and the Muslims (164). He also argues that the issue of Nigeria as either a secular state or not is at the root of these crises, for whereas the Christian groups advocate secularity of the State the Muslim group oppose secularity (164).

Emmanuel Ali, in his contribution to the causes of ethno-religious conflicts in Jos, argues that economic interests were the factors behind the crises and that it only assumes ethno-religious coloration (239). He states further that government’s failure to direct the economic potentials at its disposals to the advantage of the citizens is the reasons for these conflicts. He submits that the 2001 crisis in Jos though triggered by religion was essentially a struggle for “living economic space” (244).

Leonard Fwe examines the history and causes of ethno-religious conflicts in Kaduna State and argues that factors such as poverty, lack of trust, fear of socio-cultural domination and activities of retired military officers were responsible for the incessant ethno-religious conflicts in the state (102). He concludes that the multi-ethnic nature of Kaduna state was not the cause of these conflicts as other scholars assumed but that economy and ignorance are behind it.

Jibrin Ibrahim and Kazah Toure also traces the causes of ethno-religious conflicts in Northern Nigeria to the colonial policy of amalgamating Northern and Southern Nigeria in 1914. According to them, the move has resulted in the fear of domination of one region or ethnic group or religion by the other (1).

Zakari Kazaure in his foreward to a conference on “Dialogue and Peace,” traces the origin of conflicts between Islam and Christianity to several centuries ago (1). According to him, “Islam and Christianity met in Nigeria after they had fought each other for centuries in Asia, North Africa, the Middle East and Southern Europe” (7). The only way out of these religious conflicts to him is dialogue for peace to reign.

Ali Mazrui was very assertive when he states that tensions between religious groups are usually an aspect of either “ideological conflicts, ethno-cultural conflicts or class conflicts” (47). This means that religious conflicts have other underlying motives and not necessarily religious motive.

2.2 ETHNO-RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Right from the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates of Nigeria in 1914, to the contemporary period, one major conflict that has constantly and incessantly reared its head against the unity of the country is identity based conflicts with religion and ethnicity as dominant variables. These series of ethno-religious conflicts witnessed in many parts of Nigeria, especially in the northern axis

of the country have not only hampered the nation's socio-economic and political development but also put to question the moral tenets and peaceful co-existence of the two dominant world religions in Nigeria (Islam and Christianity). The resultant massive loss in human and material resources has continued to register its multiplier effects on all facets of the nation's socio-political, economic and infrastructural development.

These conflicts have had enormous negative consequences on the economy, and especially on the poor masses, which are yet to be measured with a view to finding appropriate policies that will ameliorate the situation. Scholars from various areas of study have at various times pointed out and expressed the adverse effects of these conflicts on the socio-political development of the various areas engulfed in protracted conflicts and Nigeria as a nation (Daura xiii; Egwu 16; Mazrui 47).

Violent conflicts, Celestine Bassegy argues, generate social division, reverse economic progress, impede sustainable development, human rights violations and that large population movements triggered by conflicts threaten the security and livelihood of the people in conflict (DFID 16). According to him, the multiple and continuous economic crisis in the African continent has been generally linked to the protracted and widespread violent conflicts. For Bassy: "in existential terms, the imminent linkage between conflict and underdevelopment crisis is non-linear, but dialectical... underdevelopment crisis breeds conflict and conflict in turn sustains the quagmire of economic crisis in Africa" (xv).

The consequences of protracted violent conflicts on development in Africa, Celestine Bassy further states, has been so much and that because of these incessant violent conflicts in the continent, development and security have proved antithetical and that the consequences can be identified from their direct and indirect impact on

the society and the economy (xxiv). Such impacts, according to Abdel and Ali, range from destruction of human and physical capital, disruption of economic transactions, increased cost of conducting such transactions, to distortion of resource allocation by the state (239).

Dogara Je'adayibe Gwamna in his article examines the grave danger of religious conflicts. He stressed the need for tolerance without which religion "will become liability instead of blessing" (134). He argues further in line with Bala Usman's dominant manipulative thesis that external forces are at work in the crises (135). According to Gwamna "external factors underlie some religious crises in Nigeria" (142) and that these contribute greatly to the growing religious intolerance in Nigeria over the years. He decried the growth of intolerance among religious adherents in Nigeria today and called for the need to curtail external influence in fuelling religious conflicts in Nigeria for Nigeria to live in peace with one another.

The NIPSS Research Final Report on "Religious Disturbances in Kano and Kaduna States" gave the account of how incessant conflicts led to the destruction of lives and property. It examines the *Maitatsine* conflicts and put the death toll at over 5,000 (11). The paper further observes that the 1982 conflict in Kano was unique because "it was the first time that organized Muslims attacked Christians on such a grand scale over the rebuilding of a church in Fegge, Kano" (25). The report concluded by saying that the conflicts in Kano and Kaduna within the reporting period constitute a comprehensive lesson for the nation in religious tolerance. Nigeria, it stated further, cannot escape the fact that government has a responsibility to give reality to the religious freedoms as contained in the Nigerian Constitution (31).

Writing on the adverse effects of conflict on development, E. King and Mary Sall remark that peace as opposed to conflict is increasingly perceived as a

precondition for human development as well as a deep human yearning and universal aspiration. According to these scholars broad economic development and prosperity are possible only in the presence of positive peace, as opposed to the absence of war. As a result they states further that:

Acute conflicts compromise economic stability, halt progress, and retard infrastructural improvements. Chronic disputes trivialize human life and render persons expendable. Persistent discord feeds upon itself. Flames of unrest consume irreplaceable natural and environmental resources. Dislocations caused by crime, unemployment and fatal communicable diseases go unaddressed, crippling the human spirit. Futures disappear and strife and insurgencies destroy cultures, the organization of societies and the course of civilization. Achieving world peace is thus one of the key challenges of the twenty first century (11).

According to Ayo Dumoye, there is no gainsaying the fact that conflicts have negative impact on political stability and economic development of any nation, because “ethnic conflicts and economic crisis are mutually reinforcing” (199). Poverty, he said, exacerbates ethnic conflicts, which in turn obstructs economic growth. Dumoye states further that a country where there is prolong violent conflicts will not be able to carry out any meaningful development because scarce resources meant for development will be diverted to maintaining law and order. Also the productive segment of the population is either dead, fighting or are in refugee camps (200).

According to NIPSS Alumni (1990), ethno-religious conflicts pose serious threat to national development because in the long run, no country survives religious war. The paper is a study on religious tolerance in Nigeria and a call for measures to guide against religious conflicts.

Examining the effects of violent conflicts in central Nigeria from a historical perspective, Bala Usman states that since 1980, communal conflicts have become more frequent, “more widespread and more violent and destructive of life and property” (1). He states further that these violent conflicts usually leave bloodshed, arson and other forms of devastation, involving human and materials assets like vehicles, buildings, livestock, and crops.

In his contribution to identifying the grave effects of ethno-religious crisis, Toyin Falola describes northern Nigeria as “region of terror” tracing the genesis to 1980. His work covers 1980 to 1990s which he referred to as “a decade of clashes” (14). According to him, 1990s should be seen as the “age of warfare” for northern Nigeria (15). He argues that because of these crises and violent conflicts “Nigeria was at war with itself” and that “the war was of religion, hunger, greed, and power rivalry” (193).

The recurrent violent conflicts in Nigeria since the return to civil rule in 1999 according to Ogoh Alubo, is worrisome. He has averred that these conflicts have become so frequent that no part of the country is left out and that it has become “a monthly affair” (2). He observes that these conflicts are not limited to Nigeria alone but a world affair. He points out the grave danger these conflicts pose for Nigeria in terms of human lives and property. He links the conflicts to the Nigerian civil war, but that however in this case the crises “have fronts in virtually all regions of the country” (4). These conflicts he says are so pervasive that “many Nigerian constituent units are now regrouping under regional and or ethnic umbrella and that “Nigeria is threatened by the possibility of dissolving into ethnic kingdoms” (6). He classifies the conflicts into three categories, religious, ethnic and political and chronicles some of these violent conflicts between 1999 and 2004 (8).

Rotgak Gofwen, in his book, employs a sociological approach in his explanation of the spate of ethno-religious crises in Nigeria. His work covers between 1980 and 2001 and identifies how ethno-religious conflicts can hinder nation building. He argues that the incessant ethno-religious conflicts witnessed in Nigeria hamper nation building. He lists the various ethno-religious conflicts that took place in northern Nigeria during the period under review. The work states that most of these crises crystallized into vicious fratricidal wars which have threatened the existence of most African States. He equally underscores the delicate nature of these crises, because, according to him, though the crises have their roots in politics and economy, they normally manifest as religious and ethnic conflicts. According to Rotgak Gofwen, “in Northern Nigeria, religion and ethnicity are interwoven to the extent that conflicts between groups in the region tend to be simultaneously interpreted as ethnic and religious conflicts” (5).

F. E. Ateru in his thesis on “Ethnic Conflicts in Nigeria,” stresses that it is dangerous and anti-developmental. Ateru believes that ethnicity and religion are being manipulated by the elite for selfish motives. According to him, Nigeria faces the threat of disintegration because of ethno-religious conflicts. Ateru agrees with other scholars that these incessant conflicts have led to destruction of lives and property, population displacement and problems of internally displaced persons (IDP), socio-economic instability, a feeling of insecurity as he traced the causes of these conflicts to economic and political factors noting that “unemployment provides readily available hands” (III).

The negative consequences of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria according to Etanibi Alemika are catastrophic because these conflicts threaten democracy,

development and human rights (19). The nation's aspirations for development and democracy, he said, cannot be realized under conditions of conflict and violence (20).

According to Victor Adetola, conflicts have the capacity to negatively affect development programmes by destroying infrastructure, interrupting the production process and diverting resources away from productive uses (385). He argues further that more than ever, "peace and development are now more intimately linked and are often regarded by the United Nations and other international actors as inseparable goals" (387). Also, that:

Food security which simply refers to access by all people, at all times, to sufficient food for a healthy and productive life can be disrupted resulting into food insecurity. Thus food insecurity can occur due to a disruption or damage to the food production system which may be as a result of occurrence of drought, war, famine, social conflict, socio-economic/political circumstances (393).

Lanre Olu Adeyemi, in his paper, argues that one cannot attempt to understand the development of the Nigerian state without studying ethnicity and religion because they are the main challenges to the development of democracy, nation building and national integration. The aim of Adeyemi's paper is to explain the multi-ethnic and multi-religious complexity and diversity of Nigeria (2). The paper focuses on the persistent ethno-religious crises in Nigeria and their effects on national development (10).

The National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) Special Report (8) on conflicts and integration in Nigeria states that religious conflicts in Nigeria predate the contemporary period. According to this report, religious conflicts are the most significant, widespread, complicated and dangerous form of conflicts in Nigeria. These conflicts, the report observes, "if not handled with care and urgently, are

capable of tearing the country apart” (9). The Report traced the main causes of religious conflicts in Nigeria as emerging from the conditions, relation and structures of non equity. These the report argues, have created regional, ethnic, religious differential hierarchies and alienation, political domination and oppression, and economic underdevelopment (8). The report stresses further that these cleavages and contradictions have grown and matured due to neglect over the years until they explode into open conflicts (10). The report further states that since the existence of Nigeria, conflicts in all ramifications have dogged successive administrations.

In his article, Sunday Iduh whose work covers from 1999 to 2007 acknowledges that violent conflicts in Nigeria are great threats to other African countries rather than poverty as some scholars earlier thought. This is so because according to him, “any major conflict is a disaster to the continent” (1) because of the large number of the Nigerian’s population. This work dwells on the causes and effects of these conflicts which he attributed to the three decades of military rule and which in turn prevented people from expressing their grievances. The dawn of democracy therefore, according to him, was an opportunity for the various ethnic or religious groups to express their grievances. Iduh states further that the various conflicts in Nigeria between 1999 and 2007 undermine her co-existence (2).

Writing on the effects of ethno-religious conflicts, Musa, A. Daura, asserts that “there is no gain saying the fact that ethnic conflict in whatever dimension carries with it an ill-wind which devastates the corporate co-existence of a nation and Nigeria is not an exception” (24). Daura summarises the implications to include: severe loss of lives and property, displacement and refugee problems, poverty arising from loss of economic opportunities, diverse depreciation and epidemics, disturbances in many

social activities like education, health, employment, adequate housing, lack of hygienic source of water, denial of rights, distrust, lawlessness and disintegration (24).

David Imbua Lishimimle, in his article, traces the historical genesis of religious conflicts to 1960 (164). According to Lishimimle, religious conflicts have pushed Nigeria decades backwards instead of technological and scientific development (167). He further asserts that religious conflict is putting Nigeria on the part of Western Sudan which was crumbled by general confusion and insecurity (167). He concludes by recommending that Christianity and Islam should accommodate each other and that government should place sanction, against violent religious “fatalism and extremism” (167).

In his own contribution on ethno-religious conflicts in Kaduna, Fwe states that conflicts in Kaduna state prosecuted in the name of ethnic and religious solidarity often destroy the state structure, level development process and “unleashes destructive violence which can threaten the territorial integrity of a country” (81). On why the crises became more regular in recent time, Fwe attributes it “to the fact that civil rule provides space for the expression of previously suppressed grievances” (81). He also subscribes to the manipulative thesis, as according to him, a large number of actors excluded from the political process have chosen the religious stage to act out their ambition” (81).

In her article on democracy and ethno-religious conflicts, Linda Lambert decries the upsurge of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria since 1999. She laments the destruction of lives and property as a result of these conflicts and stressed that it is a sponsored project by the elite who want to protect their interest at the expense of the nation (1). She particularly indicts the long military presence in politics in Nigeria as one of the factors responsible for this spate of crises. According to her, the long

military rule “created some bottled agitations and anger that become easily expressed under democracy” (2). These conflict situations, she argues, are sufficiently worrisome and that since peace is necessary for growth, development and national integration, the basic responsibility of all Nigerians is the search for peace by all means.

In their write up on “Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Northern Nigeria,” Jibrin Ibrahim and Kazah Toure stress the danger of ethno-religious conflicts in northern Nigeria. According to them, in spite of these incessant ethno-religious conflicts, Nigeria, as a pluralistic society, has a “fairly large consensus of agreeing to live together” (2), and so the government must preside as Nigerians sit together to discuss their differences.

Gwamna’s work on “Appraisal of Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Nigeria,” traces the increase in conflicts all over the world to the collapse of Soviet Union in 1999 (74). According to him, Nigeria has witnessed an increase of various conflicts in the past three decades. He stresses that, of these conflicts, ethnic and religious conflicts are the most dangerous threats to the attainment of democracy “because “religion today has become a major defining factor of identity” (79). Gwamna states further that, in the Middle Belt, there is a thin dividing line between ethnicity and religion. He expresses fear that “the restraining factor of the presence in some families of both Christians and Muslims in the Middle Belt region is fast being eroded as the force of religion might soon supplant family affiliations” (80). The adverse effects of religious crises were further stressed when he observes that

...since the 1980s when religious crises heightened in Nigeria, people have relocated to what they consider as “safe areas.” These relocations are based on ethnic and religious boundaries, which have serious security implications in

future.... Today major cities in the North are patterned along Christians and Muslims' divide (80).

Ethno-religious conflicts according to Gwamna, has serious economic, social and political consequences and that these persistent ethno-religious crises are symptoms of the failure of Nigerian state and societal and religious values (81). He therefore, concludes that for national stability and in order to safeguard the rights and privileges of Nigerians, religious influence and its use and ethnic identities should be underplayed.

Writing on the effects of the spate of crises in Jos, Shedrack Best stresses that the conflict produced political, economic, social, religious and psychological impacts. The economic impact came by way of the destruction of property and businesses. The conflict he observes led to unprecedented large scale destruction of property. The greatest impact according to Best, is the destruction of the Jos Main Market. He also argued that the political impact of the conflict is enormous. The politics of Jos North Local Government has been polarized and heated as there are divisions among the political elites. He also identifies the psychological impact of the conflict and that this manifests by way of the imparting of a culture of mutual fear and mutual suspicion among residents of the city. Thus, according to Best "certain areas have been ethnically cleansed of some ethnic and religious groups" (23). Some of these areas he identifies are Angwan Rogo, Angwan Rimi, Gangare and Bauchi Road and that in these areas one can hardly find Christian populations. He equally argues that one can hardly find Muslims in Angwan Rukuba, Jenta Adamu, Jenta Mangoro, Gada Biu and Hwolshe areas of Jos city. Best observes further that religion has come to assume a more active and conflict prone place in the definition of identities in Jos because of the role it played in the conflict. According to him,

...religion was not causal to the conflict, but it did serve the functions of mobilization, identity and easily appealed to the popular emotions of parties to the conflict. Thus the present demarcation of residential areas in Jos is more towards religious than ethnic line (23).

Olusegun Obasanjo states that “as human beings, we will always have friction when we live together, but it should not lead to violence or the urge to take life” (8). According to Obasanjo, this wanton destruction of lives and property in the guise of ethno-religious crises is being sponsored by people who want to protect their own interest at the expense of the nation state (1).

Obasanjo in another instance stresses the need for dialogue and understanding because “these conflicts cannot be won by anyone” (13). He stated this position further by saying that it is possible to live in peace, but we have to work hard for it because we do not have a choice (13).

2.3 MANAGEMENT OF ETHNO-RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS IN NIGERIA

Conflict generally is considered as an inescapable and inevitable aspect of social, political, economic and organizational life (Alli 3; Alemika 1; Otite ix; Ibeanu 20). Conflict is also considered as part of human nature. It has been argued that the root cause of conflict is that man by his very nature exhibits certain traits like aggression, envy, ambition and frustration. On the basis of these factors, scholars are of the opinion that conflict cannot be completely eliminated from human society. There will always be conflict so long as human beings operate on the basis of rational calculations in a dynamic and competitive social environment (Dumoye 257). Conflict therefore, is seen as a creative aspect of organizational life and life generally. According to Alli, without conflict we will stagnate. As a result, in our private lives, in the life of the organizations we serve, in the society, conflict has become accepted

as an inevitable aspect of life (3). Therefore, it is not the mere presence of conflicts that is the problem of mankind but the tendency for violent conflicts to impact negatively on development and peaceful co-existence.

In his contribution, Ademola observes that conflict is “a fluid and infinitely elastic concept which can be twisted into different shapes” and has become very controversial among conflict scholars (36). Historical records over the years reveal that of all conflicts known to man, one of the most damaging is ethno-religious conflict. Thomas F. Mason observes that all manner of atrocities have been committed in the name of religion (3). According to him, men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious convictions and that history down to the present day has records of the horrors committed in the name of religions as a result of religious conflicts. Social conflicts, right from ages have posed serious problems to the human race and so, conflicts are not alien to man. However, the nature and dynamics of conflicts vary over time and places.

Onigu Otite cautions scholars not to perceive conflict as something abnormal, dysfunctional and therefore detestable. This he says is because conflict is a fact of life and could be a forerunner to positive change. The general understanding is that every plural society is bound to experience one form of conflict or the other. For Otite, what makes a society an ideal polity is the extent to which the conflicting interests and needs in a society are constructively managed so that violence does not threaten its continued existence (6). Otite states further that conflict challenges the rational man to think of alternative ways of meeting contesting human needs and interest (1). Conflicts he said, arises from the pursuit of divergent interests, goals and aspirations by individuals and or groups in defined social and physical environments (1).

In his contribution to the issue of conflict management and resolution in Nigeria, Isawa Elaigwu submits that any form of interaction among human beings and groups can generate conflict. Conflict he says, is the spice of every state because “it tests the fragility or otherwise of the state and creates the basis of future amelioration or adjustments” (5). However, he further observes that conflict that goes beyond certain levels is harmful to the very survival of the state as it threatens the basis of togetherness.

Park and Binge argue that conflict is designed to resolve divergent views and achieve a kind of unity even if it is through the annihilation of one of the conflict parties (qtd in Otite1). According to Otite, conflict cannot be discussed outside the concept of pluralism. Quoting Smooth, Otite (2) further points out that, both pluralism and conflict are related in complex ways.

In his analysis of the development of society and the inevitability of conflict, Karl Marx observes that “...struggle rather than peaceful growth was the engine of progress, strife was the father of all things, and social conflict the core of historical progress (1). The problem which we should try to solve therefore, is how to bring positive things out of conflicts, how we can control conflicts so that they do not destroy social, political, economic and organizational life.

According to Etanibi Alemika (1), conflicts often result from socio-economic, ethnic, religious, cultural, racial and gender differentiations within the context of scarce resources and struggle for their control by different groups. He argues that the primary sources of social conflicts are divergent interest associated with class, economic, ethnic, cultural, religious, gender, political and racial differentiation. These factors often combine in different degrees to produce conflicts of varying scope, intensity, duration and consequences.

According to Alemika, ethnic and religious conflicts result to several negative consequences such as loss of lives and property, population displacement and traumatic experiences, poverty, diverse deprivation such as lack of access to education, health care facility, employment opportunity and denial of human rights among others. Also trust between and within groups and communities are destroyed thereby undermining inter and intra community cooperation and alliance that may promote community development and unity (13-15).

Bearing in mind, the negative consequences of ethnic and religious conflicts in Nigeria and the threats they pose to democracy, national development and human rights, the Nigerian government and society therefore need to develop mechanisms for identifying, managing and resolving ethno-religious conflicts in different parts of the country. The nation's aspirations for development and democracy cannot be realized under such conditions of conflicts and violence.

According to Alemika, so far, the process of conflict management by the state and law enforcement agencies in Nigeria emphasizes conflict suppression instead of resolution (17). As a result, there are no serious attempts at conflict analysis, negotiation, mediation, restitution, change and resolution. Peace and conflict scholars argue that conflict management is not necessarily the elimination of conflicts but rather their regulation and management, so that they are constructive rather than destructive. Conflict management must tackle the root-causes of social conflict like resource scarcity and socio-economic inequalities and inequities and thereby lay solid foundation for a just, democratic and harmonious society where the incidences of violent conflicts are minimized.

Conflict has an ontological basis in human needs and it is the denial of such needs which causes violent conflicts, or causes resolvable differences to degenerate

into armed violence or armed conflicts (Alemika 21; Otite 344). He further observes that conflict must co-exist with cooperation and with an appreciable degree of peace for development to take place in any given society.

Alemika argues that conflict resolution can be used to reduce the chances of violence or to consolidate the cessation of violent conflict in order to prevent escalation (13). Conflict resolution, according to Otite, is essentially arrived at intervention to change or facilitate the course of a conflict because conflict resolution, in a pluralistic society like Nigeria can be quite complex (6).

Willmot and Hocker, according to Alemika et al. identifies several modes of intervention in conflicts. These include facilitation, mediation, counseling and therapy, organizational development, conciliation, political procedures, informal tribunals, arbitration of several combinations, types and civil justice systems (7). Otite contends that conflict resolution performs a healing function in societies because “it provides opportunity for the examination of alternative pay offs in a situation of positioned disagreements and restores normalcy in society” (60).

The best approach to conflict resolution according to Wasiu. O. Alli, is to be found in conflicts prevention through the process known as “preventive diplomacy” (8). Preventive diplomacy would suggest that conflicts be anticipated and prevented at all costs. It attempts to prevent disputes from turning into conflicts, and it tries to limit conflict. In the light of the serious negative consequences of ethno-religious conflicts, there is urgent need to proffer solutions to the management of these conflicts.

Shedrack Best identifies three main approaches to conflict management. These are avoidance, confrontation and problem solving (qtd. in Alemika et al 267). Avoidance entails denial of the conflicts by one or both of the parties in the conflicts.

In this case, the issue will hunt both parties again in the future, and may escalate and degenerate. Confrontation takes either verbal or physical forms, for parties to settle their differences, while problem solving is a constructive approach where parties cooperate, admit that they have a common problem and seek to find solutions to their own problem through controlled communication (Best 280).

Alemika argues that conflict management is an effort to contain and if possible, reduce the amount of violence used by parties engaged in violent conflict and to engage them in communication towards settling the dispute and terminating the violence (8). It should be noted however that in Nigeria over the years, there have been various efforts to find an enduring solution to the lingering conflicts but these conflicts remain with us. The frequency and ferocity of these conflicts have caused a general threat to the security of the citizens which is not only affecting national integration but also economic and political development. Hassan Kukah in his work, "Religious tolerance...", identified ignorance as one of the factors responsible for religious intolerance (8) and advocated public enlightenment to avoid manipulation by elites which may result in ethno religious conflicts (28).

Z. M. Kazaure in his foreword to a Conference on Dialogue and Peace (1) advocates tolerance as a prerequisite and essential ingredient for peaceful co-existence. The only way out of these religious conflicts to him is dialogue for peace to reign.

2.4 ETHNO-RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS AND THE MASS MEDIA

The mass media most times thrive on conflict, because conflict attracts readers, viewers and listeners to the media. According to Akin, "the greater the conflict the greater the audience, which are imperatives to the financial success of media outlets" (1). Bearing this in mind, therefore, the prime news value of the media

is conflict or disorder, negative events. Good news stories receive less media attention than bad news. A familiar adage in journalism is “bad news is good news and usually good news is no news” (5), unless it happens to the most powerful. The media coverage is also event driven. In other words, the outbreak of ethno-religious conflicts receive more immediate coverage than ongoing reconciliation efforts or the building of the economy which may take many years to achieve.

In his article, Josep Yoroms examines the role of the mass media and conflict management from the perspective of political economy. Like many scholars of conflicts, he states that conflict is an inevitable process in all societies (15). Buttressing the position of Marx, Yoroms has stressed that “in every society the ideas of the ruling class are the ideas of the society” (24), and as such media objectivity remains problematic and difficult to attain.

Although Yoroms acknowledges the difficulty of media objectivity, he argues that one has to apply “the right standard of significance, because conflict is more pervasive once the media reports are based on imagination” (25). According to Yoroms therefore, the media can be partial and therefore, “the likelihood for it to reconfigure peace or conflict in the society is apparent” (28), and that once the media fail to be objective it can lead to the escalation of conflicts.

The importance of the mass media in conflict management has been stressed by Sam Egwu in his study on “Ethnic and Religious Violence” (2001). According to him, the vital role of the civil society and mass media in generating awareness, perception, fears and anxiety cannot be over-emphasized. He, therefore, states that the mass media are major actors in the arena of conflicts management and should not be ignored in the study of ethno-religious conflicts.

Cyril Imo, argues that in a pluralistic society like Nigeria, there are different forms of diversity and that due to the nature of religion, operating the media in a multi-religious situation tends to be more challenging and problematic. He states further that the interactions between the media and religion are more delicate than those between the media and other forms of plurality. This to him is because “by the nature of religion, it has to do with matters of life and death” (7).

In her article on the roles and responsibilities of the mass media in conflict management, Ruth Dul stresses the vital role of the mass media in conflict management. The media she asserts have the power, control and influence on their consuming public (9). According to her, though media objectivity is desired, it is difficult to attain because “media practitioners are human being who have their own convictions, principles and minds of their own” (II). Dul argues therefore, that media objectivity is usually affected by ownership, economic interests, religious affiliation and cultural factors. This, she attests further, can only be overcome through re-orientation of practitioners, training on conflict management and provisions of adequate funding for media houses.

In another contribution on this issue, Pauline Lere, dwells specifically on the role of the media in the “Mob Cartoon’ riots” of 2001.” Like other scholars, she avers that ethno-religious conflicts are more frequent and devastating than other conflicts and that “to say that the media reports of religious crises cause religious tensions around the world is an understatement” (423). As a solution to this, he advocates for the government among other things to “check the publication of private media...the proliferation of quack media houses,” and that government should also give free hand to its media houses while ensuring that they adhere to their professional ethics (431).

Abubakar Mu'azu and Joses Yoroms' article on media and conflict management in Nigeria covers between 1999 and 2009. The work highlights the negative effects and the role of the mass media in conflict management. According to them, because of the very nature of conflicts which encompass both manifest and hidden causes, it does not lend itself to easy solutions (1). As a result of this, they argue that there is an urgent need for informed and responsible management of conflict. The mass media, they maintain, are therefore, important factor in conflict management in any given society.

In terms of media role in the escalation or de-escalation of conflicts, Muazu and Yoroms consider whether the factors of ownership, location, ethnic, religious or regional affiliation affect the way the mass media cover conflicts (3). They conclude by asserting that "...the media cannot be divorced from the realities of their environment when considered against social, economic and political structures...Since the media do not operate in a vacuum, they cannot be free from the many forces in the society" (8).

Mustapha Umar's work on the broadcast media and conflict, covers the period between 1999 and 2003. He states that the broadcast media in the North East Areas during this period was wholly owned by the state governments and federal government and this hampers objective reporting as the respective state governments in their attempt to suppress conflicts lost the people's confidence in them and the conflict parties' eventual reliance on foreign media (94).

In the same vein John Galadima and Rasheed Olaniyi in their article on the mass media and conflicts in Plateau State (2001-2002) argue that since the mass media are closely linked to the structure of power in society, they are not in the position to be neutral in conflict situation (194). Apart from that, they also observe

that in times of conflicts, journalists themselves are victims and refugees of the conflicts. Media houses were also not spared and this they argue hampers objective reportage of conflicts (207). Using content analysis Galadima and Olaniyi sampled *the Punch*, *the Trust*, *the Nigeria Standard*, *ThisDay* and the *Champion* Newspapers as well as the *Newswatch*, *the Tell*, *The News* and *The Week* magazines in their study. In their findings, the authors concluded that the mass media examined in these instances were not objective. These newspapers and magazines were biased in their coverage of casualties and management of the conflicts. This is so because according to them, “ethnic, political and religious identities and sentiments always prevent the media from being objective and neutral” (212).

In his examination of the role of the press in conflict management, in Plateau State (2001 and 2003), Galadima, observes that the media were not objective in their coverage because of ownership structure, mission of the newspaper and political affiliations (26). He also looked at the role of the international broadcast media and submitted that their reportage was equally not subjective. He concludes by advocating for the need to study the role of “speculative report” and unconfirmed stories for proper contextualization in the coverage of conflicts. This helps to avoid propaganda in the reportage of conflicts.

Emeka Anyakora, in his thesis examines the role of the mass media in national development. He stresses the fact that the mass media is very vital to national development. Anyakora examines the different organizations of the media, like the laws and statutory bodies regulating media practice and establishment (64). He gives an overview of historical perspective of the media, their contributions, attitudes and the expectation of the general public (65). He observes that the media have come a long- way and that as a result of this the society feels “terribly disappointed with the role of the media,” in conflict reporting. According to him, these doubts are

heightened when negative reports, lies, rumours, dangerous speculations, half truths and sensationalism like “yellow” Journalism manifest in media output (66).

On the issue of the objectivity of the mass media, Lendman argues that “the press is free to only those who own them” (2). He stresses further that the entire corporate mass media functions as a propaganda system for elite interest (2). According to Lendman,

...today the media is in crisis, and a free and open society is at risk. Fiction substitutes for fact, news is carefully filtered, dissent is marginalized and supporting the powerful substitutes for full accurate reporting. As a result, wars of aggression are called liberating ones, civil liberties are suppressed for our own good and patriotism means going along with governments that are lawless (2).

In their article, Hussaini Abdul and Taiwo Alabi examine the media coverage of conflicts in Kaduna State between 2000 and 2002. They argue that the mass media plays a prominent role in reporting not only conflicts but also the controversies associated with the conflicts. REGARDING the issue of objectivity of media reportage of conflicts they contend that the pattern of media ownership, the place of publication, political, ethnic and religious prejudices, the fact that media practitioners are members of the same society hampers objective reporting in times of conflict (33). Their analysis is based on the study of two northern Nigeria based newspaper organisations – (the *New Nigerian Newspapers* and the *Daily Trust* newspapers) and two southern Nigeria based newspapers (*The Guardian* and *The Punch*). They concluded by saying that in this instance, the two northern based newspapers were more balanced and objective than their two southern counterparts (151).

Haruna Wakili in his study on the press and ethno-religious conflicts in Kano covering 1991 to 2001 stresses the importance of the mass media in conflict management (157). This article examines five newspapers and two magazines – *The Guardian*, the *Champions*, the *Punch*, the *Vanguard* and the *New Nigerian Newspapers*, the *Citizens* and the *Tell* Magazines. He indicts the five newspapers from the south and argues that the the *New Nigerian Newspapers* and the *Citizen* Magazines, both from the north were quite more balanced in their reportage of conflicts within the period under review (74).

In his own contribution to media and conflict reportage, Aleichenu Odumu observes that the function of the mass media in any society is determined by the society the media serve. He stresses the vital role of the mass media in conflict management, because “the media can cause war without participating in it or bring about peace, harmony and concord” (123). He concludes by saying that though the mass media in Nigeria in times of conflicts have done well in other areas, he however, cautioned mass media practitioners to consider the interest of the larger society when reporting conflicts.

In the same vein, Belikisu Yusuf stresses the enormous and critical role of the mass media in conflict management and conflict mediation (241). In her sampled analysis of some “soft selling magazines”, she states that the media has not been objective in their reportage of crises in Nigeria (241). Yusuf’s solution to this pattern of reportage of “yellow journalism, sensationalism, junk, gossip publications, grape vine news or gutter press” (2) is that media practitioners should be trained in conflict resolution to perform well in order to maintain democracy.

Contributing to this debate on the performance of the mass media during ethno-religious conflicts, Jonathan Ishaku, like other scholars, stresses the importance

of the mass media in conflict and ethno-religious conflicts in particular (223). In his analysis of the performance of the mass media in the Kafanchan religious crisis of 1987 and the Tafawa Balewa crisis using the *Nigeria Standard* newspapers and the *New Nigerian Newspapers* as case studies, Jonathan concludes that the media spoke with “diversity of voices,” depending on ownership and mission of the media organization (223).

2.5 THE MASS MEDIA AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The place of the mass media in national development in any given society cannot be overemphasised. This section reviews the relationship between the mass media and national development. Development in its real sense has to be human centred and therefore needs communication for its full realization. Andrew A. Moemeka quoting the United Nations Foods and Agricultural Organization, states that “communication is the key to human development and the thread that binds people together” (5). The role of mass media in national development stems from the idea that people can be influenced and persuaded by messages that come from the mass media (Wan Firuz Mustafa 1). The extent to which the media is a factor for national development has been a subject of discourse in communication literature. However, before delving into the discourse, it is necessary to define the term “development”, in order to understand and appreciate the issues involved in the relationship between media and national development.

Development in its simple term refers to a change process geared at improving the life and environment of man. Social scientists believe that development involves the creation of opportunities for the realization of human potentialities. Where the media comes in development process is through what is called "development communication" (Moemeka 10). Moemeka further argues that this type of

communication is consciously packaged by the sender such that the message content or the information sent could persuade, encourage or convince the receiver or target audience to adopt an attitude and participate in actualizing a development plan or goal (10).

In his own contribution, W. Schramm lists some of the areas of influence of the mass media of communication in the task of national development to include the

...widening of horizons, focusing attention on relevant issues, raising aspirations, creating a climate for development, helping change strongly held attitudes or values not conducive to development, feeding interpersonal channels of communication, conferring status, broadening the policy dialogue, enforcing social norms, helping form tastes, affecting attitudes lightly held and canalizing stronger attitudes, and helping substantially in all types of education and training (qtd in Moemeka 4).

According to N.J. Pye the problem of political development is one of cultural diffusion, adapting and adjusting old patterns of life to new demands. Such diffusion, he claims can only be done through communication because communication is the web of society, as its flow determines the direction and pace of dynamic social development (109) Inayatullah in a similar vein defines development as change towards patterns of society that allow better realization of human values; that allow a society greater control over its environments, and over its own political destiny, and that enables individuals in the society to gain increased control over themselves (4).

Another scholar, E.M. Rogers defines development as a widely participatory process of social change and material advancement (including greater equality, freedom and other valued qualities) for the majority of the people through gaining greater control over their environment (Moemeka 10).

The role of the mass media in national development can be analysed from political, economic and social perspectives. In the political sphere, the media's role can be found in the areas of democracy and good governance, political transparency, foreign policy, human rights, war on terrorism, and public relations. In the economic spheres, the media can play its role in the areas of economic policy and growth, economic empowerment, advertisements and tourism, business and investment, etcetera. In the social sphere, the media's role covers social issues, such as corruption, criminal violence, communal conflicts, prostitution, war on drugs, population control, education, food security, and public health (Moemeka 18).

In every society, the mass media are expected to perform the functions of information dissemination, education and entertainment. These are the conventional functions expected of the mass media to render to the public, but which are equally applicable in a broader sense in national development pursuit. It could be said that through educating, informing and entertaining, the media thereby makes the society aware of the importance and need to undertake the process or certain processes of national development. Apart from these three basic roles of mass media, another role of the media is persuasion, where media are seen as virile tools of applying persuasive efforts to influence people's actions towards a particular direction. The mass media are therefore seen for their role in furnishing the public with necessary information to achieve development or change goals. These roles of the media in national development lie in the media's capacity to teach, manipulate, sensitize and mobilize people through information dissemination. The media also chart a course for the public in line with the agenda setting theory, thereby creating in the minds of the people, issues that should be viewed as priority issues including development programmes and policies (Nwabueze 5).

The mass media plays a very important role in national development. National development involves changes or advancement in a nation aimed at improving the political, economic and social lives of the people. The real influence of the media in national development depends on the media themselves, the societies in which they operate, and their audience. None of these factors is the same everywhere, at all times, or under all conditions.

Whatever the circumstances or the nature of the society in which mass media operate, certain factors are basic in the way they influence national development. Every medium has a message; it has a target audience; it aims at influencing a change; it influences attitudes, perceptions and decision making; and it generally influences behaviour.

A close examination of the basic tenets of development and the approach to development would reveal a very close similarity between media and national development. According to Moemeka (18), participation is the key variable in development. The ultimate objectives of national development are economic growth, equitable distribution of facilities and of benefits, national cohesion, and human development. True and effective community development requires the participation of every segment of the nation. These groups and sectors must establish social relations with one another before they can collectively be effective. It is the task of the mass media to facilitate the growth and development of such human relationships but it cannot perform this role effectively unless it is incorporated into the total development process.

The mass media's role in the national development of any given society is not in doubt. The role covers the political, economic and social spheres. The media set the public agenda and act as the gatekeeper of public issues. They perform the watchdog

role especially in political transparency and the fight against corruption. As the fourth estate, the media provide the checks and balances in relation to the three branches of government. The Media is particularly important in facilitating nation-building, especially of post-colonial societies and those experiencing ethnic and religious diversities. In a pluralistic society such as Nigeria, the vital role of the mass media in national development is very crucial. Therefore, the mass media have an important role to play as they consider the socio economic and cultural conditions under which they operate.

2.6 SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW AND GAPS IDENTIFIED

There is an increasing concern among contemporary scholars from various areas of study that the resurgence and frequency of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria is not only hindering unity and national development, but is also dangerous to the continued existence of the country. In the course of this review, it was stressed by various scholars that conflicts are inevitable phenomena in all human societies, are inherent in human relationships and that conflicts have both positive as well as negative sides. Conflicts only become issues of concern when they cannot be effectively managed and thus allowed to develop into violence.

In the works reviewed so far, some scholars have attributed the causes of recurrent ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria in the past three decades to one factor or the other. The overwhelming literature reviewed reveals that the factors responsible for protracted conflicts in Nigeria are multi dimensional and have ethno-religious undercurrents. Some of these factors are colonial legacy, manipulation of ethnic and religious identities, worsening economic conditions and unemployment, ignorance, “religious fundamentalism,” weakening of state power and relevance, land and boundary matters, widening inequality and poverty among others. Many scholars also

noted the return to democracy after many years of military rule as paving ways for expression of bottled up grievances thus leading to conflicts.

Other reasons given by scholars include perceived marginalization, fear of domination and lack of commitment on the part of leaders and government towards resolving these conflicts. From sociological, ethical, theological, economical, political, media or historical perspectives, scholars have contributed immensely to this discourse.

There also seems to be a general consensus among scholars in this review that the danger posed by ethno-religious conflicts is too great to be ignored if there is the need for peace, unity and progress in the country. The adverse effects of these conflicts on the socio-economic, unity and national development of Nigeria were equally stressed by the works of the scholars reviewed. Not left out is also the area of the implications of ethno-religious conflicts to national development. The reviewed works argued that Nigerians should learn to manage ethno-religious conflicts productively otherwise the threat they pose to the country and its development is overwhelming.

Concerning the role of the mass media in ethno-religious conflicts and the effects of this on national development, it was discovered that not many academic works are available in Nigeria. However, those available for review argued that the mass media cannot be ignored in conflict escalation, de-escalation, mediation, management and resolutions. Researchers in this area who mostly do not write for academic purposes but are media professionals are of the consensus that conflicts reportage should be handled with care and the sensitivity it deserves. On the issue of objectivity of the mass media and media practitioners, most of the writers agreed that though objectivity is not attainable, it should be the goal of the media in order to de-

escalate and manage protracted ethno-religious conflicts. Objectivity according to them, is being hampered because of the nature-class character of the mass media, ownership structure, geographical locations and religious affiliations of the owners and editors of media organisations among other factors.

Some scholars in the works reviewed for instance, also focused on the political economy of ethno-religious conflicts. Some examined it from a Christian perspective, while others viewed it from sociological perspectives and they appear to be very extensive and encompassing in scope and content as in the area of the catalogue of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria. Some works from media scholars were very analytical and very relevant to this research work. The reviewed works, so far have among other things suggested various ways of curbing ethno-religious conflicts, but not much has been done on the role of the mass media as an institution in escalating or deescalating, management and resolution of these crises. An appraisal of these works highlighted so far reveals also methodological “affinity” among most of them in the area of causes and effects of ethno-religious conflicts.

The main limitations noticed in some of these works, positions, theories and perspectives on ethno-religious conflicts reviewed so far are that most of them only attempted to expose the causes of these crises. Others chronicled some of the major ethno-religious crises over a period of time, while others touched on the adverse effects of these protracted crises. Some of the scholars have tended to lay emphasis on a single factor for explanation without recognizing the multi-causal nature of these conflicts.

From the foregoing one would observe that, not much attention was given in a comprehensive manner to the role of the mass media in escalating or deescalating ethno-religious conflicts. Also, not much attention is given to the sensitive nature of

ethno-religious conflicts and the need to develop a new approach to the reportage of ethno-religious conflicts by media practitioners – what is now being referred to as conflict sensitive journalism or peace journalism. There is therefore, the need for research on the role of the mass media during ethno-religious conflicts and the effect of this on national development and the need for media practitioners to embrace peace journalism.

This work explores in-depth the wider factors responsible for the spate of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria and northern Nigeria in particular in the past three decades, the effects of these conflicts on national development and the role of the mass media in de-escalating or escalating these conflicts. Factors that have hindered the mass media in effectively performing their roles such as issues of ownership, effects of globalization, character of the media, location and religious-ethnic affiliations of media practitioners need in-depth investigation and analysis in order to advocate media objectivity in times of conflicts, especially ethno-religious conflicts. This work therefore, greatly contributes to the understanding of the relationships between ethno-religious conflicts, the mass media and national development.

CHAPTER THREE

MAJOR ETHNO-RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS IN NIGERIA

It is important to state from the beginning that the various ethno-religious conflicts that have swept across this country in the past three decades are too numerous to outline and analyse in one study. However, one can highlight some of the major conflicts for the purpose of this study while others are deliberately left out to enable a detailed analysis, especially as the lists of these conflicts grow longer by the day. Hassan Kuka argues that prior to the period covered in this study (1980 - 2011), available records show that “there had already been over thirty three violent incidents of conflicts” (154) in northern Nigeria. The main focus of this chapter is to describe and analyse the nature, character and dynamics of the different conflicts that took place in some states in northern Nigeria in the past three decades as a necessary background to the analysis of the effects of these conflicts on national development and the role of the mass media in these conflicts.

3.1 THE MAITATSINE CRISES

The *Maitatsine* conflicts in Kano between December 18th and 29th 1980 appear to be the first major religious conflict in Nigeria since independence (Yusuf 97). Kano, for a very long time has been under different kinds of Islamic influences particularly of scholars from North Africa and neighbouring countries like Cameroon and Chad Republics. Some of these scholars, according to Isaac Albert (284), introduced Kano to “fundamentalist” religious activities which led to the emergence of several Islamic sects in Kano city. The *Maitatsine* conflicts were however, the first in the series of violent demonstrations of the activities of some of these sects in Kano (Albert 284).

Although there had been series of religious tensions and skirmishes across the country before 1980, the ravages of the *Maitatsine* crisis in Kano, which later spread

to Yola, Maiduguri, Bauchi and Gombe, took Nigerians by surprise. The crises caused huge losses in human and material terms. The crisis shocked many Nigerians to their marrow and according to Anthony Akaeze, about 4,177 lives were lost (1). Members of the sect led by one Muhammadu Marwa otherwise known as *Maitatsine* (meaning “the one who continues to curse” because of the abusive nature of his sermons) (Albert 285), had a long history in Kano. The sect shot their way to notoriety when they took to the streets proclaiming their brand of Islam to be superior to every other one, and in the process, initiated an orgy of violence that claimed many lives and property.

According to Hussaini Abdu:

...the *Maitatsine* phenomenon did not start in 1980. He was earlier on account of Islamic fundamentalism deported in 1962 by Alhaji Mohammed Sunusi, then the Emir of Kano. He was later put in preventive detention in 1975. Long before the outbreak of the disturbances, *Maitatsine* had become a stormy petrel in Kano society and generally among Muslims.... He arrested and detained people illegally and indiscriminately; some said he had a slaughterhouse where he made meat out of people. Many women and children were kidnapped and made to slave-work for the group. The group mobilised *almajirai* children to prosecute the war. *Maitatsine* was further accused of intimidation and molestation of innocent people, particularly the occupants of neighboring houses in *yan' Awaki* Quarters (*Maitatsine* Quarters). He forcefully ejected people from their houses and handed over the houses to his fanatical followers, seized public places like primary schools, markets ... (15).

For the ten days the crisis lasted in Kano, law enforcement agencies had a difficult time containing the crisis. To prevent the crisis from further spreading, the

military were called in to quell and restore order, after the police had battled endlessly, fruitlessly and in futility to achieve same. Alhaji Shehu Shagari's administration reportedly followed this up by signing into law the Unlawful Society Order of 1982 which prohibited groups such as the *Maitatsine* sect from operating under whatever guise. However, this did not prevent the sect from striking again. This time, they shifted base to Bulunkutu in Maiduguri where according to Harry Boer, about 400 people were killed while a huge loss of property was recorded (39). Not done, the *Maitatsine* sect further spread their tentacles to the old Gongola State, where they carried out another series of violent attacks. By the time security forces battled to restore order in parts of the state like Jimeta, Dobeli, Zango, Yelwa, Va'atita, Rumde and Nassarawa, no fewer than 763 persons had lost their lives while property worth millions of Naira were destroyed (Gofwen 65).

Between April 26 and 28, 1985, in the Pantami area of Gombe State, there was another *Maitatsine* crisis where many Nigerians lost their lives and other valuables. In all the crisis involving the *Maitatsine* men, the sight of cudgel wielding fanatics, mutilated bodies and burnt houses, were common scenes and were among some of the charges many of the group's followers had to face in the law courts, leading to the prosecution of some of them. In all the areas where *Maitatsine* struck, Kano, Maduguri, Kaduna, Yola, Gombe and Bauchi, many of the sect members died, many injured and many were captured and detained by the police. Eventually, their leader, Muhammadu Marwa was killed during one of the confrontations with soldiers. Although initially the crises started as intra-religious, the killing and destruction from them were not limited to Muslims alone, some Christians were also affected and many churches were destroyed (Albert 286). In this case, Nigerian mass media were united

in their reportage condemning this strange phenomenon and they rose up against it because of its destructive effects.

3.2 THE SHARIA CONTROVERSIES

Sharia is the moral code and religious law of Islam. *Sharia* deals with many topics addressed by secular law. *Sharia* is a system of law inspired by Islam and the Koran, as well as Arabic traditions and early Islamic scholars. *Sharia* is understood to rule not only Muslims but those living within a Muslim society, and to govern all realms of a person's life (Irshad 4). Though interpretations of *sharia* vary between cultures, in its strictest definition it is considered the infallible law of God-as opposed to the human interpretation of the law (*fiqh*) (Irshad 1). The word *sharia*, Bernard G. Weiss, (1) argues, is an archaic Arabic word denoting "pathway to be followed," or "path to the water hole." The etymology of *sharia* as a "path" or "way" according to Irshad (1) "comes from the Qur'anic verse 45:18." Abdul Mannan Omar in his *Dictionary of the Holy Quran*, believes the "Way" in 45:18 comes from *Shara'a*, meaning "He ordained". *Sharia*, according to Calder, N (nd) and in its strictest definition, "is a divine law, as expressed in the Qur'an and Muhammad's example. As such, it is related to but different from *fiqh*, which is emphasized as the human interpretation of the law."

The *Sharia* question has become a recurring issue in the relationship between Muslims, Christians and the Nigerian state since the 1970s as all constitution making processes since then had the *Sharia* question to grapple with. However, *Sharia* is not a new issue in Nigeria, particularly in the Northern part of the country, because the pre-colonial political system of most northern states was organized based on *Sharia* (Abdu qtd in Uba 165).

Sharia has been an issue in Nigeria since the early 19th century because it can be argued that the basis of the Jihad was the establishment of an Islamic State based on the *Sharia*' (Turaki 115). It is therefore not quite correct to say that the *Sharia* debate at the Constituent Assembly in 1977/78 marked the beginning of the introduction of religion into Nigerian politics. This position is supported with some Muslims' view that "there is no separation of the sacred and the mundane" (Abdu 165), and by extension, the introduction of *Sharia* into Nigeria politics is as old as Nigeria because the British Colonial Administration had in 1900 accepted the *Sharia* courts as being at par with the customary courts (116).

When the issue of *Sharia* came up in the Constituent Assembly in 1978, Nigeria was almost torn apart because of the acrimonious controversy between Christian and Muslim members in the Assembly. It almost paralysed the assembly proceedings until the Federal Government made the *Sharia* debate "a no go area" (Turaki 116; Abdu 121).

During the course of *Sharia* debates in the Constituent Assembly in 1977/78 the Muslims Students Society called on the members of the Assembly to stop the opposition to *Sharia* or be prepared to take full responsibility for putting the entire nation in chaos (Kuka 127). The *Sharia* controversies in the Constituent Assembly drew reactions in the Northern States as protesters took to the streets in Zaria and Kaduna with such banners like "No *Sharia* No peace, No peace No Constitution, No *Sharia* No Muslims, No Nigeria" (Kuka 127).

The *Sharia* debates and controversies continued since the Constituent Assembly of 1977/78 until the "mother of all controversies" in 2000. This is because the emergence of democratic government in 1999 provided the space for the expression of previously suppressed agitations as in almost all states there were series

of one form of agitation or the other. It was in the light of this that the then Governor of Zamfara State Alhaji Sani Yerima Bakura launched the adoption of *Sharia* as a legal system in the state. This singular action changed the political situation in Nigeria and the northern states in particular. There were series of debates for and against the introduction of *Sharia*. Many states with majority Muslim populations in the “North” followed suit in the introduction of *Sharia*. In the midst of this controversy, attempts towards the adoption of *Sharia* moved to Kaduna State indicating a movement from States with large Muslim population to a state with a sizeable Christian population.

In December 1999, the Kaduna State House of Assembly set up an eleven-man committee under the Chairmanship of Alhaji Ibrahim Ali to collate popular views on the applicability of *Sharia* in Kaduna State. This action polarized the House of Assembly along religious divide as there were a lot of misgivings and mutual suspicion among members of the House. During the course of the sittings of this committee, Muslims were mobilized throughout the state and on a daily basis, took turns local government by local government to submit a memorandum in support of *Sharia*. On 14th February, 2000 the Muslims decided to stage continuous demonstrations in Kaduna town for five days. These were characterized by processions along the major streets and climaxed with an outright demand for the introduction of full *Sharia* law in the state and the appointment of an Emir in Kaduna city (Gofwen 114).

After the completion of the assignment of the eleven man committee on 21st February 2000, the Christians under the umbrella of Christians Association of Nigeria (CAN) mainly from the southern part of the state decided to organize their own peaceful protest against adopting *Sharia* in the State. What started as a peaceful

demonstration resulted into violent crises spanning three days, spread all over Kaduna town and spilled over to other local government areas in the State. As a result of this crisis, many lives and property were destroyed. Women and children were displaced and victims spread across about 23 different refugee camps. This crisis was seen by scholars as the worst since the Nigerian civil war and the most destructive in the history of Nigeria, and as Hussaini put it “it was three days of agony for the people of Kaduna and the entire nation” (Gofwen 124).

Narrating the effects of the *Sharia* crisis in Kaduna, Abimboye Demola in the *Newswatch* Magazine of 2nd November 2011 (11) reported that over 2,000 people died, about 1,944 houses and 746 vehicles were burnt, and that this “marked a radical departure from cohabitations in the city as the living pattern was drastically altered” (11). Adherents of the two religions began to live in separate areas out of the fear of an outbreak of another crisis. According to Demola:

The Kaduna River, which demarcates Kaduna North from Kaduna South, provided a natural border for this division. After the crisis, most Christians living in Kaduna North relocated to the south of the state capital across the bridge, while many Muslims who were resident in the south relocated to the north...the horrible damage religious riots have done to Kaduna is unquantifiable...this sad turn of events in Kaduna... would anger the founders of this city who did not envisage segregation among its residents. Sir Ahmadu Bello... one of the builders of modern Kaduna would equally turn in his grave because the beautiful capital of the current Kaduna state is now two cities in one. No thanks to past religious crises which have taken considerable toll on the town and the entire region (11).

In an address to the nation after the *Sharia* crisis in Kaduna and some other parts of the northern states, President Obasanjo on March 1, 2000, among other things made the following remarks:

Fellow Nigerians, I speak to you again today with a sad and heavy heart, having recently returned from a visit to Kaduna, where I saw the carnage and devastation resulting from the recent disturbances in that city. I could not believe that Nigerians were capable of such barbarism against one another. But what I saw there was perhaps even more gruesome in detail... But what I found most astonishing was the discovery that a majority of those who died in the disturbances were Nigerians who had lived all their lives in Kaduna, and could not truthfully call anywhere else their home. All so suddenly, people who had been their neighbours for decades turned on them, and massacred them. And yet, those who were responsible for these murders claim that they were acting in defence of faith or religion. I cannot believe that any religion in this day and age can sanction the taking of innocent life.... There can be no winners in the destructions, all Nigerians are losers. And in peace and cessation of destructions of life and property, all Nigerians are winners (FRCN).

The foregoing account of *Sharia* crisis in Kaduna State was a clear manifestation of inter-religious crises and the attendant effects it has on social, political and economic development of the state in particular and the nation in general. The magnitude of both human and material resources, destructions were so much as attested to by former President Obasanjo in his nation-wide broadcast on March 1, 2000. The mass media in Nigeria in this instance was divided along religious and regional lines.

3.3 THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC CONFERENCE (OIC) CONTROVERSIES

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) formerly Organisation of the Islamic Conference is the second largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations which has membership of 57 states spread over four continents. The Organization was established upon a decision of the historical summit which took place in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco on 25 September 1969 as a result of the burning of *Al-Aqsa* Mosque in Jerusalem (World Model UN 2013 7).

In 1970 the first meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Conference/ Cooperation Foreign Ministers' took place in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia where it established a permanent secretariat. The present Charter of the Organization was adopted by the Eleventh Islamic Summit held in Dakar from 13-14 March 2008. Over the years, the membership of the organization has grown from its founding members of 30 to 57 states. The Organization has consultative and cooperative relations with the UN. In safeguarding the true values of Islam and the Muslims, the organization has taken various steps to remove misperceptions and has strongly advocated elimination of discrimination against Muslims in all forms and manifestations (World Model UN 2013 7; www.oic.exchanges.org/members).

The Organization of the Islamic Cooperation today has 57 members, 56 of which are classed by the United Nations as member states. Some, especially in West Africa, are - though with large Muslim populations - not necessarily Muslim majority countries. A few countries with significant Muslim populations, such as Russia and Thailand, sit as Observer States, while others, such as India and Ethiopia, are not members.

The Organisation of Islamic Conference, in 1969, Article ii of the Organization's Charter (1-2) states the aims and objectives of the Organization as follows (World Model UN 2013 7):

- 1 To promote Islamic solidarity among member states.
- 2 To consolidate co-operation among member states in the economic, social, cultural, scientific and other vital fields of activities, and to carry out consultations among member states in International Organizations.
- 3 To endeavour to eliminate racial segregation, discrimination and to eradicate colonialism in all its forms;
- 4 To take necessary measures to support International peace and security founded on justice.
- 5 To co-ordinate efforts for the safeguard of the "holy places" and support of the struggle of the people of Palestine and help them to regain their rights and liberate their land,
- 6 To strengthen the struggle of all Moslem people with a view to safeguarding their dignity, independence and national rights.
- 7 To create a suitable atmosphere for the promotion of co-operation and understanding among member states and other countries

However, under the new OIC Charter, the Organization aims, inter alia, to:

- 1 Enhance and consolidate the bonds of fraternity and solidarity among the Member States;
- 2 Safeguard and protect the common interests and support the legitimate causes of the Member States and coordinate and unify the efforts of the

- Member States in view of the challenges faced by the Islamic world in particular and the international community in general;
- 3 Respect the right of self-determination and non-interference in the domestic affairs and to respect sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of each Member State;
 - 4 Ensure active participation of the Member States in the global political, economic and social decision-making processes to secure their common interests;
 - 5 Reaffirm its support for the rights of peoples as stipulated in the UN Charter and international law;
 - 6 Strengthen intra-Islamic economic and trade cooperation; in order to achieve economic integration leading to the establishment of an Islamic Common Market;
 - 7 Exert efforts to achieve sustainable and comprehensive human development and economic well-being in Member States;
 - 8 Protect and defend the true image of Islam, to combat defamation of Islam and encourage dialogue among civilizations and religions, and to enhance and develop science and technology and encourage research and cooperation among Member States in these fields. (World Model UNs, 2013 8)

OIC Charter indicates that as at 1985 when Nigeria's status was upgraded into full membership there were forty six member- nations of the organization as shown in table one below:

Table 1:**List of Member Countries of Organization of Islamic Conference as at 1985 when Nigeria was admitted.**

1	Algeria	16	Iran	31	Palestine Liberation Org.
2	Bahrain	17	Iraq	32	Saudi Arabia
3	Bangladesh	18	Jordan	33	Senegal
4	Benin	19	Kuwait	34	Sierra Leone
5	Burundi	20	Lebanon	35	Somalia
6	Cameroon	21	Libya	36	Sudan
7	Chad	22	Malaysia	37	Syria
8	The Comoros	23	Maldives	38	Tunisia
9	Djibouti	24	Mali	39	Turkey
10	Egypt	25	Mauritania	40	Uganda
11	Gabon	26	Morocco	41	United Arab Emirates
12	The Gambia	27	Niger	42	Upper Volta
13	Guinea	28	Oman	43	Yemen Arab Republic
14	Guinea Bisau	29	Pakistan	44	Yemen Pple Demo. Rep.
15	Indonesia	30	Qatar	45	Afganistan
				46	Nigeria

As at 2013 membership of the organization stood as shown in Table 2 below (World Model UNs, 2013 8).

Table 2**List of Member Countries of Organization of Islamic Conference as at 2011**

Member State	Year Joined
Afghanistan	1969
Algeria	1969
Chad	1969
Egypt	1969
Guinea	1969
Indonesia	1969
Iran	1969
Jordan	1969
Kuwait	1969
Lebanon	1969
Libya	1969
Malaysia	1969
Mali	1969
Mauritania	1969
Morocco	1969
Niger	1969
Pakistan	1969
State of Palestine	1969
Saudi Arabia	1969
Senegal	1969

Member State	Year Joined
Sudan	1969
Somalia	1969
Tunisia	1969
Turkey	1969
Yemen	1969
Bahrain	1970
Oman	1970
Qatar	1970
Syria	1970
United Arab Emirates	1970
Sierra Leone	1972
Bangladesh	1974
Gabon	1974
Gambia	1974
Guinea-Bissau	1974
Uganda	1974
Burkina Faso	1975
Cameroon	1975
Comoros	1976
Iraq	1976
Maldives	1976

Member State	Year Joined
Djibouti	1978
Benin	1982
Brunei	1984
Nigeria	1986
Azerbaijan	1991
Albania	1992
Kyrgyzstan	1992
Tajikistan	1992
Turkmenistan	1992
Mozambique	1994
Kazakhstan	1995
Uzbekistan	1995
Suriname	1996
Togo	1997
Guyana	1998
Côte d'Ivoire	2001
Suspended or Withdrawn	
Zanzibar	1993
Observer States	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1994
Central African Republic	1997

Member State	Year Joined
North Cyprus as 'Turkish Cypriot State'	1979
Thailand	1998
Russia	2005
Observer Muslim Organisations and Communities	
Moro National Liberation Front	1977
Observer Islamic institutions	
Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States	2000
Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation	2005
Observer International Organisations	
League of Arab States	1975
United Nations	1976
Non-Aligned Movement	1977
Shanghai Cooperation Organisation	
Organisation of African Unity	1977
Economic Cooperation Organisation	1995

Source: World Model UNs, 2013 8

The issue of Nigeria's membership of the Organization of Islamic Conference/Cooperation (OIC) became an emotional matter of national importance in January 1986, when a French newspaper reported that Nigeria had joined the organization. This action succeeded in polarizing the country more than any other issue in Nigeria's history. As a result of this issue, national crisis arose overnight and leaders of Islam and Christianity were at daggers drawn.

These diverse views and threats on Nigerian's membership of the Organization of Islamic Conference led to the setting up of a 24 member committee by the Babangida regime under the chairmanship of then Col John Shagaya to "study the implications of Nigeria's membership" (Adigwe 27). The outcome of the committee's recommendations was not made public until the end of Babangida's regime. However, the OIC controversies succeeded in further polarizing Nigerians along religious divide and the effects are with us up till today.

The OIC controversies generated further antagonistic inter religious consciousness and acrimonies between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria. This is evident in the way and manner many Christians came out to oppose Nigeria's membership while Muslims in turn came out to support Nigeria's membership of the Organization. The mass media in Nigeria in their reportage of this event were as divided as the two opposing parties.

3.4 CRISES GENERATED BY OTHER CAUSES BUT LATER ASSUMED RELIGIOUS COLOURATIONS

Conflicts arising from Christian-Muslim relationships can be categorized as identity conflicts because they are very delicate to classify and handle. However, for historical reasons and the fact that the combatants in these cases are mostly Muslims and Christians, each time there are crises no matter the remote causes they usually

assume religious colourations. Some of these crises may have originated from the issue of land ownership, political participation and appointments.

3.4.1 The Kafanchan, Kaduna, Zaria and Katsina Conflicts

Since the 1980s, conflicts in Kaduna state have taken the dimension of Muslim versus Christian dichotomy (Toure 1). Toure observes that the Kafanchan crisis of 1987 was a departure from previous conflicts, which were essentially communal. On 6th March 1986 there was a violent conflict between Muslim and Christian students of College of Education, Kafanchan, Kaduna State. Before then, the atmosphere at the College was already charged because of an earlier programme organised by Muslims Students Society (MSS) and the highlight of their programme was a film depicting the Othman Danfodio Jihad (Boer 51).

The immediate cause of these crises was the plan by the Fellowship of Christian Students (FCS) of the College of Education, Kafanchan to hold a weeklong of religious activities marking the end of its annual week of activities (Boer 186). The FCS had invited Rev. Abubakar Bako, a Muslim convert to Christianity as the Guest Speaker at the occasion. The speaker in the course of his sermon was said to have quoted from Quranic passages in comparison to the Bible. This did not go down well with the Muslim students who felt he was preaching heresy. Having accused him of denigrating Islam and Prophet Mohammed in his “misinterpretations,” they decided that he deserved to be punished (Boer 51), more so that the preacher was a convert from Islam to Christianity. The action of the invited preacher did not go down well with the Muslim Students Society (MSS).

As a result, what started as a minor misunderstanding among Muslim and Christian students in the College finally sparked off the crisis. The resultant destruction spread beyond Kafanchan to Kaduna, Zaria and Katsina and threatened

the stability of the entire country. Beyond the college, it exploded into a full scale ethno-religious violent confrontation between Muslims (largely Hausa) and the Christians (predominantly non Hausa). Once the crisis spread to Kaduna, Zaria and other parts of the state, it assumed a religious colouration. In the process many lives were lost. Churches, mosques, hotels, bars and other property were destroyed (Toure 76).

This crisis lasted nearly two weeks before the situation was brought under control. By the time peace was restored, the scope of destruction was unimaginable. The magnitude of the destructions that attended this crisis led the then President Ibrahim Babangida to initially deny the religious basis of the conflicts and attributed it to “evil men with sinister motives who saw the incident... as an opportunity to subvert the government and the nation” (Boer II 188). Babangida likened this crisis to an attempted civilian coup.

By the time the conflicts were brought under control, the scale of destruction incurred was unprecedented in the history of religious violence in the country. Although this crisis was brought under control in Kafanchan town, it later spread to almost the entire Kaduna State. On 10th March, in Kaduna town, a team of Muslim youths came out all over the major streets and started attacking Christians and their property and this pattern of attack quickly spread to the major cities of Zaria, Katsina, Funtua and Kankia.

3.4.2 The Zango Kataf Conflicts

The remote causes of the 1992 ethno-religious crises in the Zango Kataf area of Kaduna State can be traced to the heterogeneous nature of the dominant historical players in this area in the 20th century (Toure 118). The major ethnic groups in Zango Kataf area are the Agan (Kamantan), Atyap (kalab), Bajju (Kaje), Ikulu, Feulbe (Fulani), Hausa and Tacherack (Kachelere).

In terms of ethno-religious diversity the area can be described as a pluralistic society with its share of conflicts. The general stake on the Kataf people, who are predominantly Christians and traditional worshipers are very similar to that of Kafanchan. For decades, a flaming situation had existed between the Hausa and Kataf communities that perceived themselves as being marginalized or dominated. The central issues in this crisis included aristocratic oppression, political exclusion and economic marginalization; some of which got violent and exploded from time to time (Toure 119). This perceived political marginalization and the control of economic power by the Hausa gave rise to the expression of series of crises largely in ethno-religious terms. Because of this, throughout the colonial period, Zango Kataf appeared to be the most restive of all the districts in Zaria province. It was a sort of melting pot, and it produced all sorts of contradictions. One of the major issues at stake was the question of a Hausa (Muslims) minority having dominance in local administration and economy, over the majority (Christian) ethnic groups (Toure 131).

The background given above is to enable one realize why a minor issue like the movement of a market site across a street to a new location prepared by the Local Government could result into the destruction of lives and property in Zango Kataf area and other towns in Kaduna State.

3.4.3 Jos Crises of 1994, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2008 and 2010

For some time now, Plateau State and in particular Jos metropolis has been enmeshed in violent ethno-religious conflicts which has resulted in the destruction of lives and property. The hitherto peaceful and serene atmosphere of the state has been shattered and replaced with protracted social conflicts of diverse dimensions. The Jos Crises have a long history. Whereas similar crises have taken place in other states in

the Northern part of the country the nature, dynamics, intensity, frequency and level of devastation of the ones in Plateau State and Jos in particular have been different.

As a result of these violent conflicts many people have been displaced and the previous harmonious inter-ethnic and inter-religious relationships and co-existence have become a thing of the past. These bitter experiences have continued to linger with no lasting solution yet in sight. While some people see religion as the reason behind these crises, others trace the genesis of these violent conflicts in the state to the creation of Jos North Local Government Area in 1991 by the Ibrahim Babangida's regime (PIDAN 99). Rather than encouraging grass-root development, some scholars assert that the outcome of the creation of Jos North Local Government Area is the architect of the incessant violent conflicts that have plagued Jos city and indeed the entire state since 1994. The "indigenous" ethnic groups of Berom, Anaguta and Afizere perceived the local government creation as a plan to turn Jos city into a Hausa enclave and to alienate them from their own land (Best 51). The creation therefore, was the genesis of discord between the "indigenous" population and the "settlers" as the battle for the soul of the new LGA began in earnest. This position therefore, paved the way for the protracted conflicts the state has witnessed since 1994.

Even before the creation of Jos North, the indigenous ethnic groups and the Hausa and Fulani had been contending for the ownership of Jos city. Things came to a head in 1994 when the two groups openly engaged in a violent confrontation over the appointment of Alhaji Sanusi Mato, a Hausa man, as Chairman of Jos North Local Government Council by Col Mohammed Mana and the consequent opposition from the "indigenes." On Tuesday 12th of April 1994, at about 7 am, conflicts occurred in Jos metropolis which shattered the peace of the state capital as lives were lost and property destroyed. Based on the findings of the commission of

inquiry that looked into the crisis, it was a crisis between the Beroms, Anagutas and Afizeres considered as the natives on one hand , and the Hausa and Fulani on the other hand over the ownership of Jos North local government. The appointment of Alhaji Mato, who was of the Hausa and Fulani extraction was therefore, rejected by the natives. Attempts to resist the appointment sparked off a huge conflagration that consumed the state capital for 24 hours leading to the killing of many people and destruction of property. The violent conflicts immediately acquired religious and ethnic colouration and shattered the peace and tranquillity for which the town was known for as each party laid claim to the ownership of the town.

After the crisis, Col Mohammed Mana the then Military Administrator set up a Commission of Inquiry headed by Justice J. A. Fiberesima to look into the caused and effects of the conflicts. According to the White Paper, the most discernable cause of the riot was the recurrent friction for many years between the Berom, Anaguta and Afizere ethnic groups on the one hand, and the Hausa and Fulani group on the other hand. The report noted that, "each party lays claim to Jos" (Human Rights 100). While the Berom, Anaguta and Afizere claim that they are the indigenous people of Jos, and that the Hausa and Fulani are settlers, strangers, who migrated into Jos for various reasons, the Hausa and Fulani contend that they, as owners of Jos, had had the privilege of producing the rulers of the town since 1902 (Best 26). As a result, the appointment of a Local Government Council Chairman became the trigger of the violent conflict in the city of Jos in a 12 hour orgy of violence on the 12th of April 1994.

The state seemed to have enjoyed a bit of respite until September 7, 2001 when a major ethno-religious crisis shook the state in its foundation. The cause of the crisis was similar to that of 1994 but religion was used as a cover to justify the

reason for the crisis between the natives and the settlers. The crisis was said to have been sparked off when a lady attempted to cross the road where a group of Muslims was observing Jumat prayers. The refusal of the Muslim Congregation to allow her pass was said to have led to the crisis. Thus from September 7 to 17 2001, Jos metropolis and its environs were turned upside down and made unbearable for the inhabitants as both the natives and the Hausa and Fulani engaged one another in bloody clashes. Many people lost their lives and property worth billions of naira were destroyed.

The background to the 2001 conflict had been set up from the previous issues which bordered on the ownership of Jos city. Like the 1994 crisis, the issue on ground before the crises was the resistance to the appointment of Alhaji Mukhtar Usman Mohammad as Co-ordinator of the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) in Jos North Local Government Council. The appointment sparked protest and rejection from the “indigenous groups.” This time around, the conflict also assumed a religious character and spread nearly all over the state, with great intensity in the Plateau North Senatorial Area.

The cause of the 2008 crisis was similar to that of the 1994 and 2001. While the 1994 and 2001 were caused by the appointment of a Caretaker Committee Chairman for Jos North Local Government and the appointment of National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) Coordinator, that of 2008 was sparked off by election into the same council. For fear of crisis, previous administrations in the state did not conduct council polls in the troubled Jos North until 2008. The crisis that ensued over the local government poll claimed many lives while property was destroyed in the senseless orgy of violence that lasted from November 28th to November 30th (PIDAN 101). No matter the reason adduced for the crisis, it was

caused by the age-long tussle over the control of Jos between the natives and the Hausa and Fulani in the council. From all indications, the poll was simply used as an excuse.

While the dust over 2008 crisis was about settling down, another crisis erupted on Sunday, January 17, 2010. It was said to have been caused by a man trying to renovate his house which was burnt down during the 2008 crisis in Nassarawa area of Jos town. Though there were different versions of the cause of the crisis the three day upheaval which led to the declaration of a 24-hour curfew would not be forgotten easily as a result of the colossal loss of lives and property recorded. As a result of this renewed crisis in the state, military men were drafted to take over the security of the state to maintain peace.

The Northern Governors' Forum at its meeting on 4th January, 2010 in Kaduna agreed that the issue of the ownership of Jos city is one of the main causes of the conflicts when they said that the problem in Jos was caused by indigene-settler syndrome and that the spark point of these recurrent ugly incidences was the "contention over the ownership of Jos city between the Anaguta, Berom and Afizere on one hand and the Hausa-Fulani on the other hand" (PIDAN 101).

Because of these protracted violent conflicts in the city, the communal harmony and peace which Jos city was hitherto known for over the years has broken down. These violent conflicts have enormous negative consequences for the economy of the state and the nation in general. There is no longer mutual trust between Muslims and Christians in the city. The living pattern has been drastically altered as Muslims and Christians now live in separate areas of the city. The city of Jos, Plateau State has been thrown into crisis and has remained the ghost of its old glory to date.

These conflicts also produced effects on the political, economic, social, religious and psychological development of Jos city and its environs. The economic impact came by way of the destruction of property and business. These conflicts led to the unprecedented large scale destruction of private and public property in the town as normal business was disrupted. Perhaps the greatest economic impact came with the destruction of the ultra modern market in the centre of Jos and as a result commercial activities in the city have been adversely affected.

3.4.4 The Yelwa, Shendam, Wase Crises in Plateau South Senatorial Zone

The Southern Senatorial zone of Plateau State originates from the former lowland division with headquarters in Shendam town. It is made up of six Local Government Areas, namely Shendam, Mikang, Langtang North, Langtang South, Quan' pan and Wase. Like other parts of Plateau State, the zone is inhabited by various ethnic groups such as Taroh, Gomai, Boghom, Pan, Kofyar, Yioun, Tehi, Jukun, and Piapung among others (Best 105).

The series of violent conflicts in the zone were aggravated by the 2001 conflicts in Jos. Like the Jos crises, the conflict in this zone first started over political contests, assumed resources dimensions, and finally snowballed into ethno-religious conflicts. This religious dimension came about after the identity group deployed religion to serve the function of mobilization, identity and ideology in the conflict (Best 105). During the early stages of the conflicts, religion could hardly be noticed as a source of conflict. Religion became a consideration with the progression and escalation of the conflict.

The parties to the conflict vary from one Local Government Area to the other and according to specific conflict flash points. However, these conflicts could be categorised into two basic identity groups, namely ethnic and religious. At a broad

level, it was visible to identify the parties as Christian and Muslim groups. At the point the conflict spread beyond the zone and when the parties began to enlist external, emotional and material support, religion became a crucial dividing line for the parties, and it is this division that gives the conflict the semblance of a religious conflict (Best 110).

Yelwa in Shendam Local Government Area is a market town located in the southern senatorial zone of Plateau State. As a commercial centre Yelwa is cosmopolitan in nature such that people from different ethnic groups settled there over the years. It is a junction town on the Ibi-Wase track route, which makes it a strategic economic location. As an important commercial centre, Yelwa also has historical ties to Wase Emirate and the Fulani ruling dynasty of Wase (Best 16). It is therefore, easy for issues in Yelwa-Shendam to turn into southern Plateau regional conflict spanning the length and breadth of the zone.

Thus when in June 2002 conflict erupted in Yelwa town, it quickly spread into neighbouring Local Government Areas. The conflict began in Yelwa-Shendam and then moved to neighbouring Langtang South Local Government Area because it affected Taroh people in Yelwa. In Langtang South Local Government Area, the conflict affected Hausa and Fulani and other indigenous populations of Wase Local Government Area. This made the conflict to spill into Wase Local Government Area. A PDP ward officials' election for Yelwa resulted into serious violent conflicts between Gamai ethnic group and Muslim Hausa/Fulani communities (Best 11, Hoomlong 26). According to Hoomlong, "It later assumed resource dimension and then transformed into a religious conflict when the protagonists took on religious identity lines to mobilize the much needed foot soldiers" (26).

The conflict did not end with the 2002 crisis in the town of Yelwa, instead it left unanswered questions and the issues remain unresolved in the minds of the protagonists. On 24th February 2004 there was the killing at Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN) Yelwa where about 47 people, (some claim 67) died, aggravating the crisis in the area (Hoomlong 26). There were three major outbreak of violence in Yelwa town: the first on 26th June 2002, the second on 24th February 2004 and the third from 2nd to 3rd May, 2004. There was another attack on the Muslim community, and about 600 people were killed (Hoomlong 32).

The conflict in Wase became manifest in 1996 as a political disagreement. The crux of the matter then was the ethnic character that the contest for the control of the machinery of Wase Local Government Area as assumed between the Taroh leading non Muslims and other largely Muslim groups in the Local Government Area (Kwaja 14). The conflict was ignited with the contest for the harvest of locust beans fruit from a tree on a contested land between a Taroh man and a Boghom man. The violence that followed led to deaths, destruction of property and displacement of the population in Mavo village of the Local Government Area. Another major factor that fuelled the confrontation was the killing of four prominent Taroh people in July the same year 2001. These events damaged the frail relations between the Taroh and the Boghom and further created and deepened the religious divide since most Taroh people are Christians, while most Boghom people are Muslims.

According to Chris Kwaja (66) the Southern zone especially Wase Local Government Area in particular has for a long time been a hotbed of conflicts widely believed to have been fuelled by resources, land for grazing, farming, environmental degradation and marginalization among other factors. What led to the Wase conflict is the issue of land resources and ownership. Also in contest was the issue of

jurisdiction of certain traditional rulers and chiefs and competition over political appointments, population growth and expansionist tendencies of the ethnic groups. The conflict in Wase and other parts of the southern zone can be described as resource and value conflicts. It is resource in the sense that the contest has historically been over the ownership of land between the Hausa and the Taroh. The conflict is essentially inter-communal with historical antecedents.

These series of violent confrontations eventually changed the character of peace and conflict in the southern zone of the state. These conflicts in the Southern Senatorial Zone between 2002 and 2004 produced farreaching consequences. This eventually led to the declaration of State of Emergency on 18th May 2004 and the appointment of Major General (rtd) Chris Ali as Administrator for the state. The state of emergency which lasted from May 18 to November 18 2004 was the climax of the conflicts which had become protracted from 2001 to 2004. These protracted conflicts in the zone also attracted some level of international attention and outcry by virtue of the extent of violence that characterized them. It has also given the zone reputation as a notorious violent prone area with passion for large scale violence and mass killings. As a result of these violent crises almost all the local government areas in the zone have been affected negatively. A glance through all the Local Governments in the southern zone will reveal the various effects of the conflicts.

The conflict impacted negatively on different groups in the area such as men, women, children, youths, and the aged. On both sides of the conflicts divide, there were allegations of abuses and atrocities committed against women such as abductions, rape, premature births and forced marriages (Best II 147).

The conflicts also led to the loss of lives and injuries sustained from violence. There were also problems derivable from deaths such as widowhood, orphanage and

the trauma of living in a town that has lost hundreds of able bodied persons and also there was the destruction of property like residential houses, business centres and places of worship. These conflicts also led to the destruction of mutual trust and intensification of suspicion along ethnic and religious identities

There were also the problems of internal displacement of populations in the conflict areas and violation of human rights of especially women, children, the aged and the disabled. There was also, health problems resulting from starvation and poor nutrition and allegation of health workers of different faiths poisoning patients of other faiths (Hoomlong 52; Best 147).

Besides, there is the increase in criminal activities because of the weapons used during the crisis which are still in circulation thus leading to a culture of violence. Youths have become restive and resorted to banditry. Citizens have also lost faith in government and this has led to the adoption of self help methods by the conflicting parties. Educational has also been affected adversely as conflict would not allow children to go to school.

The parties to the conflicts presented their different perspectives after the conflicts. For instance the Gomai explained that between February 13 and May 2, 2004 30 Gomai villages came under armed attack (delegates at the validation w/shop at Pankshin July 2004 (Best 112). Similarly, Taroh sources have it that at least 18 of their villages were sacked by armed militias from Hausa and Fulani sources in Langtang South Local Government Area (Taroh delegates at the workshop).

The Hausa and Fulani represented by Abdullah D. Abdullah in their submission to The Special Committee C, June 2004 (Kwaja 113) stated that from June 26, 2002 to 24 February 2004, the Taroh stole over 700,000 herds of cattle, goats and sheep from the Fulani and murdered over 50 Fulani men, women and children. In all,

there seem to be an agreement among scholars that the conflicts in the Southern zone sprang from the question of who was an indigene and who was not and the rights and privileges that accompany each status (Kwaja 113).

3.4.5 The Reinhard Bonke Crisis in Kano

Kano is one of the oldest Islamic cities in Nigeria and has a long and outstanding history of religious relationships and association with the Islamized North Africa. Kano as earlier stated has been particularly vulnerable to riots because of the presence of diverse sects of Islamic fundamentalists. According to Hussein Abdu, Kano has, since colonial times, remained a centre of ethnic and religious violence. Most of these violent conflicts pitch the indigenous Hausa-Fulani Muslim against their Christian counterparts from southern Nigeria. Kano has also been a centre of attraction for immigrants of various ethnic, religious and nationality groups since the pre-colonial period (1).

The first major crisis in Kano, according to Abdu (1), was in 1953 when Igbos were attacked in Sabon-Gari. This crisis was fuelled by political disagreement between political parties. The aftermath of the disagreement was the 15th May 1953 mass demonstration in Kano, against the tour of Action Group (AG) leaders to Northern Nigeria, Kano in particular. A total of twenty one (21) southerners were killed with about seventy-one others wounded. The southerners also killed fifteen northerners and wounded 163 (Albert 2). Most of those killed were Igbos. Since that time, there have been series of violent crises in Kano.

The October 29th 1991 edition of the *Tell Magazine* captioned the problem at hand then when it screamed out “Blood bath in Kano: Religious Fanatics strike Again.” The man who whipped up the riots was a German-born Christian Evangelist – Reinhard Bonke, who was invited by the Christian Association of Nigeria for a 5 day

programme dubbed “Crusade” a word according to Harry Boer “that immediately rankled Muslim ears and reminded them of the Crusades of past centuries” (41).

This came against the backdrop of the government’s earlier refusal to allow a South African Muslim preacher into the country. The coming of the Evangelist was massively publicized. So many handbills and posters were distributed. Adverts were carried out in both the print and electronic media. This publicity attracted the attention of Muslims who felt the crusade must not be allowed to hold in Kano. They accused the government of double standard for failing to grant permission to a South African Muslim Preacher, Sheik Ahmed Deedat who had wanted to come to Kano (Boer 41; Abdu1). According to Hussaini Abdu the Muslims resented some of the messages in the media adverts: that the Evangelist will “make the deaf hear, the blind see, the cripple walk” “Jesus for all by the year 2000” (1). First, various Muslim groups sent emissaries to the government to prevail on the government to withdraw the permission granted to the Christian body to host the programme at Kano Race Course. On the 13th October 1991, the day the crusade was to hold, Muslims had a peaceful demonstration in the Emir’s palace and later had an emergency prayer at the Kofar Mata Eid Praying Ground. The riots that ensued as a result of this led to the destruction of so many lives and property, including places of worship.

Furthermore, the protesters numbering over ten thousand started by destroying handbills, posters carrying inscription of Rev. Bonke and thereafter attacked people who stood on their way (Gofwen 104). Though this crisis lasted for only two days, the level of destruction was so massive. At the end of the two days of violence, the then Governor of the state Col Idris Garba, in a special broadcast and as published in the *Nigeria Standard* of 17th October, 1991 stated that:

8 persons have been officially confirmed dead and 34 others injured, 33 houses were burnt and 8 damaged while 1 church and 1 mosque were burnt, 15 vehicles were burnt and 8 damaged with 9 motor cycles damaged, 40 shops were razed to the ground while 10 hotels were damaged (1).

The Igbo as usual seemed to be the main targets, as their shops were looted and houses destroyed. The Christians/Igbo groups in retaliation attacked some Muslim/Hausa houses, destroyed Mosques and killed any Muslim found in Sabongari. This resulted in mass exodus from Kano (Abdu 1). The fleeing persons were members of Igbo, Yoruba and other southern communities, many of who had spent years in the city. For a whole week, each day, trailers and buses were loaded with non-indigenes fleeing the city. It was unofficially reported that more than 500 people were killed in places like Sabon gari, Kofar mata, Kofar Nassarawa, Ibrahim Taiwo Road, Konar Jaba, Gama Brigade, Rimin Kebe, Tudun Murtala etc. Many non-indigenes for week took refuge in military and Police barracks for a week (Abdu 1).

3.4.6 The Tafawa Balewa Crises

As if in competition with other states in the North in terms of ethno-religious conflicts, Bauchi has experienced a number of violent conflicts. Certainly, one cannot rule out other factors as being responsible for these series of violent conflicts as several reasons have been adduced as causing the spark of these violent conflicts. The most prominent version has to do with a disagreement between a Sayawa (Christian) meat seller and a Fulani (Muslim) buyer (Boer 82; Gofwen 66). This disagreement escalated into a full blown violence. Not only did it spread into many other villages in the state, but also Bauchi town the state capital.

In Bauchi town, the violent conflict took a religious dimension and this resulted into the destruction of lives and property. This is because in reaction to the

Tafawa Balewa crisis some Muslim mob took to the streets, in thousands ransacking killing and destroying property.

Barely three years later, on July 1, 1994, another violent conflict occurred in the same Tafawa Balewa. This conflict started in the form of the mounting of a road block by some Sayawa women in protest against the state cabinet reshuffle in which a Sayawa (Christian) man was replaced by a Muslim man. The protest was against a proposed reception in honour of the newly appointed (Muslim) Commissioner (Boer 85, Otite 30). This seemingly political issue developed into unprecedented violent conflicts between Muslims and Christians and claimed several lives and property. In Osa Director's words, "what happened thereafter was a night mare and sheer horror" (Boer 85).

Unlike the conflicts of 1991, this one did not spill over into Bauchi town. The reason for this may be because both Federal and Bauchi State Governments decided to restrain the media in order to prevent it from spreading information as in other riots. In addition, the state government unlike in the 1991 crisis decided not to transfer the victims to Bauchi town instead medical personnel were sent from Bauchi to treat people there (Boer 88).

Throughout 2000-2002, crises continued to brew as new issues occurred on a regular basis with tension here and there, and conflicts continued unabated. Though, it is possible to identify several other conflicts both in Bauchi and Tafawa Balewa since then, one can only conclude that it has become protracted in nature and the end is yet to be in sight given the religious colouration it has assumed.

3.5 CRISES RELATED TO GLOBAL ISSUES

These are conflicts whose origins and triggers were external but manifested themselves in deadly crises in the country. These many conflicts have been classified under the same sections for easy analysis.

3.5.1 The Denmark Cartoons' Crises

The English Version of the controversial cartoons of Prophet Muhammad was first published in the *Jyllands-Posten* in September 2005. The *Jyllands-Posten* Muhammad cartoons controversy according to Bonde, Nørby Bent (33), began after 12 editorial cartoons, most of which depicted Prophet Muhammad, were published in the Danish newspaper the *Jyllands-Posten* on 30 September 2005. The newspaper announced that this publication was an attempt to contribute to the debate regarding criticism of Islam and self-censorship (*IRIN News*; Bonde 8). According to the *London Times* online, this led to protests across the Muslim world, some of which escalated into violence with instances of firing on crowds of protestors. It also led to the burning of the Danish Embassies in Syria, Lebanon and Iran.

Furthermore, consumer boycott was organised in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other countries in the Middle East. For weeks, numerous demonstrations and other protests against the cartoons took place worldwide with rumours spreading via SMS and word-of-mouth. On 4 February 2006, the Danish and Norwegian embassies in Syria were set ablaze. In Beirut, the Danish Embassy was set on fire, leaving one protester dead. The Danish embassy in Tehran was also torched. Altogether, at least 139 people were killed in the protests, mostly as a result of police firing on the crowds. The killing occurred mainly in Nigeria, Libya and Afghanistan (Bonde 9).

Many death threats and reward offers for killing those responsible for the cartoons were made. Four Danish Ministers resigned amidst the controversy, among

them Roberto Calderoli and Laila Freivalds. In India, Haji Yaqoob Qureishi, a Minister in the Uttar Pradesh state government, announced in February 2006 a cash reward of Rs 51 crore (roughly about US\$11 million) for anyone who beheads "the Danish cartoonist" who caricatured Mohammad (Bonde 9).

Nigerians woke up on February 20, 2006 to experience another round of violent conflicts which like the previous ones, left the nation prostrate and citizens seeking divine interventions. The violent conflict which started in Maiduguri on 20th February spread to Katsina, Bauchi, Gombe and other parts of the north with heavy human and material casualties. About 35 churches were burnt in Maiduguri and many lives were lost. On 19th February 2006 *Associate Press* reported the Borno State Police Public Relations Officer Haz Iwendi as saying that "...thousands of rioters burned 15 churches in Maiduguri in a three-hour rampage before troops and police reinforcements restored order."

Olori reported that more than 10,000 displaced victims of the reprisal violence in Onitsha were holed up at the 302 Artillery regiment in the town where they had fled to take refuge under the protection of soldiers. Most of them were Muslims from the north whose houses and wares were burnt while several others were killed by the rioters retaliating to the killing of fellow Igbos in Maiduguri and Bauchi (1).

Many Nigerians as usual reacted to these violent conflicts. In the *Vanguard* newspaper of Monday April 3, 2001 a journalist, while reacting to Babangida's answers to an interview, asked why a cartoon published in Europe since September 2005 should lead to the killing of Christians and especially Igbos, six months later? In a similar reaction, Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor in the *Vanguard* newspaper of 20th February, 2006 called on state governments to guarantee the security of lives and property of Christians. The Federal Government he said should not hesitate to declare

a state of emergency in the troubled states if uncertainty persisted. According to him, “unlike in the past incidents, we will not tolerate a situation where the criminal acts of irrational extremists go unpunished” (1). He stressed further that:

While we do not condone the defamation of any religious leader or group, which is the excuse of the violent protest in this instance, we find it difficult to rationalize why Christians in Borno State or any other state in Nigeria should be attacked over a publication in Denmark...the publication is too far remote from us that the attack and destruction that took place in Borno is unwarranted, irrational and a clear disregard for Christian faith in a secular setting like ours (1).

On his part, Cardinal Olubunmi Okogie condemned the killing and the wanton destruction of lives and property, describing the protest as an “over-reaction,” “provocative,” “inciting,” and “unwarranted.” The Cardinal in the *Vanguard* newspaper of 20th February, 2006 stated that the cartoon protest was not justified because the said offensive publication neither originated nor took place in Nigeria but Denmark (1). *The Guardian* newspaper editorial of March 2, 2006 remarked that Nigeria has become notorious for “religious wars,” occurring almost on an annual basis especially in the northern part of the country. This he said has in recent times resulted into reprisal attacks in the south, occasioning the brutal and premature death of countless innocent lives and the destruction of places of worship and other valuable property (6).

In a similar vein, a Christian cleric in an opinion in *The Punch* newspaper of April 7, 2006 asserted that:

...it was painful that the Moslems were usually the ones who initiated attacks on Christians. Not minding the fact that there had been reprisal attacks in some towns of the South-east, the cleric yet wanted government to begin the

immediate trial of those behind the carnage in some States of the North. The cleric maintained that if the Federal Government continued to treat the perpetrators with kid gloves, it was only playing with fire. He, however, opinionated that Christians ought to have been congratulated for limiting the reprisals to Anambra State. He stressed further: “As far as I am concerned, any Muslim that (sic) thinks he can just wake up to go and burn down churches is a criminal and should be treated as such... (13).

In a letter to the editor published in the *Sunday Comet* newspaper of March 5, 2006 (10), the anonymous writer called on northern Muslims to always find a peaceful way of protesting whenever the need arises. He also reasoned that the offensive cartoons did not call for attack on innocent Christians in Nigeria to the extent of burning their churches which Prophet Muhammed and his successors detest. In *The Comet* newspaper of March 2, 2006, Mohammed Haruna while commenting on the cartoons riots stated that:

...many Muslims in Nigeria and elsewhere fell for the provocation where it should have been obvious that Christians had absolutely nothing to do with the cartoons. This is why the killings of Christians and Igbos in several towns in the North... should have been condemned in the strongest language by every right thinking Nigerian, but especially by the Muslim leadership. Sadly such unequivocal condemnation of the cartoon riots was left to the secular leadership of the equally secular Arewa Consultative Forum. As its Chairman, Chief Sunday Awoniyi, said in a statement the ACF issued on February 20, the killings and burning of churches were “most despicable, thoroughly condemnable and totally unacceptable (12).

Condemnations of the riots came from various sources. However, the towns and cities that were affected in the initial and reprisal attacks would still have to carry the scars of the riots for a long time. The living victims of the disturbances in the affected areas would for long carry the memories and bitterness of the destructions. These, of course are some of the effects of violent conflicts. In *The Comet* newspaper of Saturday, March 11, 2006, Alhaji Musa Adamu Shua in Onitsha recounted his ordeal:

...it is very sad that the crisis broke out that particular day. I lost my Property and relations, those I have been doing business with for more than 20 years. I have lived in Onitsha for 27 years, but all that I lived and worked for have gone and I don't think anything will make me to go back to that place (6).

During this crisis many people were displaced as their houses were razed. They fled the town and sought refuge in barracks. Reporting on the situation at that time *The Comet* newspaper reported that:

...the casualty rates were incredible. On the conservative side, well over 100 persons were reportedly killed, a good number injured, while a flourishing livestock market was reduced to ashes. Not to talk about the money spinning bureau d'change which dotted the city where several millions both in local and hard currencies were looted by miscreants. The displaced persons aided by security operatives flocked to Asaba, where they made their new home. While some are quartered in Police Mobile Base, others are living in Cable Point area usually populated by Hausa-Fulani. The influx has swollen the population of the towns. Although calm has returned to Onitsha, none of them wants to have anything to do with it again. The situation is still fragile and the mass exodus has continued. "No Hausa man will sell something again in Onitsha" (6).

Similarly, in an article published in the *Punch* newspaper of March 6, 2006, it was also noted that Nigeria recorded the highest degree of violence over the offensive cartoons as no fewer than 200 persons were killed in different parts of the country. Besides, churches and mosques were burnt in the orgy of violence visited on innocent Nigerians in the name of religion (3).

As the *Punch* newspaper of 1st March observed, it is unfathomable that the resultant deaths in the last few days of the violent conflicts in Nigeria are counted in three digits, while the total number of casualties in other parts of Arab, Asia and even European countries put together was less (15).

No doubt, the cities and towns ravaged by sectarian violence occasioned by the cartoons riots of 2005 cannot remain the same. There are definitely charred remains of the buildings and vehicles torched. Many of the buildings destroyed would still remain wrecks for a long time. For families whose relations died in the crisis, the bitter memories would linger on for a long time. Many of the displaced persons may not find their bearings again until after a long time. Many of the affected would have to relocate to other cities or villages. In the affected towns and cities, there will be suspicion between the indigenes and the non-indigenes, and between the adherents of different faiths. Palpable fear of possible attacks remain the lot of non-indigenes in their cities of abode. Really, the affected cities cannot remain the same again. In this instance we can understand the power of the mass media positively or negatively. To these violent conflicts, Nigerians seem to be asking, what went wrong, why was it so? This issue will be considered further during the analysis in chapter four.

3.5.2 The Miss World Pageant Crises

Miss World pageant according to Richard Cavendish, started in London in 1951 in what was originally intended to be a one-off event connected with the Festival

of Britain. It is the oldest surviving major beauty pageant created by Eric Morley an entertainment entrepreneur of great shrewdness and drive. By 1970, when Morley's wife Julia, an ex-beauty queen herself, joined him in organising the contest Miss World was attracting television audiences in almost every country in the world and making huge amounts of money for charity (1). "By 1977 Miss World was attracting 2.5 billion viewers in 155 countries and Channel Five started covering it in Britain in 1999. Morley died in 2000, aged eighty-two (Cavendish 1).

For the first time, in 2001 the pageant had its first black African winner, a Nigerian lady Miss Agbani Darego. As a result, according to *The Guardian* newspaper of 17th February, 2003, the mantle fell on Nigeria to host the event the following year 2002 (1). The final of the competition was then slated for Abuja on 30 November 2002. The choice of Abuja and the timing generated a lot of controversies, especially from some sections of Nigerian Muslims. The contention was that a beauty pageant featuring swimwear modelling had been slated to take place during the Muslim month of Ramadan and this they saw as insensitive and a direct insult on their faith (Olayinka 6). In July 2002, the National Council of Muslim Youths (NACOMYO) announced that it would "use all constitutional means to disrupt" the contest (Weimann 424). Another group that protested against the Miss World contest was the Supreme Council for Sharia in Nigeria (SCSN). In a press release dated 19th September 2002 and signed by its Secretary-General, Nafi'u Baba Ahmad, the SCSN asserted that it: "...frowned at the plan by the Federal Government of Nigeria to support the hosting of the Miss World beauty pageant in Abuja, in the Month of Ramadan. It viewed this as an evident act of provocation to Muslims" (Weimann 425).

Also on 23 September 2002, the NSCIA protested against:

...the display of semi-naked female contestants bodies during the last ten days of the month of Ramadan when Moslems are scheduled to be fasting and devoting all of themselves to Allah before calling on all Moslems, including government functionaries, not to participate in the proposed show of shame which is totally un-Islamic (Weimann 426).

After these series of protests, the organizers shifted the final to 7th December 2002 to hold after the month of Ramadan. They also restricted the visits of the contestants to only the Southern parts of the country. Nevertheless, on 11 November 2002, 92 contestants arrived in Nigeria and the following day, 88 of them took part in a prayer session at the Chapel at the presidential villa in Abuja. This massive media coverage of the events leading up to the final during the Muslim month of fasting according to Weimann G.J. was understood by many Muslims as a deliberate provocation (428).

On 16th November 2002, a Lagos-based newspaper *ThisDay* published, in its arts pages, an article by Ms Isioma Daniel titled "The World at their Feet." This article contained the following passage:

...The Muslims thought it was immoral to bring ninety-two women to Nigeria and ask them to revel in vanity. What would Mohammed think? In all honesty, he would probably have chosen a wife from one of them. The irony is that Algeria, an Islamic country, is one of the countries participating in the contest (Brisibe 1).

This comment was not only regarded as insulting by Muslims, but blasphemous. The mounting tensions finally escalated in Kaduna on 20 November 2002, when a group of Muslim youths burnt *ThisDay*'s Kaduna regional office. After this, they marched through the city of Kaduna, killing and burning down places of

worship and demanding the death of the newspaper's editors for alleged slander of the Prophet. *ThisDay* newspaper immediately and repeatedly apologized in print for the offense caused, yet it did not calm the aggrieved rioters. According to Joseph Hayab, the Secretary of Nigeria's Alliance of Protestant Churches, "during the three days of rioting in Kaduna, 58 churches were attacked and at least 215 people were killed" (1).

Kaduna State Governor declared a 12-hour curfew from 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. The following three days were marked by violent clashes between groups of Muslim and Christian youths, which left around 250 people dead (Human Rights Watch 2). On Friday, 22 September 2002, the riots spread to the federal capital Abuja after the Friday prayer at the Abuja National Mosque (Chigbo 1).

As a result of this crisis, according to the *Newswatch* magazine online (1) the pageant was moved to London on 23 September, 2002. The cancellation of the contest in Nigeria according to Chigbo (1) tallied with the demand of the Kaduna State chapter of the Council of Ulama, asking the Federal Government of Nigeria to call off the pageant in the interest of peace as the council had argued that the pageant offended Muslims' sensibilities.

Also the *Jama'atu Nasir Islam* (JNI), called for the cancellation of the Miss World pageant, the closure of *ThisDay* newspapers, and the prosecution of the newspaper's owners and Daniel. They warned that "failure by government to take this action will clearly signal to the Muslims of this country and the world at large that the Miss World contest was plan in Nigeria to insult Muslims" (Chigbo 2). *ThisDay* issued an apology in its front page of November. 18 but it was too late: On the same day, some aggrieved Muslim youths took to the streets of Kaduna, burning *ThisDay's* regional office, attacking and killing people. Before the end of the week, many hotels and churches in Kaduna had been burnt. In the week following, the pages of *ThisDay*

overflowed with contrition. A second apology on November 21st called Daniel's comment "not only unjustified but utterly provocative," and a November 22 editorial gave a list of the paper's Muslim staff members.

This was not to be the end of the crisis as on 25 November 2002, the then Deputy Governor of Zamfara State, Mamuda Aliyu Shinkafi spoke at a public gathering to representatives of Muslim youth organizations that: "Like Salman Rushdie, the blood of Isioma Daniel can be shed. It is binding on all Moslems wherever they are, to consider the killing of the writer as a religious duty (Brisibe 1; Weimann 434).

These riots elicited reprisal attacks in Aba, Owerri and Okigwe of Abia and Imo states respectively against the Hausa. In Aba, *Newswatch* magazine online (1) reported that there were massive protests by youths in the city. However, no life was lost as a result of prompt police intervention. Peace had returned to Aba by November 26 when Anambra and Enugu State Governments issued statements, warning people not to embark on any reprisal attacks against Muslim communities in the states. Ody Chukwube, the then Chief Press Secretary to Anambra State Governor, in a press statement, called on the people to resist the temptation of such attacks and toe the line of peace and reconciliation. The Muslim Community was asked not to bear any apprehension of attacks as Anambra people were law-abiding and peaceful.

Simon Kolawole, Editor of the Saturday *ThisDay* newspaper, was arrested later by men of the State Security Service (SSS) in Abuja while Ms Isioma Daniel, author of the offending article, was asked to report to SSS office in Abuja. She eventually escaped to the United States of America. At the end of the crisis, so many lives were lost with the attendant destruction of property worth several thousands of naira. Here we see a good example of the mass media generating conflict in a

religiously prulalistic and sensitive society like Nigeria because of the pattern of its reportage.

3.6 THE JAMA'ATU AHLIS SUNNA LIDDA'AWATI WAL-JIHAD (PEOPLE COMMITTED TO THE PROPAGATION OF THE PROPHET'S TEACHINGS AND JIHAD) ALIAS BOKO HARAM PHENOMENON

Although the group has come to be popularly known as *Boko Haram*, it is not clear whether the group actually calls itself by this name. According to Shehu Sani (1), some call them *Yusufuya* sect, some call them *Jamaatul Takfur Wal Hyra Ahlus Sunna*, some still call them *Khawaarji* and some call them *Jamaatu Ahlis Sunnah Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad*, which they seem to approve of. *Boko* itself is the Hausa name for western education and put together with *Haram* means "Western education is sacrilege" or "a sin." *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad* translated in English as "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad" (*BBC News*. 13/7/2011), started initially in Maiduguri. The organization claims to be a Muslim sect that seeks to abolish the secular system of government and establish sharia law in the country (*AlJazeera* 24/12/2011, allAfrica.com. 2011-02-02) The group on *AlJazeera* of 24th December, 2011 also claimed responsibilities for many killings through gun shots and bombings in Nigeria.

According to Shehu Sani, *Boko Haram* started as *Sahaba* group in 1995. The main leader of the group then was one Abubakar Lawan who later left for the University of Medina for further studies, and so the leadership of the group fell on Mohammed Yusuf (2). However, immediately Yusuf took over, he changed the doctrine of the sect, abandoned the older cleric and came up with *Boko Haram*. According to Sani (1) at the initial stage of their growth, the group was entrenched in Borno, Yobe, Katsina, Kaduna, Bauchi, Gombe and Kano States, but later spread

virtually to all the northern states and have been advancing their influences to other parts of the country.

According to Shehu Sani, *Boko Haram* emanated from an orthodox teaching slightly resembling that of the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Their school of thought considers anything western as an aberration or completely un-Islamic. The group viewed the western influence on Islamic society as the basis of the religion's weakness. Hence their declaration that "western education and indeed all western institution is infidel" and as such must be avoided by Muslims" (1).

Sani observes that at first, both the cleric and the larger community ignored the sect as they dismissed the preacher as unknowledgeable. Others saw them as propagandist who would not get the attention of other Muslims. However, events proved this wrong as the sect began to grow from strength to strength. In Bauchi, Yobe, and Borno States, many young people dropped out of school, including university students to join them. Workers, including highly placed administrators and tertiary institutions' lecturers also joined them. That was when the clerics realized that there were going to be problems. But it was too late then, as many youths had already separated from their families, while many people abandoned their jobs for the group. It was gathered that most people sold their belongings to contribute to the coffers of fighting the cause of Allah to "save Islam from the clutches of western influences and domination" (Sani 1).

Some of the fundamental arguments and beliefs held by the group according to Sani is that banking, taxation and jurisprudence in the country are completely *infidel* (1). They also argued that western education was un-Islamic as it embodies all that Islam rejects, while it propagates the opposite of what *Allah* and his prophet had ordained. For instance, the mixing of boys and girls under the same shade, the

propagation of the theory that men evolved from the family of the monkey as well as the sun in the sky is satanic. According to them, all these are in conflict with the direct words of *Allah* who said Muslims should not mix sexes under the same umbrella and that He created men from clay as well as the sun, earth and the moon each move on its own axis. They further argued that today's banking system is Shylock and Islam forbids interest in financial transaction, just as the laws of the land are manmade, in replacement of the ones ordained by *Allah*. It was in their bid to run away from all of these vices that members of the sect decided to cluster themselves in strategic locations at the outskirts of most major towns of Bauchi and Yobe.

The sect lured many youths to abandon school and embrace Yusuf's new and emerging state that promises to offer them a better education. According to Sani, the late Yusuf also took advantage of unemployment, poverty, corruption and insecurity. And as he pointed out such failures, citing verses of Quran and the saying of the prophet, the youths saw him as the leader that will indeed deliver them from malevolence to the promised land. In the early stage of the group, it attracted membership from the families of the high and mighty in Borno State (2). Many members of prominent families from Borno and Yobe States reportedly joined or later became sympathetic to his cause and supported it financially (Sani 3).

The first crisis began in Maiduguri when the sect members were on their way to a cemetery in a procession to bury some of their members who died in a motor accident a day earlier. Some of them who rode on motorbikes were intercepted by an Operation Flush patrol team for not wearing crash helmets. This resulted into a crisis between members of the sect and security operatives. This incident resulted into the killing of some members of the group, while others sustained injuries. A few days later, Yusuf, made a pronouncement through his Friday sermon in Maiduguri to

retaliate the shooting of his men, saying that his “group would be prepared to confront all the security agencies in the State as well as government which he described as “enemies of Islam” (Sani 1).

Boko Haram men are largely known to have lived at Jadaman Mada and near the Airport within Bauchi metropolis. According to Sani, they do not buy commercial food and they do not eat food prepared by non members, due to its sources (*Haram*). Sani states further that they normally dress in similar costumes as the Taliban of Afghanistan or Pakistan, with long sleeved robes, shortened trousers, turbans, long beards, small coats over the long sleeve robes, covering the abdomen and chewing sticks (4).

On July 26, 2009, a small group of about 30 youths marched towards the Dutsen Police Station in Bauchi town around 6.00am. All of them were carrying weapons. The police confronted them as soon as they attacked and this led to the death of some of their members. Soon the police with the military swiftly surrounded the group leader’s house early that morning where items like military uniforms, boots, live ammunitions, shells, locally made explosives and gun powder were discovered (Sani 4). Immediately after the encounter, the houses belonging to the sect were destroyed by the authorities. Some members of the sect were killed in the encounter while others escaped.

The Assistant Inspector General of police (AIG), Zone 12, Mr. Moses Anegboda confirmed that 41 persons were killed in the crisis between the police and the sect. He told the *News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)* that 39 persons were members of the group while a policeman and a soldier were also killed and 176 suspected members of the sect had been arrested. The AIG equally noted that about 210 weapons were recovered from the sect with 200 detonators, two bags of lethal gun

powder, seven bags of poltesum, one basin of nitrate used for making explosives and an AK-47.

Few days later, the Bauchi conflict between the *Boko Haram* sect and the security operatives spread to Yobe State. The sect members launched an attack on the central police station in Potiskum and soon retreated into a hideout at Mamudo, where security agents swooped on them. As a result of this clash three police officers and one fire service officer died. Governor Ibrahim Geidem in condemning the sectarian strife described it as an “embarrassment to Islam” (Sani 3).

In Kano, the house and mosque of the sect leader Wudil Salihu Al-min were demolished by the Kano State Police Command. Wudil went into hiding following the attack on Wudil Police Station. During the raid on Wudil’s house, explosive substances including fuel bottles, a jack knife, a gun, a locally made pistol, arrows and charms were discovered. According to the police command anti-bomb unit, a bag of yellow powdered substance discovered in the house contained 15% charcoal, 25% potassium nitrate, 20% sulphur, which is highly inflammable when ignited with fire. According to Shehu Sani at the Bompai Police Headquarters, in Kano, a member of the *Boko Haram* arrested told a journalist that he was not disturbed by this present condition. “*Allah* be praised, we are simply passing a period of tribulation and I know that even if I die now, I would be hugely rewarded by *Allah*. They cannot stop us. We must propagate the message of *Allah*. Only *sharia* we believe in and western education is a taboo,” he said as he groaned in pain (3).

Though *Jamaatu Alhlis Sunnah Lidda’awati Wal-Jihad* alias *Boko Haram* is still claiming to be fighting the cause of Islam as their name implies, some Muslim scholars and leaders from all over Nigeria and other stakeholders have come out openly to denounce their mode of operations and claim to be carrying out their attacks

in the name of Islam. The sect's methods of attacks have graduated from attacking the Police and Military with dane guns and small and light weapons to the use of bombs and suicide bombing.

Few hours after the Borno State Police Command paraded nine followers of *Sheikh* Mohammed Yusuf with 74 locally made bomb shells in Biu Local Government Area, a bomb exploded in the residence of another member, killing him, while his friend sustained severe injuries and was hospitalized at the University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital. One Hassan Sani Badamu from Biu was killed on July 20 after the explosion occurred in his bedroom in Gwaindangari, behind Railway Quarters while he was with a friend. A guide book on bomb making was also recovered from the blasted room (Sani 3).

In Maiduguri, members of the sect grouped themselves in batches and simultaneously attacked targets around the city. They ambushed the State Police Headquarters, sparking off a shoot out that lasted for over three hours. Many members of the sect were killed in the process. In the various battles, at least eight police officers, two soldiers and three prison officers were reportedly killed. The new prison in the city was broken into where prisoners were set free, while homes of policemen and police stations were set ablaze. Later in the day, former Governor Ali Modu Sheriff declared a dusk to dawn curfew in all parts of Maiduguri and Jere, a neighbouring Local Government Area. The next day, security forces raided the enclave of the sect in Maiduguri in an attempt to crush the group. The army moved in six light armoured tanks and deployed hundreds of heavily armed soldiers, mobile policemen and regular policemen around Maiduguri to destroy the residences of the sect leaders, including Yusuf's, which also served as the group's headquarters.

The security forces also cordoned off Maiduguri, Galadima, Kasuwan Shanu and low cost areas, which had been under the control of the sect members since Sunday nights when the crises began. The military action came a day after more than 150 people were killed in Borno, Yobe and Kano States in gun battles between the sect and security forces. The offensive which started in Maiduguri was led by the GOC 3 Armoured Division of the Nigerian Army, Jos, Major General Saleh Maina.

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) said over 4000 persons took refuge at different military and police barracks. The Assistant Zonal Coordinator of the Agency in the North East, Apollos Jedral said of the displaced residents, 3000 persons were taking refuge at the Maimalari Barracks, 600 were at the State Police Headquarters while 19 were at the Giwa military barracks. He said the agency ordered for relief materials mostly food items and beddings, which he handed over to the Borno State government for distribution to the victims. In Yobe state, fighters reportedly “used fuel-laden motorcycles” and “bows with poison arrows” to attack a police station. On 30 July, 2011, allegations were made that Yusuf himself was extra judiciary killed by Nigerian security forces after being taken into custody (Ndujihe 1).

In January 2010, the group struck again in Borno state, killing four people in Dala Alemderi ward in Maiduguri metropolis. On 7th September, 2010, *Boko Haram* freed over 700 inmates from a prison in Bauchi. While in December the same year, *Boko Haram* was blamed for a market bombing which resulted in the arrest of 92 of its members. On Friday January 28, 2011, a gubernatorial candidate was assassinated, along with his brother and four police officers. It was also reported that on March 29, 2011, police “thwarted a plot to bomb an ANPP election rally” in Maiduguri, Borno State. The threat was blamed on *Boko Haram*.

November 4, 2011- A major *Boko Haram* bomb blast killed over 60 people in Damaturu, Yobe state. On April 1 suspected *Boko Haram* members attacked a police station in Bauchi. On April 9, a polling centre in Maiduguri was bombed. On April 15, the Maiduguri office of the Independent National Electoral Commission was bombed, and several people were shot in a separate incident on the same day. Authorities suspected *Boko Haram*. On April 20, *Boko Haram* killed a Muslim cleric and ambushed many police officers in Maiduguri. Tuesday February 8, 2011, *Boko Haram* gave conditions for peace, during which they demanded that the Borno State Governor, Senator Ali Modu Sheriff, should step down from office with immediate effect and also allow its members to reclaim their mosque in Maiduguri.

On 9th May 2011 *Boko Haram* rejected an offer for amnesty made by the governor-elect of Borno state, Kashim Shettima. June 17, 2011, the group claimed responsibility for a bombing attack on the police force headquarters in Abuja that occurred the previous day.

Right from the onset the *Jama'atu Ahl-Sunnati Lil Da'awati wal Jihad* or *Boko Haram* sect by their name "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and *Jihad*" and by their various video messages said and they keep on saying that they are fighting the cause of Islam . However, this has generated a great deal of controversies among Nigerians and outsiders as to the true nature and mission of this group. Unlike other crisis that can easily be attributed to a cause or causes, there are diversities of opinions as regards the cause or causes, their aims and objectives or missions.

Speaking at the 7th National Conference of Resource Forum of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria at Baqiyatullah Husainiyyah, Zaria on 16th October 2011, Dahiru Yahaya argued that what is happening about *Boko Haram* is a conspiracy

against Nigeria, which he said, is a deliberate design against an individual or entity to bring it down for the benefit of the perpetrators. According to him, “resisting oppression is in Islam as established by Ahlul Bayt (AS) particularly by Imam Husain (AS). Mental or intellectual *hijrah* is also an established matter in Islam. We are in a situation in Nigeria where *Halal* and *Haram* has no dividing line. Thus, methods of checking oppression are employed by different scholars at different times. And the methods differ for each era and time. However, he said “*Boko Haram* subscribed to Islam without subscribing to time and changes” (1).

According to him, everybody knows that things are not right in Nigeria and that the methods of checking these excesses vary from group to group. Whereas others prefer to die than to live in the condition, he said, others subscribed to other methods. To him:

...the beginning of *Boko Haram*, and many groups are coming up. Everybody can become a *Boko Haram* if not because of Islamic Movement in Nigeria; anybody who has no meaning to live in Nigeria can become *Boko Haram*. So when people don't have meaning in their lives, they become criminals. He concluded by saying that *Boko Haram* is a result of bad governance where people don't have meaning in their lives except frustration (3).

In his reaction to the *Boko Haram* phenomenon, Ahmad Salkia observed that there is the political *Boko Haram* that uses the name of the group to carry out the assassinations of some of their political opponents in the North-East. He also noted that there are some politicians and security contractors both in the North and South that have grown tall on the crest of the *Boko Haram* catastrophe to develop their personal estates (Ahmad 2). Suicide bombings and armed robbery in the name of religion in Nigeria were started by the *Jama'atu Ahl-Sunnati Lil Da'awati wal Jihad*

or *Boko Haram* in the early hours of June 16, 2011. Since then there have been several suicide bombings and several instances of targeted bombing of public places such as churches, beer parlours, banks and police stations, which have led to the death of hundreds, including women and children.

The platform of this violence remains religion, specifically the Islamic faith, from which sect leaders and followers push for suicide bombing on the assumption that it offers perpetrators' martyr status as well as instant access to paradise (Ahmad 3). *Boko Haram* activities in Nigeria assumed different dimensions. Whereas some attributed the flourishing of the activities of the group to poverty, unemployment and frustration, others saw it as a religious war being waged by Muslims against Christians and still others saw it as a political campaign to frustrate the government of the then President Goodluck Jonathan.

Apart from this, the role of the media in the reportage of the activities of this group has generated a lot of controversies. Whereas the government of the day was accusing the media of over reporting the activities of the group, *Boko Haram* on its part is accusing the media of bias towards government and against them. As a result the bomb blasts at *ThisDay* newspaper offices at Abuja and Kaduna, the offices of *The Sun* newspapers and the *Moment* newspapers were claimed by the group in their video telecast as published in the *Daily Trust* newspaper of 2nd May, 2012 on page 3. In the same telecast, they threatened to visit their anger on other newspapers like the *Nation*, the *Vanguard* the *Punch* and *The Guardian*. The media therefore, in this instance and other instances came under threat. What role then is the media expected to play in a volatile situation such as this? This will be critically examined in chapter four of this study.

3.7 THE 2011 POST PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION VIOLENCE

The 2011 elections might have come and gone but not so for the agony trailing the polls. Many Nigerian families lost loved ones in some northern states during the post-presidential election crisis of 16th April, 2011. The violence, which claimed many lives and destroyed property, erupted in some parts of the North after President Goodluck Jonathan was declared as the overall winner of the presidential elections by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). According to the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), many youth corps members were killed in the mayhem with about 75,000 people internally displaced.

In Maiduguri and Sokoto, the destruction inflicted upon Nigerians was enormous. More than 60 churches were burnt and thousands of houses belonging to both Christians and Muslims were destroyed. Rioting was equally reported in Bauchi and Gombe States. Violence erupted in several other states, including Kaduna, Katsina, Jigawa, Kano and Yobe, as well as in Adamawa. During these crises, many people were killed and places of worship were razed.

While the cause of the crisis is political, it soon assumed a religious character. The riots made Nigerians to call on the Federal Government to look into the killings and bring the perpetrators to book. President Jonathan in the process commissioned a 22-man panel of inquiry headed by Sheikh Ahmed Lemu to probe the post election violence. Other members of the panel were Rev. Father Idowu Feron, Alhaji Muhammadu Danmadami, Chief Ajibola Ogunshola, Mrs. Lateefat Okunnu, M.B. Wali, Dr. (Mrs) Timiebi Koripamo-Agary, President of the Trade Union Congress (TUC), Comrade Peter Esele, Alhaji Muhammed Ibrahim, Prof. Femi Odekunle, Ambassador Ralph Uwuechue, Alhaji Bukar Usman, Sheik Adam Idoko, Retired Maj General Muhammed Said, Barrister P.C. Okorie, Arc. Shamsunna Ahmed, Maj

General L.P. Ngubane, Alhaji Sani Maikudi, Rear Admiral I. Hotou and a serving member of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC).

The panel has long concluded its assignment and submitted its report but the question remains as to whether the recommendations made will be implemented. Successive governments since 1994 had set up one panel of inquiry or the other to look into various crises ravaging some parts of the North but the recommendations have not been implemented up till today. Oftentimes, it amounts to waste of funds, energy and time as such reports or recommendations are not always made public or implemented. One of such reports was the Federal Government's 15-man panel of inquiry, which was raised to look into the Jos crises. This panel was headed by Chief Solomon Lar now late. Till date, the recommendations of that panel have neither been published nor implemented. This inaction has continued to cast doubts in the minds of some observers on what would be gained from this exercise. Other panels of inquiries for which reports were not implemented were Prince Bola Ajibola Commission of Inquiry of 2008/2009; and Plateau State Peace Conference Report of 2004, all of which are yet to be released.

In all the instances of ethno-religious crises examined in this study, the roles of the mass media have been observed in either escalating the crises or deescalating them depending on their pattern of reportage, their geographical location, mission statements and religious affiliations of the editors and proprietors of the media establishments. Chapter four of the study examines this trend in the light of the expected role of the mass media vis-a-vis the ethics of journalism, the call for conflict sensitive journalism and the implication for conflict reporting.

CHAPTER FOUR
**THE FUNCTION AND PLACE OF MASS MEDIA REPORTAGE IN ETHNO-
RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS AND DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHERN NIGERIA**

4.1 FUNCTIONS OF THE MASS MEDIA AND ETHICS OF REPORTAGE

The mass media considered as the fourth estate and the watchdog of the society in liberal societies exist to perform the functions of information sourcing and dissemination, educational promotion, surveillance, entertainment, social enlightenment and mobilization. These functions distinguish the media as an important institution in the society. As a result, how the media perform these functions is very important to the wellbeing of the society. The function of the mass media in the society can also be seen from political, religious, economic and social perspectives. In the political sphere, the mass media is central to the success of democracy and good governance. In religious sphere, the media can be useful in the propagation of the ideals and messages of various religions. In the economic sphere, mass media can perform functions in the areas of economic policy and growth, economic empowerment, tourism, business and investment. And in the social sphere, the mass media's role covers social issues such as corruption, criminal violence, violent conflicts, population control, education, and other social vices (Saidu 32-33, Salihu 31).

When the mass media perform their functions professionally, truthfully, in fairness and in the interest of justice, the society will benefit. On the other hand where the media practitioners become selfish in pursuance of personal gains, the society suffers. William Davis echoes this when he writes that:

The operation of a modern industrial democracy requires that those who purvey information provide information that is, in fact, not a judgmental distortion of reality and fact, but as accurate as humanly possible or else a

society can quickly, with the permissiveness of modern media, be thrown off balance (10).

The responsibility of the mass media is to narrate the facts as they are, impartially, accurately and responsibly in order to help the readers and viewers create an informed public opinion. Journalism is a public service profession as such reporting can be done relatively easier when a society is at peace. The real challenge however, for reporting accurately, impartially and responsibly is when a society is in violent conflict. This is because during a violent conflict, the mass media has an additional social responsibility regarding what to report, what not to report, and how to report. This additional responsibility is very crucial because by the very nature of conflict which is usually multi-dimensional in nature and manifestation, it demands proper understanding and analysis to avoid escalation. The attendant danger of inappropriate and inaccurate reportage during conflict cannot be overemphasized. As a result, lack of social responsibility on the part of the media may escalate conflict and cause more harm to the larger society. It is for this reason that the media's function of reporting violent conflict involves much more than what is required of the media at times of peace (Odumu 123).

Considered as the fourth estate, the mass media provide checks and balances on the activities of the three arms of government. As agenda-setters, the media influences issues on public policy; as gatekeepers, they decide what information gets to the public and as watchdog the mass media represent the interests of the people against powerful interests. The media determine the issues found on the public agenda, influence the direction of foreign policy and economic growth and they can also check the excesses of leaders. In internal conflict situations, the media as an instrument of peace should contribute to nation-building and according to Kamilindi

Thomas it is equally capable of fuelling divisiveness, hatred and violence as in the case of “hate media” in Rwanda (1). However, to be able to understand the role of the mass media in the ethno-religious conflicts that have plagued Nigeria during the period under study (1980 - 2011), there is need to examine the general ethics guiding media profession and the specific ethics for conflict reporting.

4.1.1 Ethics of Journalism

By its very nature the mass media and the media professionals are quite powerful because they can use the means of influencing the society for good or for bad. However, this power comes with great responsibilities, for if this power is misused the larger society will suffer with dire consequences for the public trust of the media. As it is with other professions, the mass media also have a code of ethics guiding the media and media practitioners in the discharge of professional duties. Dan Agbese reinforces this view when he argues that:

...no reporter is an angel. All men and all women have a tendency to misuse their positions in ways that do no credit to their professions or vocations. Therefore, journalism, like medicine and law, has a code of ethics to guide the professional conduct of editors and reporters (2).

Media codes or ethics are written to meet public criticism of the media, so as to avoid legal restrictions, protect professional standards and to articulate what journalism stands for. Media ethics are the application and evaluation of the principles and norms that guide the practice of journalism, with special attention to the most important problems in the field. Journalism is a collective profession that strives on team work as such what one journalist does or does not do can be complemented or contraverted by what other journalists do or do not do. As a result of this collective responsibility, journalists as a professional 'family' are responsible for the outcome of

their work on society. While various existing media codes have some differences, most share common elements including the principles of truthfulness, accuracy, objectivity, impartiality, fairness and public accountability as these apply to the acquisition of newsworthy information and its subsequent dissemination to the public (SPJ 3; NUJ Code 4).

4.1.2 Code of Ethics for Society of Professional Journalists

Although every country has its peculiar journalistic code as it suits its needs and environment, the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) Code of Ethics serves as a model for ethical principles adopted and taught by journalism institutions, professional organizations and newsrooms all over the world. The SPJ Code of Ethics is voluntarily embraced by thousands of writers, editors and other news professionals (SPJ Code 1). The code in its preamble among other things states that:

...Members of the Society of Professional Journalists believe that public enlightenment is the forerunner of justice and the foundation of democracy. The duty of the journalist is to further those ends by seeking truth and providing a fair and comprehensive account of events and issues. Conscientious journalists from all media and specialties strive to serve the public with thoroughness and honesty. Professional integrity is the cornerstone of a journalist's credibility. Members of the Society share a dedication to ethical behavior and adopt this code to declare the Society's principles and standards of practice.

The detailed provisions of the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) Codes are as

follows:

Seek Truth and Report it

Journalists should be honest, fair and courageous in gathering, reporting and interpreting information.

Journalists should:

- 1 Test the accuracy of information from all sources and exercise care to avoid inadvertent error. Deliberate distortion is never permissible.
- 2 Diligently seek out subjects of news stories to give them the opportunity to respond to allegations of wrongdoing.
- 3 Identify sources whenever feasible. The public is entitled to as much information as possible on sources' reliability.
- 4 Always question sources' motives before promising anonymity. Clarify conditions attached to any promise made in exchange for information.

Keep promises

- 1 Make certain that headlines, news teases and promotional material, photos, video, audio, graphics, sound bites and quotations do not misrepresent. They should not oversimplify or highlight incidents out of context.
- 2 Never distort the content of news photos or video. Image enhancement for technical clarity is always permissible..
- 3 Avoid misleading re-enactments or staged news events. If re-enactment is necessary to tell a story, label it.
- 4 Avoid undercover or other surreptitious methods of gathering information except when traditional, open methods will not yield information vital to the public. Use of such methods should be explained as part of the story
- 5 Never plagiarize.

- 6 Tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience boldly, even when it is unpopular to do so.
- 7 Examine their own cultural values and avoid imposing those values on others.
- 8 Avoid stereotyping by race, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, geography, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance or social status.
- 9 Support the open exchange of views, even views they find repugnant.
- 10 Give voice to the voiceless; official and unofficial sources of information can be equally valid.
- 11 Distinguish between advocacy and news reporting. Analysis and commentary should be labeled and not misrepresented as fact or context.
- 12 Distinguish news from advertising and shun hybrids that blur the lines between the two.
- 13 Recognize a special obligation to ensure that the public's business is conducted in the open and that government records are open to inspection.

Ethical journalists treat sources, subjects and colleagues as human beings deserving of respect.

Journalists should therefore

- 1 Show compassion for those who may be affected adversely by news coverage. Use special sensitivity when dealing with children and inexperienced sources or subjects.
- 2 Be sensitive when seeking or using interviews or photographs of those affected by tragedy or grief.
- 3 Recognize that gathering and reporting information may cause harm or discomfort. Pursuit of the news is not a license for arrogance.

- 4 Recognize that private people have a greater right to control information about themselves than do public officials and others who seek power, influence or attention. Only an overriding public need can justify intrusion into anyone's privacy.
- 5 Show good taste. Avoid pandering to lurid curiosity.
- 6 Be cautious about identifying juvenile suspects or victims of sex crimes.
- 7 Be judicious about naming criminal suspects before the formal filing of charges.
- 8 Balance a criminal suspect's fair trial rights with the public's right to be informed.

Act Independently

Journalists should be free of obligation to any interest other than the public's right to know.

Journalists should:

- 1 Avoid conflicts of interest, real or perceived.
- 2 Remain free of associations and activities that may compromise integrity or damage credibility.
- 3 Refuse gifts, favours, fees, free travel and special treatment, and shun secondary employment, political involvement, public office and service in community organizations if they compromise journalistic integrity.
- 4 Disclose unavoidable conflicts.
- 5 Be vigilant and courageous about holding those with power accountable.
- 6 Deny favoured treatment to advertisers and special interests and resist their pressure to influence news coverage.

- 7 Be wary of sources offering information for favors or money; avoid bidding for news.

Be Accountable

Journalists are accountable to their readers, listeners, viewers and each other.

Journalists should:

- 1 Clarify and explain news coverage and invite dialogue with the public over journalistic conduct.
- 2 Encourage the public to voice grievances against the news media.
- 3 Admit mistakes and correct them promptly.
- 4 Expose unethical practices of journalists and the news media.
- 5 Abide by the same high standards to which they hold others.

(Culled from SPJ Code of Conduct 1)

4.1.3 Code of Ethics for Nigerian Journalists

The mass media and journalism as a profession are as diverse as the society they cover. Yet in the midst of this diversity, media and journalist organizations around the world have codified professional ethics or codes of conduct to regulate the practice of the profession. According to the preamble of the codes of ethics of Nigeria Union of Journalists:

Journalism entails a high degree of public trust. To earn and maintain this trust, it is morally imperative for every journalist and every news medium to observe the highest professional and ethical standards. In the exercise of these duties, a journalist should always have a healthy regard for the public interest. Truth is the cornerstone of journalism and every journalist should strive diligently to ascertain the truth of every event. Conscious of the responsibilities and duties of journalists as purveyors of information, we,

Nigerian journalists, give to ourselves this Code of Ethics. It is the duty of every journalist to observe its provisions (1).

The detailed provisions of the Nigerian Union of Journalists Codes are as follows:

1 Editorial Independence

Decisions concerning the content of news should be the responsibility of a professional journalist.

2 Accuracy and Fairness

- i The Public has a right to know. Factual accurate, balanced and fair reporting is the ultimate objective of good journalism and the basis of earning public trust and confidence.
- ii A journalist should refrain from publishing inaccurate and misleading information. Where such information has been inadvertently published, prompt correction should be made. A journalist must hold the right of reply as a cardinal rule of practice.
- iii. In the course of his duties, a journalist should strive to separate facts from conjecture and comment.

3 Privacy

As a general rule, a journalist should respect the privacy of individuals and their families unless it affects public interest.

- A Information on the private life of an individual or his family should only be published if it impinges on public interest.
- B Publishing of such information about an individual as mentioned above should be deemed justifiable only if it is directly at:
 - i Exposing crime or serious misdemeanour;
 - ii Exposing anti-social conduct;
 - iii Protecting public health, morality and safety;

- iv Preventing the public from being misled by some statement or action of the individual concerned.

4. Privilege and Non Disclosure

- i A journalist should observe the universally accepted principle of confidentiality and should not disclose the source of information obtained in confidence.
- ii A journalist should not breach an agreement with a source of information obtained as “off the record” or as “back ground information”

5 Decency

- i A journalist should dress and comport himself in a manner that conforms with public taste.
- ii A journalist should refrain from using offensive, abusive, or vulgar language.
- iii A journalist should not present lurid details, either in words or picture, of violence, sexual acts, abhorrent or horrid scenes.
- iv In cases involved in personal grief or shock, enquiries should be carried out and approaches made with sympathy and discretion.
- v Unless it is in the furtherance of the public’s right to know, a journalist should generally avoid identifying relatives or friends of persons convicted or accused of crime.

6 Discrimination

A journalist should refrain from making pejorative reference to a person’s ethnic group, religion, sex, or to any physical or mental illness or handicap.

7 Reward and Gratification

- i A journalist should neither solicit nor accept bribe, gratification or patronage to suppress or publish information.

- ii To determine payment for publication of news is inimical to the notion of news as fair, accurate, unbiased and factual report of an event.

8 Violence

A journalist should not present or report acts of violence, armed robberies, terrorist activities or vulgar display of wealth in a manner that glorifies such act in the eyes of the public.

9 Children and Minors

A journalist should not identify, either by name or picture, or interview children under the age of 16 who are involved in cases concerning sexual offences, crimes and rituals or witchcraft either as victims, witnesses or defendants.

10 Acces to Information

A journalist should strive to employ open and honest means in the gathering of information. Exceptional methods may be employed only when public interest is at stake.

11 Public Interest

A journalist should strive to enhance national unity and public good.

12 Social Responsibility

A journalist should promote universal principles of human rights, democracy, justice, equity, peace and international understanding.

13 Plagiarism

A journalist should not copy, whole, or in part, other people's work without attribution and/or consent.

14 Copyright

- i Where a journalist reproduces a work, be it in print, broadcast, art work or design, proper acknowledgement should be accorded to the author.

- ii A journalist should abide by all rules of copyright, established by national and international laws and conventions.

15 Press Freedom and Responsibility

A journalist should strive at all times to enhance press freedom and responsibility (Culled from NUJ Code of Conduct 1-2).

It is note worthy that though every country has its journalism code of conduct there are essential similarities in most of their provisions or contents as can be seen in the Nigerian Journalism Code of conduct and that of the Society of Professional Journalists. This is so because the primary themes common to most conventional codes of journalistic standards and ethics are accuracy and standard for factual reporting, slander and libel considerations and harm limitation principles among others.

4.1.4 Code of Ethics for Conflict Reporting

Unlike the conventional journalism ethics as exemplified by the codes of ethics of the Society of Professional Journalists, Ninan Sevanthi argues that there are no absolutes in the ethics of conflict reportage, but being accurate, responsible, non-inflammatory, using language that does not pander to the objectives of any party, obtaining facts from more than one source, and framing the conflict in a way that promotes understanding is a good set of objectives to reach for (2). Apart from the conventional and traditional codes of ethics that encourage truth telling, the same cannot be said when it comes to reportage of conflict because the question is how much truth-telling should the mass media do in times of conflict? Should the media tell it like it is, or weigh the consequences of doing so? The ethical dimensions of conflict coverage are many as are the range of conflicts that have to be covered. How do Journalists source stories on conflict?

One of the trickiest issues is the use of language in a conflict situation. Should media practitioners mince words to suit one side of the conflict? (Sevanthi 1) These and many other issues gave birth to the new outlook on journalistic practice vis-a-vis conflict coverage in the present society, and the agitation by some media professionals and peace scholars calling for moderation to the old journalistic tradition of reporting the fact and damning the consequences.

Ross Howard argues that to provide reliable information to the public in times of violent conflict requires additional journalistic skills (1). This is very important because by the nature of conflict which is multidimensional, reporters also need to understand more about what causes the conflict, and how the conflict develops and ends. If the mass media only report the bare facts about a violent conflict, citizens will only understand the conflict in those terms. But if the media search for news beyond the bare facts, and present more information to citizens, including possible solutions, they may see the conflict in different terms. A conflict sensitive journalist applies conflict analysis and searches for new voices and new ideas about the conflict. He or she reports on who is trying to resolve the conflict, looks closely at all sides, and reports on how other conflicts were resolved.

Howard, an internationally acclaimed journalist and conflict scholar suggests this popular code for Conflict Sensitive Journalism as a paradigm shift from the traditional or conventional codes. This becomes necessary because by the existing codes of journalism practice, conflict and journalism can hardly be separated because conflict or abnormality makes news. Conflict sensitive journalism code stipulates that in times of conflict, journalists should observe the following rules:

- 1 Avoid reporting a conflict as consisting of two opposing sides. Find other affected interests and include their stories, opinions and goals. Interview

merchants affected by the general strike, workers who are unable to work, refugees from the countryside who want an end to violence etc.

- 2 Avoid defining the conflict by always quoting the leaders who make familiar demands. Go beyond the elites. Report the words of ordinary people who may voice the opinions shared by many.
- 3 Avoid only reporting what divides the sides in conflict. Ask the opposing sides questions which may reveal common ground. Report on interests or goals which they may share.
- 4 Avoid always focusing on the suffering and fear of only one side. Treat all sides' suffering as equally newsworthy.
- 5 Avoid words like devastated, tragedy and terrorized to describe what has been done to one group. These kinds of words put the reporter on one side. Do not use them yourself. Only quote someone else who uses these words.
- 6 Avoid emotional and imprecise words. Assassination is the murder of a head of state and no-one else. Massacre is the deliberate killing of innocent, unarmed civilians. Soldiers and policemen are not massacred. Genocide means killing an entire people. Do not minimize suffering, but use strong language carefully.
- 7 Avoid words like terrorist, extremist or fanatic. These words take side and make the other side seem impossible to negotiate with. Call people what they call themselves.
- 8 Avoid making an opinion into a fact. If someone claims something, state their name, so it is their opinion and not your fact.

- 9 Avoid waiting for leaders on one side to offer solutions. Explore peace ideas wherever they come from. Put these ideas to the leaders and report their response.

Violent conflict causes destruction and brings tremendous human suffering and social catastrophe on the society as a whole. This makes reporting on conflict more delicate than reporting on other day-to-day happenings in the society. A combination of these codes of ethics will give the study the ground and the base to analyse and evaluate the media reportage of ethno religious conflicts in Nigeria from 1980 to 2011.

4.2 SURVEY OF MASS MEDIA REPORTAGE OF ETHNO-RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

Chapter three of this study presented detailed historical accounts of some major ethno-religious conflicts that took place in northern Nigeria during the period under study (1980-2011). This subsection focuses on the media reportage of these conflicts and how geographical locations of the media organisations and religious affiliations of the editors and reporters or publishers influence patterns of reportage. In doing this, some of both local and international media organizations have been examined to gauge the influence of religious affiliations of the reporters and editors and geographical locations of the mass media organizations in the reportage of ethno-religious conflicts between 1980 and 2011. This is necessary in order to ascertain why the media reported ethno-religious crises in Nigeria the way they did in the past three decades.

4.2.1 The Local Media

For the sake of analysis, the local media is categorized into two groups: those based in the southern part of the country popularly called the “Southern or Lagos -

Ibadan axis press” and those media based in the northern part of Nigeria popularly called the “Northern press.” The study equally examines some media organizations based in the north central part of Nigeria who are often times accused of aligning with the southern press (Hussaini 120). Through this classification the study examines if the geographical locations and religious affiliations of editors or reporters or publishers have any influence on the media reportage of the various ethno-religious conflicts under consideration. In spite of the media’s claim of objectivity, neutrality and market place of ideas, the study cannot but agree with Haruna Ya’au that:

...all media are owned and controlled by some interests for the purpose of advocating and disseminating these interests. The degree to which the mass media serve the society truthfully ...will depend upon the degree of congruence between the interests of the controlling body with that of the society (1).

It is in line with this position that Tony Nnaemaka asserts that

...all media operate within an ideological context because, the choice of the media to cover an event rather than another in the same national environment, the emphasis and interpretations they give events so scheduled are all conditioned by ideological factors albeit the cultural perspectives and value orientations (1).

Thus, Nnaemeka’s position reinforces the fact that the media’s claim of objectivity is already eroded even from the very choice of the events the media decides to cover and the emphasis usually given to the coverage of such events. This is so because according to Bilkisu Yusuf

...no publisher will be prepared to invest his huge capital in a media establishment without a motive, either economical or ideological. Whatever

guise the media exhibit, its ultimate aim is to serve and protect the interest of the owner (251).

The Southern - Lagos Axis and North Central Press

As this study considers the pattern of media reportage of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria, the fact to take note of is that the ownership of most print media organizations in southern Nigeria is mostly Christian. Also, those that are not outrightly owned by southern Christians have Christians in most of their managerial and editorial positions. Similarly the media, especially the print media ownerships and the managerial and editorial control of media in the northern part of the country is mostly in the hands of Muslims (see table 3 below). This position has been reinforced by Olayiwola Raham who has succinctly commented on the influence of ethnicity and religion in the pattern of media reportage in Nigeria. According to him:

Issues that affect Muslims – Sharia, the OIC, the holy pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina and the question of Muslim rights in the Constitution are often treated with levity, derision and contempt by the media, most of which are dominated by Christians. In the same vein, those Nigerian media which have Muslims on their editorial boards retaliate by being critical of anything Christian (31).

Table 3**List of Some Major Newspapers and Magazines, their Locations, Editors and Publishers in Nigeria, Including FRCN Kaduna**

Newspaper	Location	Editor	Publishers/Owners
Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, Kaduna	Kaduna	Kabir Abubakar	Federal Government of Nigeria
Business Day	Lagos	John Osadolor	Frank Aigbogun
Today's Challenge Magazine	Jos	Obed Michapu	ECWA Productions Ltd.
Compass	Abeokuta	Chuka Nnabuife	Gbenga Daniel
Daily Champion	Lagos	Austin Adam	Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu
Daily Times	Lagos	Mannir Dan Ali	Fidelis Anosike and Noel Anosike
The Guardian	Lagos	Jewell Dafinoni	Felix Ibru
Daily Independent	Lagos	James Akpadem	James Ibori
Leadership	Abuja	Suleiman Uba Gaya	Sam Nda Isaiah
National Mirror	Lagos	Seyin Fasugba	Jimoh Ibrahim
The Nation	Lagos	Gbenga Omotoso	Bola Tinubu
Newswatch Magazine	Lagos	Ray Ekpu	Ray Ekpu, Dan Agbese and Yakubu Mohammed
Nigeria Standard	Jos	Chris Gyang	Plateau State Government
New Nigerian Newspaper	Kaduna	Bala Mohammed	Northern States Governments
The News Magazine	Lagos	Bayo Onanuga	Bayo Onanuga and Babafemi

Newspaper	Location	Editor	Publishers/Owners Ojudu
National Concord	Lagos	Doyinsola Abiola	M.K.O. Abiola
Peoples Daily	Abuja	Nasiru Mu'azu Isa	Peoples Media Ltd
The Trust group	Abuja	Muhammed Haruna	Kabiru Abdullahi Yusuf
The Punch	Lagos	Azubuike Ishiekwene	Olu Aboderin
Sun	Lagos	Steve Nwosu	Orji Uzor Kalu
Tell Magazine	Lagos	Nosa Igbiebor	TELL Communications Limited
ThisDay	Lagos	Simon Kolawole	Nduka Obiegbuna
Nigerian Tribune	Ibadan	Sina Oladendo	Segun Awolowo
Today's Challenge	Jos	Obed inchakpu	ECWA Productions Ltd
Citizen Magazine	Kaduna	Bilkisu Yusuf	Mohammed Haruna, Kabiru Yusuf and Bilkisu Yusuf
Vanguard	Lagos	Gbenga Adefaye	Sam Amuka

Source: Various print media imprints.

One of the first notable religious conflicts that took place in Nigeria was the *Maitatsine* religious riots that started in Kano in December, 1980. Thereafter, in the same month, various uprisings took place in Rigassa in Kaduna State and later again in Kano. Barely a year and half after the Kano crisis, in February 1984, the group struck again in Jimeta, Yola and in 1985 it resurfaced in Gombe (Boer 39). Although the *Maitatsine* intrar-religious crises though took place only in some states in the Northern part of Nigeria, both Muslims and Christians alike were affected. Virtually all the media organizations in Nigeria at that time reported the incidences and called on the government of the day to curtail the spread of the crises in order to safeguard lives and property. There was no noticeable division among the media in Nigeria from both the so called "Southern or Lagos/Ibadan axis press" and "the Northern press" (Hussaini Abdul and Taiwo Alabi 133).

The debate on the introduction of *Shariah* legal system during the 1977 Constituent Assembly, led to the publication of a series of articles on the adoption of *Shariah* in the Nigerian media. The *Shariah* debate too, arguably first introduced the use of the mass media to propagate open and partisan religious ideals in Nigeria. In the past, the mass media had been used only as a political instrument. However, in the *Shariah* debate in the 1977 Constituent Assembly the biased "religious card" was added to it. The media in the process amplified various statements and communiqués from symposia and seminars organized to debate on the constitution from their various religious, ethnic or ideological perspectives.

Nigeria's membership of the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) in 1986 led to very serious open disagreement and verbal attacks between Muslims and Christians where the geographical, ethnic and religious inclinations of the mass media in Nigeria were further exposed as they were sharply divided along religious divides in their pattern of reportage.

In an interview with Jide Osuntokun on Nigeria's membership of the OIC, the *Sunday Concord* though owned by a Muslim, published in Lagos and edited by a Christian, on March 30th 1986 stated that “if Nigeria is not withdrawn from OIC this country will break up” (5). On this same OIC controversy, the *Nigerian Tribune* of February 1, 1986 credited a statement to the Muslims Students Society where they said that, “...any attempt to withdraw Nigeria from the organization would be met with the stiffest resistance and an acceptance of the challenge of Christians to a religious war” (6). The *National Concord* carried an interview with Femi Abbas on March 21, 1986 where he stated that “...the constant tolerance of the Muslims is not an act of cowardice..., if we are pushed to the wall, we shall have no alternative but to defend ourselves according to the tenets of our religion” (6).

In an editorial on 10th February 1986 *The Guardian* wrote “...beyond fidelity to religion...we are satisfied that our membership of the OIC constitutes a threat to our unity. We believe that the government should review its position and withdraw” (3).

In an interview with Colonel Umar Dangiwa on Nigeria's membership of the OIC, the *Nigerian Tribune* newspaper publication of 29th March, 1986 reported him as saying that “...through the right orientation the Muslims could convert the non Muslims but where this fails, we will be left with no alternative but to engage in a jihad” (9).

The College of Education Kafanchan crisis in March 1987 provided another test for x-raying how religious affiliation of editors/publishers and geographical location of media organizations did and can influence their pattern of news reportage of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria. During the conflicts in 1987, the mass media in Nigeria took different positions either according to their geographical locations or

religious affiliations of editors or publishers. While the *Nigeria Standard*, a newspaper published in north central Nigeria by the Plateau State Government and edited then by Jonathan Ishyaku a Christian reported that the conflicts were as a result of injustice of subjugating the minority ethnic group in Kafanchan to the rule of feudal minority clique, the *New Nigerian Newspaper* reported that Muslims were provoked by the preaching of Rev. Bako (Ishyaku 239).

However, even though the crisis was brought under control in Kafanchan town, it later engulfed almost the entire Kaduna State because of the manner the media handled the reportage. While the *Nigeria Standard* of March 13 and the *Punch* of March 14 1986 reported that Christian's property were destroyed during the crisis they were silent on the property of their Muslim counterparts (Ibrahim 69).

In its reportage of the Tafawa Balewa, Bauchi conflicts of 1991, the *Newswatch* a news magazine published in Lagos and edited by a Christian editor in its edition of 6th May 1991 reported that "all mission property were burnt down including the property of the Christian Pilgrims Board" and that all non-native sections of the city were engulfed (10-17). In this report, the news magazine failed to report that the crisis affected both Muslims and Christians., This smacked of the influence of religious bias of the editors and reporters.

The 28 October, 1991 edition of the *Tell* magazine, published in Lagos and owned by Christian publishers and also edited by a Christian, published a cover story on the crisis arising from the visit of Reinhard Bonke a German Christian evangelist to Kano. Dare Babarinsa wrote the cover story titled: "Blood Bath In Kano: Religious Fanatics Strike Again" with the details carried on pages 12 and 16 captioned "*Allahu Akbar! Alahu Ak War!*" In the story the *Tell* magazine reported that:

The targets were mostly southerners and Christian northerners. As the rioters moved from street to street, killing people, setting vehicles and houses on fire, a new dimension was introduced. As had never happened in previous riots, the Christian community showed an unwillingness to turn the other cheek... building materials worth millions of naira were destroyed and looted. Corpses littered the areas. The counter attack threatened to escalate the crisis. A mosque was burnt at Emir's road in apparent retaliation for more than 20 churches burnt... (1).

Here again, we see the influence of location of the *Tell* magazine and the religious affiliation of the writer of this article especially the cover page headlines of the magazine. A Muslim writer may consider for instance the headline “*Allahu Akbar! Alahu Ak War!*” as blasphemous. The question then is, did the reporter consider the grave possibility of reprisal attacks that may take place in the south against the northerners and Muslims living in the south? Was it necessary for the reporter to specifically report that the rioters targeted southerners? Is it not possible to report that property and lives were destroyed without necessarily mentioning specifically the religion of the people or their area of origin?

In its report on the Zango Kataf ethno-religious conflicts the *Today's Challenge*, a faith based news magazine's edition of March 1992 reported that:

...the Hausas were well armed, ready and confident over victory on the strength of their arms... the delayed arrival of police was based on the knowledge that the Hausas were prepared enough to deal with the Kataf and tame them once and for all. Muslim youths came out with bows and arrows, cudgels, cutlasses and axes killing and maiming (12).

The *Punch* newspaper also published two explosive stories about the crisis. The first was on July 27, 1999 titled “40 Now Killed In Kano Riots.” The second story was carried on 28th July 1999 captioned “70 Bodies Of Kano Riots Victims Dumped At Mortuary.” An examination of the two stories by the *Punch* gave the impression that all those killed in the crisis were Yoruba. This of course created tension in other parts of the country. the *Punch* newspaper itself confirmed this in the *Punch* of 27th July, 1999 when it reported that “some people were planning to carry out reprisal attacks in Lagos” (2).

The *Sunday Champion*, another Lagos based newspaper published by a Christian on 25th July, 1999 also carried a story on the Kano crisis. The story on the front page was entitled “Hausas Attack Yorubas.” To add a religious angle to the conflict, the paper stated that “no fewer than ten people lay dead when the confusion settled, even as the retreating army of barefooted avengers promised more action against those they described as *infidel*” (1). It is quite clear that the attempted introduction of a religious dimension into this inter-ethnic incident by the newspaper showed a clear influence of religious affiliation of the reporter to the geographical location of the newspaper which was likely to lead to more conflicts.

The reintroduction of *Shariah* legal system in 2000 brought out clearly some pattern of media coverage as the sampled newspapers or magazines indicate the influence of location and religious affiliations of the editors or publishers. While most media in the core north supported the introduction of *Shariah*, almost all the major media organizations based in the south as sampled in this study were against the adoption of *Shariah* as can be seen below:

While writing on the *Shariah* crisis in Kaduna in 2000, Nosa Igiebor in the *Tell* magazine of 6th March 2000 – a news magazine based in Lagos and edited by a

Christian, reported that “the Muslims displayed total disregard of the feelings and opinion of the Christian community by the introduction of *Shariah* in the state” (3). The magazine in this instance did not report that both the Kaduna State House of Assembly and the Kaduna State Government had earlier on set up two separate committees to examine the viability or otherwise of establishing *Shariah* legal system in the State and its implications for other religious adherents.

The *Punch*, a newspaper based in Lagos and edited by a Christian, in one of its weekly columns, “The Great *Shariah* Debate,” provided forum for debates on the *Shariah*. The influence of the geographical location of the *Punch* newspaper and probably the religious inclination of the editor was very prominent in the reportage on *Shariah* as most of its articles were dominated by anti-*Shariah* sentiments (Hussaini 182). Some of the articles carried headlines like “*Shariah* Law is a Coup,” “Reckless Declaration Referred to as Law.” Also, some of the *Punch* news reports carried headlines like “Kill Igbos and Face The Wrath,” “Kaduna Boils Again,” “Youth, Soldiers Clashed,” and “*Shariah* Is Secession By Another Name, *Shariah* Is Nonsense” (March 19th 2000 1). The question begging for an answer in the above pattern of reportage is whether Muslim reporters will report these events the same way? In its editorial on June 5th, 2000, the *Punch* newspaper commented as follows:

...in our views, the security implication of Kaduna state government’s implacable resolve to Islamize willy-nilly, a volatile multi-religious society like Kaduna are grave indeed. To put it bluntly, the formal adoption of *Shariah* law in the face of principled resistance to it by non Muslim indigenes of the state is capable of igniting an intractable crisis of a frightening dimension (8).

The content of this editorial shows that the *Punch*, a southern Nigeria based newspaper had taken side in this issue. The social responsibility doctrine, the market place of idea and objectivity principles in reporting, demand that pro-*Sharia* group too should be given the opportunity to air their views which in this regard the paper failed to consider. While writing on the amputation of a cow thief in Zamfara state in March 2000, Egbemode Funke in the *Sunday Punch* of 1st April 2000 titled “Ahmed Sani must keep his amputees in Zamfara,” stated among other things that

...to prove that Zamfarans are peculiar people, some of them even cheered while Jangidi’s (the cow thief) hand was being sawed off. These are the same people who peep through keyholes to watch unmarried couples making love...I felt reluctant giving alms to amputees on my way to the office. If some states prefer to subject their subjects to slow death, let them take responsibility for the half human beings their holiness throw up. Ahmed Sani should not export his amputees to Lagos (38).

The *Sunday Punch* newspaper in this comment showed clearly the side of the *Sharia* debate divide it was championing. This comment did not consider the feeling of Muslims in Zamfara State and Nigeria as a whole. This comment was not in any way fair to those in support of the introduction of *Sharia*, and as a neutral institution, the newspaper should have been more careful to weigh the consequences of such a comment. Also, during the Miss World riot in 2002, the *Punch* newspaper of 2nd November, 2002, in an article by Yakubu Stanley reported that “secret killings and reprisals were still being carried out in Kabala Doki area and other outskirts of Kaduna city” (1). In this report, there was no evidence shown to support this claim.

In his column, Reuben Abati in *The Guardian*, a Lagos based newspaper, published by a Christian and edited also by a Christian in its edition of 10th March

2000 titled “the *Maiguard* phenomenon” stated that the *Shariah* crisis was a “rehearsal of what is to come in the near future,” and stated that: “the battle is ahead, the *ihadists* are leaving us with no option but war, their stubbornness raises further question about citizenship” (5). Here we can equally see the pattern of reportage and comment of the newspaper that claims to be a neutral entity and objective in the discharge of its responsibility to the public with its use of “us” as if the paper is the mouth-piece of those opposing the introduction of *Shariah*. In the same write up, the employment of Hausa private house guards was discouraged because according to Reuben Abati they are “politicians, spies, ethnic irredentists, tribal enforcers and potential enemies” (5).

In another article in *The Guardian* newspaper of 3rd March, 2000 titled “Obasanjo and the *Jihadist*,” Reuben Abati commented that

...since 1936, Hausa Fulani love to slaughter Igbos. That has been so easy however, because the Igbos do not always know what is good for them. Look, in 1966, they had all the keys to the nation’s amoury in their hands. They had to wait until the Hausa-Fulani seized the keys before they started fighting. Sure Igbos would not love to make such mistake in the 21st century. Even the Akwa-Ibomites, who are ordinarily gentle, are fighting back. In the Niger Delta, the *Egbesu* boys and all the other groups are already conducting dress rehearsal. In the South West, the OPC has a standing army of 2 million (3).

The Guardian in this comment by Reuben Abati who was then the Chairman of its editorial board is a typical example of the media’s outright jettisoning of its self proclaimed role of a neutral and objective institution. This write up was not restricted to editorials or comments but also most contents of the newspapers were outrightly against the introduction of *Shariah*.

The Guardian in one of its editorials titled “Shame in Zamfara” referred to the era during which *Shariah* was practised in some parts of the Muslim world as sad. According to the paper:

Many Moslem scholars are unanimous that the authority for *Shariah* derives from the Koran and traditions of Prophet Muhammad. The Zamfara amputation incident has no parallel in the times of the Prophet. There was the sad era when the law was applied in some parts of the Moslem world. But such medieval times cannot be repeated in the world now (5).

In the *Punch* newspaper of 2002 page 4, Yakubu Stanley wrote that “Muslims have been piling up sophisticated weapons to wipe off Christians, especially in Kaduna and the whole North.” This is another typical example where the geographical location of the newspaper and the religious affiliation of the reporters affect how issues are perceived and presented by a media outlet. A northern based newspaper and probably owned by a Muslim will certainly not publish this kind of news story.

The News magazine of 29th October 2001 published a cover story titled “Wild Wild North—Bin Laden’s Men Unleash Terror In Kano, Tivs Slaughter 20 Soldiers.” By this report, the 2001 Kano riot was merged with the magazine’s account of the Tiv crisis. This was done in order to support its claims of “Wild Wild North.” Consequently, the press comments of the October 2001 crisis in Kano, like the coverage of previous episodes of conflicts, followed a familiar pattern, characterized by geographical and religious partisanship, divisive tendencies and inaccurate reporting among other things.

During the 2001 ethno-religious conflicts in Jos, the *Nigeria Standard*, a Plateau State Government owned newspaper based in Jos, on 19th September, 2001

in its Front Page Comment, carried a headline titled “Sustaining Peace in Plateau” where the paper appealed for peace and stressed the need for all citizens to live in peace with one another. The same front page published a news story titled “Peace Return to Jos” where the paper appealed to people to continue to live in peace. On page 7 of the same edition, the paper carried a full page condolence message to the state government and the victims of the 2001 crisis. In the same edition, the paper published a full page peace message titled “Plateau State Is Home Of Peace And Tourism, Please Don’t Destroy That Peace, Destroying It Is Equally Your Loss- Concerned Citizens” (15).

The back page of the same edition carried news items like “Jos Crisis: FG to Assist Plateau” and “Include Peace Studies In Primary Schools Curriculum.” On 21st September, 2001 the *Nigeria Standard* in its front page published the following headlines: “Jos Crisis: 137 Suspects Docked; State To Set Up Inquiry Commission.” On page 2 of the same edition the paper carried news items titled “Plateau CAN Wants Culprits Punished” and “Information Committee On Jos Swing Into Action.” This same edition carried another peace message similar to the one carried on page 15 of the edition of the paper of 19th September, 2001 titled “Plateau State Is Home Of Peace And Tourism, Please Don’t Destroy That Peace, Destroying It Is Equally Your Loss – Concerned Citizens” (7).

Other news items and opinion in the same edition of the paper include: “Eze Igbo Appeals To Fleeing Colleagues” (9), “Reps Identify Causes Of Clashes” (9), Opinion-Enhancing internal security by Obinna Iwuagwu (13). Towards Reaching All Christians (12), Christian-Muslim Relations: The Way Forward” (17).

In the 23rd September 2001 edition of the *Nigeria Standard* newspaper, the paper carried the following news items on its front page: “Plateau Makes Progress

In Rehabilitation, Reconstruction And Reconciliation Efforts; Dariye Wants Nation's Security Sustained; Escew Bitterness For Democracy To Thrive: Leaders Urged; Displaced Persons Return Home.” This edition carried another peace message against rumour mongering when it published the following: “Dem Say, Dem Say! Who Talk Am?... No Spread Am O!” In the same edition the following news items were published by the paper: “How We Can All Make Jos Habitable By JMDB Chief (4), Why We Should Live In Peace” (20).

The 24th September, 2001 edition of the *Nigeria Standard* published the following news stories in its front page: “Inciting Publications On Jos Crisis: Joint Security Forces Gives Warning; “Gye-Wado Counsels Nigerians On Peace” and “Release White Paper Of 1994 Jos Crisis” (2), “Plateau Indigenes In Abuja Want Jos Crisis Probed” (2). In this same edition of the *Nigeria Standard* on page 15, peace messages like the previous ones were carried on full page thus: “Plateau State Is Home Of Peace And Tourism, Please Don't Destroy That Peace, Destroying It Is Equally Your Loss.” This edition on page 16 carried news items like “Middle Belt Forum Commends Peace Efforts In Jos” and “Students Told To Shun Intolerance.”

On 26th September, 2001 the *Nigeria Standard* newspaper published the following news items on its front page: “PLSG Issues New Orders On Public Preaching, Worship Places, Set Up Judicial Commission; Eight Villages Razed Down;” “Mantu Commends PLSG” and “We Must Defend The Peace Of Our Dear State–Dariye” (7). This same edition carried a peace message appealing to people to shun rumour mongering thus: “Dem Say Dem Say... Kai! Who Talk Am? No Spread Am O!” (16).

On 29th September, the *Nigeria Standard* carried the following news on its front page: “We will not go on rampage: Unijos students; Joint security forces to

remain until....,” and another peace message that goes as follows: “Dem Say Dem Say... Kai! Who Talk Am? No Spread Am O!” Other news items in the 29th September, 2001 edition were: “Sango wants culprits of Jos Crisis punished (2); Jos Crisis: PLHA lauds Obasanjo (5); Plateau People For Inter-Religious Dialogue (5); We Will Curb Excesses At Worship Places (5); Mikang Donates Relief Materials To Government (9); Health Minister Commiserates With PLSG” (9). Another peace message on the front page says: “Dem Say Dem Say... Kai! Who Talk Am? No Spread Am O!” On the 30th of September, 2001, the *Nigeria Standard* newspaper did not give up on its peace campaign when it reported on page 11 that peace had finally returned to the state and Jos city in particular, and as if to crown it up the paper carried another peace message, warning against the danger of rumour mongering such as “Dem Say Dem Say... Kai! Who Talk Am? No Spread Am O!”

An examination of the various editions of the *Nigeria Standard* newspaper reportage as sampled above during the 2001 Jos crisis shows that the paper being published in Jos the scene of the crisis and owned by the State Government reported many stories and peace messages which were reconciliatory in nature. True to the popular sayings in news reporting that “proximity is news,” one will also discover that the *Nigeria Standard* newspaper published more stories on the 2001 Jos crisis than other newspapers.

The *Vanguard* newspaper, a Lagos based newspaper owned by Sam Amuka a Christian and edited by Gbenga Adefaye also a Christian, published a news item on 8th September 2001, titled “Sectarian crisis in Jos!” (2). Here the paper gave graphic details of the crisis and how it started with the attendant destruction of lives and property. The *Vanguard* newspaper edition of 14th September, 2001 also carried two

news items about the conflict on page 9 titled “Sultan Appeals For Peace In Jos,” and “Benue Governor Warns Religious Leaders Against Inciting Sermons.”

The front page of the *Sunday Vanguard* of 16th September carried a special news package with pictures of some destroyed property titled “From Jos to New York: A Week of Terror.” On page 3 of the same *Vanguard* edition was another news item on the Jos crisis titled “Riots: Benue Students Evacuated.” In the course of the news the paper reported that not less than 7,000 students of Benue State in institutions of higher learning in Plateau state had been evacuated by the state government for safety as a result of the violence in Jos and its environs.

The *Sunday Vanguard* newspaper in its 16th September, 2001 edition on page 7 carried a special column by Kola Animasaun, a Muslim columnist, titled “The Voice of Reason: That Was a Tragic Week.” In this write up Kola concentrated more on the terrorist attack of New York on September 11, 2001 but made some references to the Jos crisis where he condemned it and called for a truce and religious tolerance. In the same edition, page 10 the paper carried the following news on the crisis: “Harvest of Religious Hate,” where the paper decried the crisis and the attendant destruction of lives and property and “Jos Carnage: A Witness to Terror,” where the paper carried some pictures of burnt churches and houses as a result of the crisis though the paper did not carry any picture of burnt or destroyed mosques. The question is, were there no burnt mosques in the Jos crisis of 2001? If in the 2001 crisis in Jos both Muslims and Christians were affected, why was this not reflected in the report especially the published pictures?

The front page of the *Vanguard* newspaper edition of Monday 17th September, 2001 carried a news item on the Jos crisis titled “Schools Remain Shut in Plateau.” Here the reporter gave the latest follow up information on the security situation in Jos

city and its environment and that the security was yet to improve for normal school activity. Also on page 2 of the same edition, the paper published another story on the crisis in Jos titled “Jos Riot: 3 Killed In Reprisal Attack In Onitsha.” In the body of the story the paper reported that northerners were being killed as a reprisal of the crisis in Jos when some dead bodies of the Igbos were brought to the town. According to the paper, “all those who dressed like Hausas were killed in the process.” On the same 17th September 2001, the paper published a news story titled “Christian Professionals Warn on Religious Strife.” According to this report, “...muslims will only succeed in setting the nation ablaze if they continue to engage in unprovoked attacks on Christians” (3).

Page 2 of the *Vanguard* newspaper of 18th September, 2001 carried a news item to the effect that the Middle Belt Progressive Movement (MPM) alleged that “the crisis in Jos is a move to create an emirate in Jos.” On 19th September 2001 on page 31 the paper carried a news Item titled “Dariye Approves Five Committees to Assist Jos Riot Victims.” On page 33 the paper published a Midweek feature story with a statement credited to one Rev Dauda Marafa that “Jihadist Plan to Bring Back Old Bauchi Provinces Under Islam.” In this write up, the paper published an interview with the clergy man during which he said that “the Hausas’ intention is to return Jos to Bauchi emirate.” An examination of this write up reveals that it was full of statements that were not backed up with facts and were capable of creating more tension that could escalate the crisis. Here too the paper had the option of interviewing the Hausas for their own views before going ahead with the publication to make the story balanced.

On 24th September, the *Vanguard* newspaper on its front page carried a news item titled “Jos Crisis: 270 Face Prosecution.” In the body of the story, the paper

reported that 270 people were arrested in connection with the recent violence in Jos and had been arraigned in different magistrate courts in the state capital. This kind of news was capable of dousing the tension because those aggrieved could have been pacified by the news that perpetrators of the crisis would be prosecuted. The same front page of the *Vanguard* newspaper carried another news item titled “Clerics Blame Obasanjo’s Critics for Religious Crisis” where the paper reported how some clerics rose to defend President Obasanjo for the upsurge of religious conflicts in some parts of the country.

On 27th September, 2001 the *Vanguard* newspaper on page 5 carried a news story titled “Senators Condemn Jos killings.” The story gave a vivid account of the Senate sitting of 25th September, 2001 where they condemned “the recent Jos riots.” On page 9 of the same edition were stories like: “Group Wants Sponsors of Ethnic Crisis Arrested” and” Youths Blame Jos Crisis On Anti-Middle-Belt Agenda.” The *Vanguard* newspaper of 28th September, 2001 on page 9 carried a news story titled “Plateau Government bans Road Blocks, Loud Speakers at Religious Worships.” The story gave the details of the ban which specifically identified the use of loud speakers in residential areas and markets for religious preaching as unlawful and should be discontinued.

An examination of some editions of the *Vanguard* newspapers during the 2001 Jos crisis reveals attempts by the newspapers to be neutral in their reportage. However, there were some instances where the geographical location of the newspapers or the religious affiliation of the editor or reporters did affect their pattern of reportage. Some of such stories as quoted above were “Middle Belt Progressive Movement (MPM) alleges that the crisis in Jos is a move to create an emirate in Jos,” and a statement credited to Rev Dauda Marafa titled “Jihadist Plan to Bring Back Old

Bauchi Provinces Under Islam.” These are very weighty statements that one is sure that the *Trust* group of newspapers or the *New Nigerian Newspapers* both northern based newspapers would certainly not publish.

There appear to be a noticeable departure of the pattern of the *Nigeria Standard* newspaper reportage of the 2001 Jos crisis and that of 2008. This is because, in the 2001 Jos crisis, the *Nigeria Standard* newspaper in its sampled reportage focused and published more news and messages advocating the need for peaceful coexistence. Moreover, analysis shows that the editions of the paper in 2001 carried more news and pages of dedicated peace messages, these were absent in the reportage of the 2008 crisis as samples below reveal. Reasons for this shift in the *Nigeria Standard* newspaper’s pattern of reportage shall be examined in detail in chapter five.

The *Nigeria Standard* edition of December 12th, 2008 carried the following headlines on its front page: “Let Governors Command Military- to Quell Crisis – Governor Jang Urges and Danjuma; NIPR Call For Probe.” On the same edition was a news analysis titled “Jos Crisis and Nation’s Security” on front page and on page 2. On the same page 2 was a story by the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria titled “PFN States Position on Crisis,” where it was alleged that “the crisis in Jos was an age long plan to Islamize the whole north since the time of Sadauna.” Here the paper had the option of reporting the statement such as this credited to the PFN or not, if it considered its implications on the quest for peace on the Plateau or in the alternative sought the view of Muslim leaders for their own side of the story. This is so because the media especially in times of conflicts cannot afford to publish all information at its disposal without verification, for public interest.

Page 2 of the same edition carried news items such as: “Christians, Muslims Agree On Peaceful Coexistence; NUJ Condemns Crisis” and “Gov Jang Relaxes Curfew From 6pm – 8am To 7pm To 6am.” Pages 5 and 6 carried other stories on the Jos crisis such as: “Jos Crisis Not Political – Mr. Dan Majang Special Adviser on Media and Public Affairs,” and “SA On Labour Cautions on Rumour,” where the SA cautioned citizens of the state against rumour mongering and that it was capable of causing unrest. The same page 6 of the edition carried another story titled: “NSE Plateau Branch Sues for Peace.” On page 10 was the story condemning the crisis titled: “ACCM President Condemns Jos Crisis.” Also on the same page was a story titled “Gbong Gwom Appeals for Peace.” Here the traditional ruler appealed to all citizens in the state to maintain calm and encouraged peaceful co-existence.

On page 13 of this same edition of the paper was a column titled: “Police Transfers: A Plot Against Plateau State.” Here the writer of this column made a lot of allegations and innuendoes on why some police men were transferred away from Plateau State. He made statements which suggested that the transfer was meant to bring Muslims to the state so that they could take side with the “enemies of the state during conflicts.”

Allegations such as this and many more were not substantiated with any concrete evidence on why some police men were transferred from Plateau State. Even if this statement was an advertorial in which case the authors were to pay for the publication, the newspaper had the choice of refusing to accept it for publication especially where it did not appear to be in the interest of the public to do so. This news did not help in dousing the tension on ground. Rather it was inflammatory in nature with a lot of insinuations that could not easily be proved. Here too one can

see a clear departure of the paper's pattern of reportage in this instance compared to the focus on peace in 2001.

On 19th December, 2008 the *Nigeria Standard* published on its front page a story concerning the crisis titled: "Jos Security for Reorganization" and on page 2 published the following stories: "Northern Elders charged; Inquiry Panel To Be Reconstituted" and "NIREC Calls for Sanctions." On that same 19th December the following news items were published by the paper on page 10: "Jos Bounces Back To Life; Jos Crisis: Jang Appeals for Calm; Forum Calls For Stringent Measures On Crisis–Northern Patriotic Forum of Tertiary Institutions In The State," and "Tarok People Condole Crisis Victims." The same edition of the paper published a feature story by Sam Dung Dalyop titled "Jos Crisis: Another Jihad Go Awry?" Some part of the story read thus: "Jos city and land has never before been conquered in history. What the jihadist of the 18th and 19th centuries could not achieve, the Jasawa a neo-jihadist are making frantic efforts to achieve in 21st century Nigeria" (15).

A comparison of the pattern of reportage by the *Nigeria Standard* newspaper, during the 2001 and 2008 crises shows that the newspaper was more careful in their reportage of 2001 than that of 2008. Whereas there were many peace messages in the 2001 reportage the 2008 editions did not deliberately carry peace messages. Also there were instances of controversial publications in the 2008 crisis than that of 2001. In the next subsection, the study examines the reason for the change in pattern of reportage.

While reporting the Jos crisis of 2008, the *Vanguard* newspaper of 3rd December, 2008 on its front page carried a news item titled Jos Mayhem: "Police Roll Out Tanks In Kano." In the story, the paper reported that there was tension and the possibility of reprisal attacks in Kano over the crisis in Jos and that security agents

were putting in place measures to avoid a breakdown of law and order in the city. That same edition on page 15 carried other news items such as: “Bankole Sues For Peace In Jos” and “Jos Mayhem: Ogbulafor Condemns Ethnic, Religious Violence.”

The next day, 4th December, 2008, the *Vanguard* newspaper published a front page story titled “Jos: Benue Evacuates 3,000.” Also on page 15 of the same edition the paper published the following stories: “CAN, SCSN Decry Jos Mayhem; Gov. Orji, Condemns Jos Mayhem” and “Yar'Adua, Law Makers Observed 1 Minute Silence For Jos Riot Victims,” while page 16 of the edition carried another news story on the crisis titled: “Jos Riots: Kwara Students In Unijos Flay Govt.” In the same edition on page 17 the paper published a feature story by one of its columnist Nnana Ogbona titled “Jos: The Fire Next Time.” Here the writer decried the incessant crisis in Jos and called for efforts to find solutions to the crisis for peaceful co-existence. That same edition on page 18 carried a news story titled “Just Jos - 400 dead.” Another on page 38 was titled “Fire in Jos Town.”

On 5th December, 2008 the *Vanguard* front page carried a news headline titled “Senate To Probe Jos Crisis.” That same edition on page 15 carried another news story with the title “113 Yoruba Die In Jos Mayhem.” Though the paper may have reported the bare fact conflict sensitive journalism is against this pattern of reportage as it advocates that it is not necessary to identify the ethnic origin of the people killed during crisis because this could lead to reprisal attacks which will further escalate the crisis. That same day on page 10 it published a feature story titled “Jos Mayhem: Killing for What?” This feature story by Taye Obateru was expected to make people to be more reasonable in living peacefully together as nobody benefits from crisis.

The *Vanguard* newspaper of 6th December, 2008 on its front page published a story titled “Jos crisis: We all lost, say Hausa-Fulani, Igbo, Yoruba” (6). This story

about Hausa-Fulani, Igbo, Yoruba ethnic groups lamenting their losses as a result of the crisis was very timely as it highlighted the adverse effects of the conflict on everybody. The *Vanguard's* front page story of 8th December, 2008 was titled "Jos Mayhem: Gov Jang Begs for Mercy." That same 8th December, 2008 on page 9 the paper carried another stories titled "Clark Blames Jos Crisis On Political Class; Jos Crisis: Ogun Govt Commiserates With Victims' Families." Also the following stories: "Jos Mayhem: Delta Evacuates Citizens (12); Sulthan, CAN Leaders Propose Pathway To Lasting Peace In Jos (14) and We Warned That Jos Riot Was Coming - Varsity Don" (14).

Page 15 of the *Vanguard* edition of 19th December, 2008 carried a news that NIREC Donates N2m To Religious Groups In Jos while in page 19 it published a feature article by Isiguzo Ikeddy titled "Jos challenges all." On January 11, 2009, the *Sunday Vanguard* on its front page published a news story about the December 2008 crisis titled "Confusion galore over Jos crisis." The same edition carried a feature story by Kola Animasaun titled "Still on the Jos problem" (16) wherein the writer sued for peaceful resolution of the issues in conflict in Jos.

In the *Vanguard* newspaper of 11th January, 2009 on page 45 was an interview titled "Our grouse against Jang," with Ibrahim Nakande an Hausa leader and former member of Federal House of Representatives, where the respondent accused the state Governor of ethnic cleansing and called for tolerance on the part of the government of the day. In another publication on the front page of the *Vanguard* of 12th January, 2009 titled "Plateau is Nigeria, Jos is Any State Capital," the writer Amoda M. sued for tolerance and the need for citizens to live peacefully irrespective of their state of origin. And on January 25, 2009 came another news story on page 23 titled "Jos Crisis: Anger, Hate Run Deep Before Reps Panel," where the writer reported the

heated argument on the floor of the Senate over their disagreement as to the causes of the Jos crisis.

There appears not to be a clear departure in the pattern of the *Nigeria Standard* newspaper's reportage of 2008 and 2010 Jos crises. Though there are pockets of peace messages in form of editorials and news commentaries, the reportage of 2001 was more peace oriented as can be seen below. While writing on the 2010 Jos crisis, in an editorial titled "Dadin Kowa Peace Model," The *Sunday Standard* newspaper of 31st January, 2010 published this towards bringing about peace to the troubled city:

Dadin Kowa, is a suburb of Jos, the Plateau State capital. It is known to be a mixed settlement where all tribes and religions are amply represented, living in peace with one another since time immemorial.... While the streets of Jos and Bukuru were being enveloped by billowing clouds of smoke occasioned by the sectarian crisis of January 17, 2010, residents of this sprawling suburb stood by and watched with horror as settlements around them went up in flames...'The peace that was in Dadin Kowa at the time was the result of a collective resolve by members of that community to live together in peace irrespective of religion, tribe or political leaning...This was the same scenario with residents of the state and federal low cost, Jos where peace was maintained also...We feel that this community and its leaders stand out as a real models of how peaceful co-existence, religious' tolerance, inter-ethnic love and respect for one another ought to be...(1).

The above editorial speaks much of the *Nigeria Standard* newspaper's resolve to advocate for peaceful co-existence and for an end to the incessant crises in Jos and Plateau State as a whole. The same front page of the *Sunday Standard* of 31st January, 2010 carried the following news: "Who wants to cripple Plateau? Return November,

2008 Mercenaries for Prosecution - Jang; Jos Crisis, traumatizing, embarrassing - CAN.” In the footnote of the same edition in front page was a a peace message calling for unity amongst Plateau elders.

On 31st January, 2010 the paper carried on its page two a news item titled “Jang Urges Elders to Unite for Peace In Plateau.” The same edition page 2 carried an appeal by Jos Local Government Council Chairman titled “Eshcew Bitterness, Live in Peace.” On the same page was another news comment by the paper titled “Efforts at Stifling *PRTV* Raise Head.” According to the paper:

Following the Jos crisis of January 17th, 2010, the General Manager of *PRTVC*, Pastor Yijap Abraham has been invited to answer charges for alleged criminal conspiracy and inciting public disturbance, rioting, armed with dangerous weapons and culpable homicide in the current Jos crisis. The letter dated January 29, 2010 and signed by Deputy Commissioner of Police for DIG “D” Department Force (CID), Abuja DCP Felix T. Damisa requested that the General Manager, *PRTVC* be released to answer the above charges (2).

In the same edition a columnist “Katdapba Gobum on Sunday” in an article titled “Here We Go Again,” condemned the resurgence of crisis in Jos and called for an end to the crisis for peace to reign. On page 4 of the same edition, were other news stories such as “ECWA wants punitive measures against perpetrators of mayhem; Mwaghavul Youth Movement (MYM) condemns Jos crisis; Jang assures Jos residents of peace; Plateau noted for peace since colonial era.” Same edition pages 9 and 10 had other comments under Sunday Magazine titled “Who wants Plateau on its knees?” All the above comments and news items were appeals for peaceful coexistence except another article on page 12 under Sunday Feature titled “What does Kanti Bello want from Plateau?” In this feature story the writer Boniface Gwotbit attacked Senator

Kanti Bello for calling on the federal government to declare a state of emergency in Plateau State as a result of the crisis. According to this writer:

The enemies of Plateau State can be seen from three categories. There are foot soldiers, the intermediaries who accommodate them and give them the map of Plateau State. The third group has to do with those in high places who are not only sponsors but defenders of evil actions... the utterances of Senator Kanti Bello was indeed most unfortunate...(12).

The same edition of the *Nigeria Standard* newspaper carried the following news items: “Did this house set Jos on fire? (15); Birom Youth Movement condemns handling of crisis (16); CAN faults calls for state of emergency (16); Women, children; hit hard by conflict (19)”; and an advertorial on page 24 by Coalition of Plateau Youth Forum, Jos calling for the removal of Major General Maina the GOC, 3rd Armoured Division from Jos, for not handling the 2010 Jos crisis properly. On January 10th, 2010, the *Sunday Standard* newspaper front page carried a news comment titled “No, not again,” by Sunday Zaleng, where he commended the peace, solidarity of residents of Dutse Uku in Jos who had decided to live peacefully together. In all, the *Nigeria Standard* newspapers covered the 2010 Jos crisis adequately but with fewer focus on peace messages as compared to the reportage of 2001 Jos crisis.

On January 27, 2010 the *Vanguard* newspaper on its front page carried a news story titled: “Jos: Plateau Gov decries suspects’ transfer to Abuja,” where the State Commissioner for Information presented the state government’s position on the transfer of the suspects arrested in connection with the 2010 Jos crisis. The same edition of the paper published the appeal by General Yakubu Gowon and former Governor Solomon Lar for the citizens of the state to maintain peace and live

together. According to the report Gowon stated that it was the responsibility of all to arrest the situation and not government alone and that “if we want peace all hand must be on deck” (2). That same story spilled over to page 2 carrying another statement by the former Military President Ibrahim Babangida appealing for lasting peace among ethnic groups in the state. This same page carried a statement credited to the Police Public Relations Officer putting the death toll at 326 and confirmed the replacement of former Police Commissioner Mr. Greg Anyating with Ikechukwu Aduba.

In the aftermath of the crisis, the military especially the GOC of 3rd Armoured Division Jos, Major- General Maina was accused of bias in his handling of the crisis. In response to this, the *Vanguard* newspaper on page 10 published a news story where the Chief of Army Staff General Danbazau in an article titled “Jos crisis: Nigerian Army is neutral...” denied this allegation. Also on page 14 of the same edition were other stories on the crisis titled “Christian Youths Fault Mass Burial Of Jos Crisis Victims: CAN Youth Wing Plateau State By Adamu Bala” and “Governor Jang Searches For Solution,” where it was reported that Gov Jang began consultation with stake holders and interest groups towards finding solutions to the crisis.

On 28th January, 2010 the *Vanguard* newspaper published a news story on page 10 titled “FG saddened by Jos mayhem – Jonathan,” and on 29th January the paper published the following news stories on the Jos crisis: “Jos crisis: Oyo indigenes return to Ibadan vow never to go back” (11), “Ohanaeze asks FG to probe Jos crisis” (12), “Jos crisis: 8,000 displaced take refuge in Bauchi” (14) “Jos crisis: coalition wants allegations against Security men probed” (15) and an opinion column titled “Jos Tragedy: other views considered,” by Adisa Adeleye where the writer advocated for peace to return to Jos as it was formerly known for.

The January 30th 2010 edition of the *Vanguard* newspaper published other stories on the Jos crisis such as: “Jos crisis: Civil society Groups want security men investigated” (8). Also in this same edition was a feature article under Matters Arising by Kunle Oyatomi titled “Jos: How many more killings could be equal to justice?” In this article advocating for peaceful coexistence, the writer among other things concluded that any peace without justice is violence postponed and that since nobody was brought to justice for the crimes committed the previous year, “the criminals were emboldened to repeat their atrocities this year with more sadistic brutishness” (17).

Writing on the same crisis, the *Vanguard* newspaper on February 1, 2010 published the following news items: “Ulamas, PFN task Governor on Jos crisis (6); Jos crisis: Cross River Students Union calls for calm” (9) and on 2nd February carried the following news stories on the crisis: “Rep demands probe of allegation of extra-judicial killings in Jos” (14) and a Cartoon showing heaps of human skulls by Awosivan Segun titled “Welcome to in JOS tice.” This cartoon in the usual characteristic of cartoons conveyed a lot of messages of the evil of crisis and the need for peaceful coexistence.

On February 3rd, 2010 on the front page of the *Vanguard* newspaper was a news item titled “Lar, Kwande head FG’s panel to probe Jos crisis” where the paper reported that the Federal Government had set up a 15 man committee with membership drawn from Christian and Muslim representatives to look into the remote and immediate causes of the crises and proffer lasting solutions to the incessant Jos crises. In that same edition were other stories such as “Jos: Jang urges restraint from media houses” (5) where the Governor appealed to media organizations to verify their

stories before rushing to publish them, and “NBA blasts Bauchi Assembly over plot to deport Plateau indigenes” (14).

In the *Vanguard* newspaper of 4th February 2010 on page 14 was a news story titled “Yoruba Were in Jos Before Hausa,” a statement credited to Hon Bitrus Kaze member representing Jos East and Jos South in the House of Representatives. On the 5th February at page 15 was another story on the crisis titled “Jos crisis: result of Mis-Governance - Labour” and another news on the crisis titled “Jos crisis: 25 Displaced Women Delivered in Camp,” in which the plight of the internally displaced persons (IDP), especially women and children were highlighted.

On 5th February 2010 the *Vanguard* newspaper published a story on the crisis on page 42 titled “Jos crisis: Muslim Ummah Urges FG to punish perpetrators” and on 6th February another story titled “Jos crisis: Plateau indigenes flee Bauchi” (6). However, on 8th February the paper published a news item on page 12 titled “Group seeks pay-out for Jos riot victims,” where a group known as Bauchi Muslim Parliament, urged for the prosecution of rioters and called on the Plateau State Government to compensate victims of the riots for negligence on its part by not protecting the people. On 8th February, 2010 the paper carried a *Vanguard* Comment titled “Lawless Bauchi State Assembly,” where the paper made the following comments concerning the 2010 Jos crisis and the resolution of Bauchi State House of Assembly:

It is therefore an embarrassment for the Bauchi State House of Assembly to pass a resolution that the state would not guarantee the security of indigenes of Plateau State. This resolution could have been a reaction to the Jan 17 riots in Jos, but it is inexcusable (25).

The violent crises that erupted as a result of the media reportage of Miss World pageant in 2002 was another serious area worth examining. The trigger of the Kaduna crisis was the prologue to the cover story of the November 16 edition of the *Sunday ThisDay*. The prologue, written by a journalist, Isioma Daniel, was apparently in response to the objection expressed by some Muslims against Nigeria hosting the pageant says that "...Muslims thought it was immoral to bring ninety-two women to Nigeria and ask them to revel in vanity...What will Mohammed think? In all honesty, he would probably have chosen a wife from among them" (16).

This publication provoked a storm of outrage from Muslims across the country. According to Hussaini Abdu and Taiwo Alabi "the publication, especially the prologue, was perceived to be blasphemous, provocative, senseless, irresponsible, insensitive, callous and reprehensible" (133). As a result, even an apology by *ThisDay* newspaper and the resignation of Isioma Daniel could not stop the violent riots that ensued in Kaduna and Abuja over the write up. In response to this, *ThisDay* of 17th November, 2002 published the following apology in order to douse the tension:

Apology to all Muslims...

To all our Muslim brothers and sisters, Assalamu Alaikum Wa Rahamatul-Llahi Wa Barakatuhu. May the peace and blessing of Allah be upon you all. With all sense of responsibility, sensitivity and respect for all Muslims, the staff, management, editors and Board of *THISDAY* Newspapers apologise for the great editorial error in last Saturday's edition on Miss World Beauty Pageant. We are sorry that the portrayal of the Holy Prophet Mohammed (SAW) in a commentary written by one of our staff was not only unjustified, but utterly provocative...Islam teaches that no human being is infallible. And that is why we all constantly seek Allah's Rahama. Says the Holy Book: "...

whoever forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is with Allah..." Qr 42 v. 40. "And verily, whoever shows patience and forgives, that would truly be from the things recommended by Allah" Q 42 v. 43. Saturday November 16 was our error, for which we feel very sorry...May the Almighty Allah, the God of infinite wisdom, continue to guide us a right. Ma-Assalam, and Ramadan Kareem (1).

Prophet Muhammed as the heart of Islam, should not be spoken of like that as far as Nigerian Muslims are concerned. Four days after the publication, on 20th November, 2002 riots broke out in Abuja and Kaduna leading to many deaths and the destruction of property including northern offices of *ThisDay* newspaper. Questions that came to many observers were why did the reporter go to that extreme knowing that religious issues are very sensitive issues? Did she do it out of ignorance or was it lack of sensitivity? Whatever is her reason, the outcome remains a sad memory in the history of this country and a lesson or two must have been learnt in a bitter way. When she was interviewed in London by *The Guardian*, where she flew to from the anger of protesters who declared death on her, the reporter claimed ignorant and that she thought what she did was fair and harmless (1).

Against the general condemnation of *ThisDay* publication, *The Guardian* newspaper in its editorial of 3rd December, 2002 preferred to take a liberal approach and viewed the issue legalistically when it defended the action of Ms Isioma Dannel and *ThisDay* newspaper that they have the fundamental rights to freedom of expression and freedom of the press. The paper argued that "...Ms Dannel is entitled under the constitution to freedom of speech. It is a right that cannot be taken away...when the right to free speech is censured it is the very fabric of the society that is threatened" (20).

While this may be correct in the context of human rights and freedom of speech, in the face of violent riots that ensued as a result of that publication, what was required at the time was reconciliation and peacemaking and not about who was right or wrong. One can again see the influences of the location of the media organization and the religious affiliation of those in control of the media playing out here.

The Northern Press

The Northern press in this section represents those newspapers and magazines that are published in the northern Nigeria including electronic media that have their headquarters in the north. In this instance, newspapers from the north like the *New Nigerian Newspapers*, the *Daily Trust*, the *Weekly Trust*, the *Sunday Trust* newspapers and the *Citizen* magazine will be examined. Also the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN)-*Radio Nigeria Kaduna*, Kaduna will be examined specifically for its role in the College of Education Kafanchan riots in 1987.

The College of Education Kafanchan crisis in March 1987 provided another test for x-raying the role of the mass media in ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria. The *Newswatch* magazine of March 30, 1987 reported that on Monday 9th March, 1987 *Radio Nigeria Kaduna*, reported the incident in both its English and Hausa news bulletins every hour that Christians were killing Muslims, that Muslims had fled into hiding and that two mosques had been burnt. It equally reported that copies of the Holy Quran were being burnt in public and that an itinerant Christian preacher at the College of Education inflamed the Christians to attack the Muslims when he started misquoting the Holy Quran and blaspheming the Holy name of Prophet Muhammad (10).

Jonathan Ishaku in his analysis of the media coverage of this same Kafanchan ethno-religious conflicts in 1987 observed that while the *Nigeria Standard* newspaper reported the incident, the *New Nigerian Newspaper* reprimanded the *Nigeria Standard*

newspaper for it believing that such reports were likely to exacerbate the crisis. In spite of this however, the *New Nigerian Newspaper* claimed ignorance of this incendiary broadcasting on radio Kaduna'. However by the time the violence spread to Kaduna, the *New Nigerian Newspaper* was clearly justifying the violence on the ground that "Muslims were provoked to violence in Kafanchan" (Ishyaku 237).

In the wake of the various controversies and tensions generated by Nigeria's membership of the Organization of Islamic Countries/Conference (OIC) in 1986, the then Editor of the *New Nigerian Newspapers* Mr. Oparadike Innocent and the Managing Director-Mohammed Jega were unable to agree on what stand the papers should take. In this case both the MD and the Editor were clearly acting out their roles as defenders of the interest of their faith. This eventually led to the resignation of the editor. During the OIC controversies the *New Nigerian Newspapers* granted interviews to both those who supported Nigerian membership and those who opposed it. The papers published many interviews, press statements, and advertorials by various religious leaders in the newspapers.

The *New Nigerian Newspaper* in its editorial in defense of Nigeria's membership of the OIC on 27th January, 1986 stated that "...Government *raisondetre* is..., to protect their subjects' religious values are most critical part of these ways. Those who rule out our membership of the OIC ought to ponder on this fact" (6).

The *Trust* group, made up of the *Daily Trust*, the *Weekly Trust* and the *Sunday Trust* is owned by a Muslim, edited by Muslims and published formerly in Kaduna but now in Abuja. *The Trust* group did not hide their position as "defenders of *Shariah*." This position clearly came out as their various exclusive interviews, editorials, news stories were all directed against perceived anti-*Shariah* elements. To

this effect, the *Trust* group published various headlines on *Shariah* and issues related to it. In its report on the *Shariah* debate in the Kaduna State House of Assembly, the *Weekly Trust* of 24-30 December, 1999 carried a headline titled “*Shariah* Divides Kaduna?” The *Weekly Trust* published many contributions from readers and guest columnists supporting the introduction of *Shariah* legal system in Kaduna State. One of these columns was “the Friday Discourse,” which was clearly “pro-*Shariah*.” In this write-up, the paper reported that the protests and riots that ensued as a result of the passage of *Shariah* bill in Kaduna State House of Assembly had succeeded in dividing Kaduna State along religious lines.

In its editorial of March 3, 2000, on the passage of the bill to introduce *Shariah* criminal legal system in Kaduna State, the *Weekly Trust* newspaper stated that the paper:

can go to any extent to defend the rights of Christians not to be governed by *Shariah*. But we cannot defend them in stopping other people (Muslims) from being governed by *Shariah*, This is a legitimate demand especially now that the call for restructuring has become an issue (15).

The doctrine of social responsibility is sacrosanct to the overall role of the mass media in any society. However, in the above statement by the *Daily Trust* newspaper one may ask if this doctrine had been adhered to because the above statement was capable of escalating the crisis more so that what the society needed at that time was an appeal for reconciliation and not the issue of legalism as to who was right or wrong. The *Daily Trust* in this instance displayed its lack of objectivity and sensitivity to religious issues more glaringly.

In response to those saying that Nigeria was a secular state and should not adopt the religious law of the *Shariah*, the same edition of the *Weekly Trust* commented as follows:

The contribution we expect from our Christian brothers is the resolve to initiate similar steps by applying similar laws as contained in the bible in their states rather than resort to supporting secularism and opposing Muslims...If Jesus were to return today, I am sure he will fight against these evils, especially the doctrine of secularism that wants us to believe that God is dead (14).

The media by their professed goal are expected to be an impartial and neutral entity and a market place of ideas where all shades of opinions are traded. However, here we see the *Weekly Trust* assuming the mouth piece of one group of the warring parties in Kaduna State.

After the outbreak of *Shariah* violence in February 2000, the *Weekly Trust* provided graphic details of the crisis. In April 2000, one of the front page stories of the *Weekly Trust* was captioned “The Coup in Kaduna.” The paper reported the Southern Kaduna Christians of attempting a coup “Against The Muslim Led Government of Kaduna State.” Again here, one can see the religious affiliation of the controllers of the *Weekly Trust* influencing their focus in this report. When Igbos launched reprisal attack in the east, the *Weekly Trust* in a comment written by Kperogi E. stated that investigation in Owerri, Aba, Umuahia and Uyo:

...shows that reprisal attacks against Northerners living in the Eastern part of the country in the wake of the recent religious upheaval in Kaduna had a curious, even ironic twist: Northern Christians, including those from Kaduna were not spared; they were tarred with the same brush as their Muslim

counterparts by easterners who were angry with the killings of their kith and kin in Kaduna (1).

In one of its columns titled “Inside Politics” the *Weekly Trust* newspaper attacked the south west media, eastern Governors and what it referred to as anti-*Shariah* groups in the north. Dutsin-ma S. M. in the *Weekly Trust* of March 31 to April 6, 2000 commented that “...the crisis in Kaduna was calculated by united Christian forces comprising of natives and Igbo community fully mobilized by the Igbo war lord (Ojukwu) and was ostensibly to wipe out Muslims residing in the city” (37).

Kudu N. K. in the same edition of the *Daily Trust* accused Governors of the five Igbo speaking states of “playing the ignoble roles of the five majors of the 1966 infamy.” According to him:

For the unwary, this is curious behaviour on the part of the Igbo leadership. It is not, considering the antecedent of Igbo tribal leadership beginning with the Jan 15th 1966 bloody military coup when five majors murdered prominent Northern and Yoruba leaderships, both civilian and military....it appears that history is repeating itself. This time five Governors are playing the ignoble roles of the five majors of the 1966 infamy. The Ikemba of Nnewi; the erstwhile “head of state” of Biafra...he now recommends to the Igbo, the eye for eye and tooth for tooth tactics to achieve their objectives of destabilization of Nigeria and hopefully the resuscitation of the defunct Biafra (37).

The *Daily Trust* in this write-up clearly showed that its mission was to defend an interest, that of the Muslim north. Where did objectivity and sensitivity of the newspaper to the feelings of the Igbos and other non supporters of the introduction of *Shariah* lie?

After the May 2000 *Sharia* crisis in Kaduna, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) complained of bias and mismanagement of the crisis and called for the transfer of Kaduna State Police Commissioner Alhaji Hamisu Yusuf. In a reaction to this call, the *Weekly Trust* in its editorial of 5 - 11th May 2000 wrote that the Commissioner of Police:

...alerted the relevant public officials on the threat to peace but nothing concrete was done to support him to avert the crisis... the impressive performance was not appreciated by some Christian groups especially the CAN that openly and persistently called for his removal. And the zeal of government to please them, can be seen in the manner he was hurriedly transferred to Gombe, and he reported, he was redeployed to Lagos... however, the call by Muslims for disciplinary measures against the GOC of One Mechanized Division for his alleged poor handling of the crisis was not entertained (15).

In its reportage of the series of crises in Plateau State in September, 2001, the *Weekly Trust* in its edition of January 4th to 10th 2002 published a news headline titled: "Goodbye, VOA Hausa Service." This article was a reaction to the reorganization of the reportorial outfits of some international media organizations as a result of various complaints against their coverage of the 2001 protracted social conflicts in Jos city and its environs. According to *ThisDay* newspaper of 9th December, 2002 as a result of the reorganization, Christian reporters were added to the existing ones by the VOA and BBC (10). In the process the VOA compiled the names and telephone numbers of prominent religious leaders in the state and other parts of Nigeria to enable them be in touch with them in times of crisis (Galadima 202).

On the 21st September, 2001, the *Weekly Trust* (21–27) edition published a comment by Aliyu Tilde on page 14 titled “Fire on the Plateau.” Here the commentator described and discussed the crisis in Jos blaming the state government for not taking proactive measures to forestall the crisis. The *Weekly Trust* editions of October 5th to 11th, 2001 carried an advertorial titled “Reply to the Governor Dariye's Diatribes Against Muslims-JNI Jos North Branch” (7).

In the crisis that arose as a result of the Local Government election in November/December 2008, the *Trust* group came out strongly in support of the Hausa-Fulani group against their opponents. In an article by Mohammed Adamu in December 3, 2008 edition of the *Daily Trust*, the writer made the following comments:

The State Governor, retired Air Commodore David Jonah Jang, had always harboured deep hatred for the Hausa/Fulani who are predominantly Muslim. For Jang, this historical wrong took a personal dimension when he was retired in August 1990. This only seemed to have deepened his hatred towards the ‘hegemonists (3).

In another article in the *Weekly Trust* of December 20th, 2008 M. U. Ndagi stated that “It is now clear that Jang, by his intolerant and callous mindset, is very unlike many state governors under whose leadership "settlers" enjoy privileges...” (40). Here we witness another instance of a medium that professes objectivity and neutrality displaying clear partisanship and allowing religious and ethnic sentiments of its owners and editors to affect its reportage.

In another instance, Adamu Adamu in the *Daily Trust* newspaper edition of 5th December 2008 made the following comments:

His Excellency David Jonah Jang, *Madakin Jos*, governor of Plateau State is on a revenge mission with messianic zeal... Jang never forgets his compulsive combativeness with the Hausa Fulani... Jang's plan for genocide hatched several months ago.... (5).

From the above examples, it can be seen that the *Trust* newspapers had thrown objectivity and neutrality to the dust and assumed the position of defenders of some sections and ideological/ethnic and religious champions. By this position they portrayed the crisis not as generated by election disagreement but a preplanned genocide. To buttress this point the paper went on to make more comments. On its Front page Comment, the *Daily Trust* in its edition of December 3, 2008 made the following statements:

The blatant attempt to rig election in Jos North Local Government was not the normal election rigging for which the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to which Governor Jang belongs, is known for all over the country. In the case of Jos North, the electoral battle lines between the PDP and ANPP happen to coincide neatly with communal and religious boundaries, with the Berom ethnic group and the larger Christian community backed by PLSG on one side, and the Hausa Fulani and Muslim community on the other.

In another edition of the group, the *Sunday Trust* Front Page Comment of 7th December, 2008 came up with the following comment:

This latest genocidal bloodbath in Plateau State was the fifth. The fourth was the Yelwan Shendam massacre which occurred in February 2004... in which Christian tribes in Plateau State massacred Muslim men, women and children in their hundreds during a two-day orgy of violence.

In defence of the killing of people in the Church at Yelwa on 24th February, 2004 the *Weekly Trust* on its front pages of May29-June 4, 2004, in a comment by one Garbadeen Mohammed titled “Who is celebrating Plateau?” stated that “...February 24, 2004 was a Tuesday, not a Sunday so they (Muslim Militias) attacked fighters who retreated to churches, not worshippers.” Here too, the religious affiliation of the writer and the “mission” of the newspaper as the “defender” of one particular religion were very visible. These newspapers on these cases threw cautions to the wind by using religious sentiments in their comments and editorials columns and these were capable of aggravating the crisis.

On 3rd December, 2008 on its front page the *Daily Trust* newspaper published the following on the 2008 crisis in Jos thus “There is an unhappy feeling in many parts of Plateau State that a Christian majority state's prized capital city is numerically dominated by Hausa Muslim community.”

On 8th December, 2008 the paper again published a comment by Adamu Adamu as follows:

What could one make of the entire congregation praying the noon prayer right inside Masallacin Kwanar Shagari, last Saturday that was matched out of the mosque and led into detention? Were they guilty of saying their prayers, or what was it that they had done (15).

In another publication, the *Daily Trust* newspaper of December, 8, 2008 in an article on the Jos Crisis wrote that:

The Federal Government must get to the bottom of this tragedy. Otherwise there may be no next time, and only a full, open and unhindered investigation of the genesis and the manner of handling the crisis can satisfy the nation... because of the culpability of Jang's government, it should first be removed

from the scene and replaced by an emergency administration. Thereafter, a full judicial commission of inquiry should be set up to look into the issue (7).

In another instance the *Sunday Trust* newspaper Front Page Comment came up in an article by one Garbadeen Muhammad with what he thought should be the solution to the Jos crisis:

One solution that is a hot favorite with almost everyone, especially the perennial victims of these genocide, in this case the Hausa Fulani and Muslim population of Plateau State, is to remove Jos North from Plateau State and merge it with Saminaka in the North West, Tilde, Toro and, Magama Gumau to the East and such other small towns and settlements within this geographical boundary. The new entity may then be made to be part of Bauchi State.

In a special column on the back page of the *Daily Trust* of December 8, 2008 Adamu Adamu stated that:

The best solution for peace to prevail is Plateau State should be de-created... alternatively, Jos metropolitan area, comprising Jos North and South and 20 kilometres in each direction should be declared Federal Capital Territory, and all those holding municipal, statutory, ancestral or local government titles to the land within it should forfeit them and be compensated by the Federal Government.

The *Daily Trust* came up with yet another comment by Adamu Adamu on its back page of December, 8, 2008 as follows:

If the Federal Government continued to dither in indecision as to what to do... a Muslim resistance might be born, which these pitiful plague of humanity

would not be able to handle... and you would not find any of them in Plateau State or in any other place in Nigeria.

From the foregoing instances, it is clear that the *Trust* group of newspapers, like the Southern based newspapers, took positions right from the onset that they were out to defend a cause, that is, the cause of Islamic religion and the “North.”

The Media reportage of the activities of *Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda’awati Wal-Jihad* popularly known as *Boko Haram* has generated a lot of controversies. Whereas the Federal Government of Nigeria accuses the media of over reporting the activities of the group, *Boko Haram* on its part is accusing the media of bias towards government and being against them.

On 26th April, 2012, the Abuja and Kaduna offices of *ThisDay* newspapers were bombed. That same day, the Kaduna offices of *The Moment* and *The Sun* newspapers were equally bombed. The three incidences were claimed by *Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda’awati Wal-Jihad* alias *Boko Haram* when in an interview on a website, premiumtimesng.com, and video telecast as published in the *Daily Trust* newspaper of 2nd May, 2012 (3). *Boko Haram* said that it was targeting Nigerian and foreign journalists, saying that the attacks were meant to send a strong message to the media that it had become fed up with alleged misrepresentations of its position by journalists, saying it would no longer take blame for actions not committed by its members. According to Abu Qaqa who claimed to be their spokesman:

We have repeatedly cautioned reporters and media houses to be professional and objective in their reports. This is a war between us and the government of Nigeria; unfortunately the media have not been objective and fair in their reports of the ongoing war; they chose to take sides.

In the same telecast, the group threatened to attack other media organizations like the *Nation*, the *Vanguard*, the *Punch* and *The Guardian* newspapers. The group in a statement published on a news website *Premium Times*, claimed that the press was not reporting the group accurately. The group said that it attacked *ThisDay* to send a strong message to the media that it would no longer condone reports misrepresenting it in the press, or blaming it for acts it did not commit. According to Abu Qaqa, "The media in Nigeria are not a problem to us if they do their jobs professionally without taking sides," adding that each time they say something, it is either changed or downplayed.

Qaqa equally warned the media that they had just started this new campaign against the media saying "we will not stop here, we will hit the media hard since they have refused to listen to our plea for them to be fair in their reportage." According to Qaqa, "these media houses have committed a lot of offences that are detrimental to Islam, and we don't have the power to forgive them. We will take revenge on them by God's grace..." The *Voice of America (VOA)* (Hausa service) was also included for having recently "started campaigning for people to support the government against us by exposing us." The mass media in Nigeria in this instance was at a cross road because of the accusations by both the government and *Boko Haram*.

The pattern of media reportage in the 2011 Post-Presidential Election crises in some states of northern Nigeria were as diverse as the number of media organizations that reported the crisis. The media spoke in diverse voices according to their political, geographical, ethnic and religious leanings. Whereas most newspapers and magazines from the Southern part of the country condemned the crisis, newspapers that are Northern based (such as the *Daily Trust*, the *Weekly Trust*, the *Sunday Trust* and the

New Nigeria Newspapers) under reported the crisis and underplayed its effects on the society.

The Danish Cartoons' riots in Maiduguri, Bauchi and some other northern states saw one of the deadliest riots over cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed across the Muslim world. The cartoons were first published in Danish newspapers and then in other European newspapers. Protesters set fire to churches and cars, hurled stones at police, and other innocent people over cartoons that were published in Denmark as far back as 2005! Maiduguri, Bauchi, Katsina, Gombe were engulfed in those riots and the attendant loss of property and human lives could not be quantified. Many Nigerians were surprised why cartoons, in far away Denmark should lead to so much destruction of lives and property in Nigeria.

One may choose to give the riots in Nigeria whatever interpretation one wants but one thing that is clear is that religious issues are sensitive issues and should be handled with utmost care and respect. Journalists should stop trivializing religious issues and be more careful in their news reportage or commentaries. This is a typical example of the media not only serving in deescalating conflict but the media creating conflict and escalating it. Cartoons by their nature speak volumes more than written words because they are subject to diversity of interpretations. They should therefore, be handled more professionally by journalists.

4.2.2 The International Media

In the ethno-religious conflicts that took place in northern Nigeria between 1980 and 2011, the International media organizations like their local media counterparts were involved in the reportage of the conflicts. Here in this sub section, the study presents and examines samples of some of the international media reportage.

An Integrated Regional Information Networks, commonly known as *IRIN News*, report on the Danish Cartoons' riots on 20. February 2006 stated that:

At least 17 people, including a Catholic priest, were killed and 30 churches burned in the northeast Nigerian city of Maiduguri when Muslims protesting cartoons caricaturing the Prophet Muhammad turned on local Christians, police said. Nigerian police spokesman Haz Iwendi said a crowd of protesters in the predominantly Muslim city targeted the Christian minority, burning and looting their shops and churches on Saturday. We can confirm that 17 persons were killed, 30 churches and five hotels were also burnt (n.p).

The *Voice of America (VOA)* report on the reprisal attacks on the Hausa as a result of the killing of Igbos in the wake of the Danish Cartoons' riots on 22 February 2006, titled "Muslims in revenge attacks in the South of Nigeria" stated that:

The death toll from five days of Muslim-Christian violence in Nigeria is up to at least 64 following more violence in the south. Christian mobs in the city of Onitsha killed at least 19 people, mostly Muslims, Wednesday. Witnesses describe a bloody scene with Christian rioters using machetes to slash and mutilate their victims. At one point, soldiers used force against the rioters to block more attacks. The violence in Onitsha began Tuesday when at least 12 people were killed during Christian attacks on Muslims. Those riots were in reprisal for riots targeting Christians in Nigeria's largely Muslim North. At least 33 people, mostly Christians, were killed when Muslims rioted in the cities of Bauchi and Maiduguri earlier in the week (n.p).

The *British Broadcasting Corporation News (BBC)* on Wednesday, 10 January, 2001 in its report titled "Eclipse triggers Nigeria riot," reported that:

...Riot police are patrolling the streets of the northern Nigerian city of Maiduguri in the wake of rioting sparked off by the sighting Tuesday night's lunar eclipse. Hundreds of Muslim youths attacked mainly Christian targets, hotels, bars and brothels after seeing that the moon was starting to disappear. Reports from Maiduguri say the youths blamed the eclipse on what they call the preponderance of sinful activities in the city. The youths poured out on to the streets soon after the eclipse began. They were chanting "God is great!" and "We want *Sharia* (n.p).

An *IRIN News* report on religious violence in Bauchi State on 26 September titled "Nigeria: Living in Fear as Tensions Rise" stated that:

Mobs of young men rampaged through the predominantly Muslim town, looting shops and burning churches and other buildings belonging to Christians. Over 1,000 people sought refuge in police stations, according to police officials (n.p).

This report further stated that:

In similar violence in February, at least 150 people were killed and 50,000 displaced in a week of riots across six of the country's 36 states after Muslims attacked Christians in the North Eastern city of Maiduguri. They were ostensibly angry over cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed published in Denmark (n.p).

In reporting the ethno-religious violence in Bauchi on 13th December, 2007 the *IRIN News* stated that:

At least six people have been killed and 30 critically injured since clashes between Muslim and Christian communities in the North Central Nigerian city of Bauchi broke out on 11 December, Red Cross workers and residents said.

Some 3,000 people have fled their homes in the area of the fighting, witnesses said. The government has ordered a 9pm to 6am curfew and closed the local university, which has often been the site of violent clashes (n.p).

On 16 October 2012 at 15:27 GMT the *BBC* in a broadcast titled “Nigeria's Maiduguri shaken by 'Boko Haram' blasts-Nigeria under attack,” reported that:

The loud explosions that have rocked Nigeria's northern city of Maiduguri were orchestrated by the militant group Boko Haram, an army spokesman has said. Lt Col Sagir Musa told the *BBC* the multiple attacks targeted locations used by the Joint Military Taskforce (JTF) in the city, the Islamists' base. He said 24 militants had been killed but denied reports that civilians or soldiers had died (n.p).

Also on 4th February, 2008, the *IRIN News* reported that:

Nigeria has a long history of Muslim-Christian tension and periodic violent clashes, especially in the North. In December 2007 sectarian riots between Muslims and Christians over a mosque construction left six dead and dozens injured in Bauchi city, while many houses were burnt. In February 2006, 30 people were killed in an uprising when a school teacher allegedly made blasphemous remarks. In the worst recent rioting in 2004, hundreds of people were killed in waves of sectarian violence in Kano, ostensibly in retribution for similar attacks in Plateau state, central Nigeria (n.p).

In their reportage of the Sharia crisis in 2000, the *BBC* on Tuesday 22 February, 2000, at 13:49 GMTR reported that:

Fresh fighting has broken out in the northern Nigerian city of Kaduna, after Monday's march by Christians protesting against the proposed introduction of Islamic law erupted into violence. Dozens of bodies lay on the streets as police

struggled to quell riots between Christians and Muslims...In the working class Sabo district, I saw police open fire indiscriminately on Muslim and Christian gangs but neither side appeared to retreat and corpses littered the streets...(n.p).

A *Reuters Foundation* report on the 2008 Jos crisis on 30 November 2008 stated that:

Clashes between Muslim and Christian gangs triggered by a disputed local government election have killed around 400 people in the central Nigerian city of Jos, the worst unrest in the country for years. The city lies at the crossroads between Nigeria's Muslim North and its mostly-Christian South, but the conflict is about much more than religious beliefs (n.p).

The *BBC News* report on 29 November 2008, titled "Riots kill hundreds in Nigeria" on the 2008 local government election crisis in Jos stated that:

Hundreds of people are reported to have been killed in central Nigeria after Christians and Muslims clashed over the result of a local election. A Muslim charity in the town of Jos says it collected more than 300 bodies, and fatalities are also expected among Christians (n.p).

On the 2008 Jos crisis, the *BBC News* on 29 November 2008 also reported that:

Homes were destroyed during the clashes, with mosques and churches burned, as gangs of men from the Muslim Hausa community and the mainly Christian ethnic groups, armed with machetes fought. The information Minister for Plateau State, Nuhu Gagara, said about 200 people died (n.p).

The *VOA* on October 31, 2009 at 4:37 PM in a report titled "Deadly Cartoon Riots Spread to Nigeria," reported that:

Extra security forces have been deployed in parts of Nigeria after deadly rioting over cartoons of the prophet Muhammad spread to sub-Saharan Africa.

Police are reporting 15 people were killed during anti-Christian violence on Saturday. Residents in the North Eastern Borno State spent the night under curfew, while reinforcements arrived to quell communal tensions. More than 100 people were detained in Borno State's capital, Maiduguri, where protesters ran wild after police tried to disperse them with tear gas. They responded by looting Christian shops, burning churches and attacking Christians on the streets. Most of the dead are believed to have been Christians, who represent a sizeable minority in the increasingly radical Islamic North (n.p).

A report from the *Human Rights Watch* on 1 December 2008, stated that:

The violence in Jos, the capital of Plateau State in central Nigeria began early on the morning of November 28, 2008, following a disputed local election in which supporters of the opposition All Nigeria Peoples Party accused the governing People's Democratic Party of rigging the election results. Over the next three days, clashes between rival Muslims and Christians, some of whom on both sides were armed with firearms and machetes, left several hundred people dead, according to local sources in Jos. There was also widespread destruction in the town as mobs burned down homes, mosques, and churches. Thousands of residents have been forced to flee their homes (n.p).

While reporting a bomb blast in 2011, the *VOA* on April 24, 2011 at 8.00pm stated that "Bomb Blast Kills At Least 3 in Northern Nigeria Ahead of Vote."

According to the *VOA*:

Nigerian police say a bomb blast in Northeastern Nigeria has killed at least three people and wounded 14 ahead of state-wide elections. Nigerian police believe the Easter Sunday blast in the city of Maiduguri is the work of the Islamic group *Boko Haram*, which has been fighting for the past two years to establish an Islamic state in Northern Nigeria...Earlier this year, *Boko Haram*

claimed responsibility for killing a gubernatorial candidate in Borno state. A human rights group, the Civil Rights Congress of Nigeria, says at least 500 people were killed in that violence (n.p).

The *VOA* again while reporting the post presidential election crisis of 2011 on April 2011 at 8.00 pm titled “Residents flee from post-election violence, in Kaduna, Nigeria,” stated that:

Authorities said there has been an explosion in northern Nigeria where dozens are reported to have been killed this week in post-election violence. Security sources said the blast on Friday evening hit in the city of Kaduna, the capital of the state of the same name... at least two people were killed as they accidentally detonated a bomb they were trying to assemble. Riots broke out in the predominantly Muslim north this week after incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan, a Christian from the south, won Saturday's election. Muslim supporters of his unsuccessful challenger in the race, Muhammadu Buhari, have attacked churches, homes, and police stations. The violence has sparked counterattacks by Christians. Media reports say more than 100 people were killed in the violence, though officials have declined to give a death toll for fear of prompting more attacks (n.p).

Also on April 18, 2011 at 8.00pm the *VOA* reporting on the post presidential election crisis on April 18, 2011 at 8:00 PM in a report titled “Nigerian President Calls for Calm Following Re-Election,” related that

Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan is calling for calm after days of electoral violence following a presidential vote that most observers believe was largely free and fair. But the political party that finished second says Jonathan's re-election was rigged. President Jonathan says security forces are

moving to repress violence in Northern states where rioters burned the home of his vice president, threw stones at security forces and broke open a jail (n.p).

The Telegraph on Friday 22 November 2002 at 1:13PM GMT in a report titled “100 killed in Miss World riots in Nigeria,” stated that

The death toll in riots sparked by the Miss World contest in Northern Nigeria has risen to more than 100. The violence in the city of Kaduna was triggered by a newspaper article suggesting Islam's founding prophet Mohammed would have approved of the Miss World contest and would probably have chosen one of the beauty queens as his bride. It sparked rioting with Muslim youths going on the rampage, leaving more than 100 dead and hundreds injured. Angry mobs stabbed and set fire to bystanders. Others burned churches and clashed with police and troops. Despite the volatile situation, Miss World organizers said they still planned to go ahead with the competition (n.p).

On November 21st 2002 in a *BBC* report titled “100 Dead During Miss World Riots in Nigeria,” said that:

Over 100 people have been killed and another 500 injured in the Northern city of Kaduna, Nigeria as mobs of Muslims and Christians rampaged through the city killing and burning bystanders to death. The riots began after an article was published in the Lagos daily newspaper that questioned why Muslim groups were protesting the Miss World pageant, due to take place in Nigeria on December 7. The article included a line that Prophet Mohammad would most likely have married one of the beauty contestants, according to *Reuters*. Muslim groups in Northern Nigeria have banned the newspaper. In response to the protests, the newspaper printed three apology letters. Earlier this week Muslim youths looted shops and started fires in Kaduna in response to

Nigeria's role in hosting the Miss World pageant. Muslim groups are arguing that the beauty pageant is un-Islamic, and they are also angry that the contest began in the Muslim holy month of Ramadan (n.p).

In a report in the *Al-Jazeera* by Adesuwa Twan on 10th February 2010, titled "Nigeria: *Boko Haram* - Reps to Probe Al-Jazeera's Footage of Killings," the station declared that:

The House of Representatives yesterday mandated its committees on Human Rights, Police Affairs and Justice to investigate a video clip that has been airing on *Al-Jazeera*, an international news station which showed extra judicial killings of defenseless cripples and underage citizens by men of the Nigeria Police Force, during the *Boko Haram* sectarian violence in Borno State, last year. The extra judicial killings which was captured as they allegedly took place while the insurrection was being managed by the security agents was aired as part of attempts to counter claims by the Nigeria Police that the report of Amnesty International indicting the police of extra judicial was not true... This graphic video obtained by Al-Jazeera shows conclusive evidence of crass inhumanity and palpable barbaric atrocities that have long been known to be pervasive in the Nigerian Armed Forces psyche - Extra-Judicial MURDER of Civilians in broad daylight (n.p).

On January 23rd, 2003 at 7.00pm Abdullahi Ado in the *Radio Deutsche Ville (Voice of Germany)* Hausa services reported that "...those arrested on October 23, 2002 at Rikkos in connection with the crisis in Maza village were taken to court on January 23rd 2003 but were refused bail" (n.p).

He went ahead to interview Barrister Bala, the lawyer of the accused and one Alhaji Santall Mai Ungwa Rogo. In the said interview, Alhaji Santall Mai Ungwa

Rogo accused the state government of victimizing the people because they were Muslims, saying further that Jos North Local Government was their home and nobody could send them away.

According to the *Human Rights Watch* reports titled “800 people killed in post-election violence” on May 16, 2011 - 2:23pm by Emmanuel Chidiogo:

...over 65, 000 people were displaced in northern Nigeria... following the April 2011 presidential polls riots...the victims were killed in three days of rioting in 12 northern states (Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Niger, Sokoto, Yobe, and Zamfara) (n.p).

In a report titled “Nigeria cartoon riots kill, 16 Churches burned in widespread violence as Danish cartoonist defends publication,” *The Observer* of Sunday 19th February 2006 as quoted by *The Guardian* by Amelia Hill and Anushka Asthana, expressed that:

Rioting over the controversial cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad claimed another 16 lives last night in Nigeria as churches were burned by protesting Muslims. The first protests in Nigeria flared in the provinces of Borno and Katsina where hotels and shops were torched by protesters...

On November 29, 2008 at 9.00pm, the *BBC World* (TV) reported that 300 persons were massacred and buried in mass graves in the post local government elections in Jos North. Similarly on November 30, 2008, the same *BBC* (TV) at 2.00 pm reported that 360 corpses were deposited in the Jos Central Mosque. These news reports were denied by the police authorities as false. Similar reports and figures of casualties were given by the *CNN* and the *Al Jazeera*.

4.3 EVALUATION OF THE MEDIA REPORTAGE OF ETHNO-RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS

An analysis of the above sampled newspapers and news magazines headlines, editorials, news analysis and commentaries, advertorials, special columns, cover stories and news broadcasts reveals that mass media can create conflict, escalate conflict or deescalate conflict through their pattern of reportage. These include the electronic media especially the international broadcast media organizations. In order to guide against the misuse of its power which will certainly be injurious to the larger society, the media organizations and professionals have drawn up codes of ethics that guide the practice of the profession.

An evaluation of our sample media reportage of the ethno-religious conflicts in northern Nigeria in the past three decades with media codes has given us the picture of the influence of location, religion and ethnicity in the pattern of media reportage and performance between 1979 and 2011. While some headlines and cover stories may appear to be alarming and sensational which negate the codes of media professionals others appear to be reconciling and geared towards peace building. In many instances where the media headlines appeared to be insensitive, alarming and capable of inciting further conflicts, they reinforce the fact that as human institution the media all over the world have interests to protect no matter their claim of neutrality and objectivity. Apart from that, is the fact that, conflict and abnormality are inseparable companion of most news.

A popular parlance in the news cycle by Charles Anderson Dana, an American journalist (1819-1897) is that “when dog bites a man it is not news but when a man bites a dog it is news.” Readers are normally drawn to headlines that are very catchy and captivating and such headlines sell newspapers and magazines. Owens-Ibie (32) reinforces this assertion when he argues that the media are naturally attracted to

conflicts, and that conflicts often generate media attention because they fit into the definition of what is considered news by professional journalists; timeliness, drama, consequence and the involvement of personalities who become important definers of conflict. According to him, these elements help the media to define news in negative terms and conflict tends to satisfy the public demand for information on the conflict.

As can be observed, the pattern of reportage of the local media is not different from that of the international media organizations. A typical example of even the international media appearing to fall below the expectation of the Nigerian public was a situation on February 12, 2002 where it was reported that Nigeria wanted *CNN* reporters withdrawn from the country because of their alleged biased reportage on Nigeria. According to the report, this was disclosed on 11th February, 2002 by the then Minister of Information and National Orientation, Jerry Gana in Abuja. The report said that the demand had been made that the *CNN* correspondent in Nigeria, Jeff Koinage, be transferred from the country with immediate effect. Speaking during an exclusive interview with *ThisDay* newspaper in Abuja on February 10, Gana said that following the reports on the recent crisis in Lagos in which the Journalist reported that "Nigeria's now preferred military rule to democracy" (5), the correspondent was told why his report was quite inimical to the well being of the country. Gana said that the decision of the Federal Government initially was to declare the reporter *persona non grata* and then be deported, before he advised the government to soft pedal.

During the September 7, 2001, Jos crisis, *ThisDay* of 26th September, 2001 reported that, the international broadcast media were criticized by members of the Plateau State House of Assembly, and the then Plateau State Commissioner for information - Amos Azi and others. The *BBC*, the *VOA* and the *Voice of Germany*

(VG) were in the report accused of broadcasting inciting comments made by some actors on their Hausa Services (Galadima 23).

The accusation against these media according to John Galadima, bordered on the fact that they were bias in their coverage of these crises as they engaged only Muslim reporters in their Hausa Services. Being Muslims, these reporters devoted more time and priority to Muslim's views and versions of the cause of the crisis compared to the Christians version and that even where allegations were made against the state government, attempts were not made to get government's reaction to such allegations (23).

The problem of deliberate subjectivity arises here, because the reporters ought have sought for the version of the state government especially as those interviewed accused the government of discriminatory and bias treatment which could further aggravate the tension and crisis. When former President Olusegun Obasanjo declared a State of Emergency in Plateau State on May, 19, 2004 a group known as "The Plateau Patriots" in reaction to this indicted the international media when they stated that:

...In February 2004 armed militia declared the town "new Zamfara State" and many Christians were killed, until this time Muslim Ummah kept mute. And the Muslim megaphones, the *Daily Trust* newspaper and various Hausa services of foreign media, (*BBC*, *VOA*, *VG* etc) took an unusually interest in the Yelwa crises... where the foreign media left out in the massive onslaught on Plateau... *Daily Trust* ... *Weekly Trust* enjoyed the monopoly of unsubstantiated and provocative reporting on the Plateau events (Galadima 9).

Reacting to this accusation of lack of objectivity by the *VOA*, Jonathan Last in his article in *ThisDay* newspaper of 2th December 2001 (9) titled "when *VOA*

becomes the voice of Islam in Nigeria" indicted the international media for fuelling ethno-religious crisis in Nigeria.

Also in the wake of the ethno-religious conflict that engulfed Yelwa-Shendam axis of Plateau in 2004, the Gumai Unity and Development Organization indicted both the international media and the local media as follows:

While reporting the events on May 2-3, 2004, the trio (*BBC, VOA and Radio Dents Chewelie Hausa service*) deceived the world that the Gumai and Christians were the aggressors. They also refused to interview Gumai Christian' victims of the crisis while all those interviewed were mainly Hausa Fulani Muslims...(Galadima 10).

Analysis so far reveals that some international media organizations contribute in aggravating situations of crises in Nigeria. In the reportage of ethno-religious conflicts in the past three decades they have often depended on individuals or organizations who feed them with figures of casualties thereby further escalating the crises. When ethno-religious conflicts are not carefully reported they contribute to the escalation of the crises. Some of the international media organizations were accused of one sided reporting and interviewing of the parties in conflict. Because of the many complaints of bias coverage against these international media organizations, the *ThisDay* newspaper of December 9, 2001 reported that some of them re-organized their reportorial units in Plateau State as they took the following steps:

- a Amaka Dike (now late) was engaged as a freelance reporter in Jos for the *BBC* African English service to compliment the Hausa service reporters.
- b Mrs. Grace Abdu a Christian Hausa lady was employed by *VOA* Hausa service.

- c The *BBC* Hausa service also organized an interactive session over the crisis on the Plateau, during which the then Governor of the state (Chief Joshua Dariye) interacted with news men.
- d The *VOA* also compiled the names and telephone numbers of the prominent religious leaders in the country and Plateau in particular (Galadima 29).

The summary of this line of argument is that the mass media all over the world have a philosophy. This philosophy is usually encapsulated in the mission statement, which is basically about the objectives and goals. In other words the pattern of news reportage of the international news media has to do with their philosophy, socio-economic or ideological conditioning. They do not appear to differ significantly from the local media in their performances. The media should not only be interested in crises but should cover peace initiatives undertaken before and during crises periods towards the peaceful coexistence in Nigeria and humanity. This is the focus of the paradigm shift in journalism practice referred to as conflict sensitive journalism or peace journalism.

From the above survey and evaluation of media reportage of ethno-religious conflicts in northern Nigeria since 1980 it is clear that the pattern of media coverage of these crises fall below the standard set by the various media codes of ethics. The patterns of reportage were insensitive and did contribute in generating and escalating the incessant ethno-religious conflicts. Most of the mass media in Nigeria exhibited ethno-religious partisan tendencies and primordial sentiments in their coverage of these crises.

This study also reveals that the mass media in these cases threw away the ethics of social responsibility, objectivity and balanced reporting when reporting ethno-religious conflicts. The reporters and some media managers were often one

sided and carried published comments and editorials that escalated rather than de-escalated the crises. Most of the media organizations examined in this study could be accused of failing to thoroughly investigate the nature, dimension and pattern of the crises they reported and therefore based their views and interpretations on faulty and conflict generating posture. Also, some of the sampled media organizations analyzed in this study showed extreme sympathy for one party or another in the various ethno-religious conflicts surveyed so far. Although the media have all along claimed to be neutral in the discharge of their responsibilities they have all in these analysis exhibited traits of taking side and thus inflaming and inciting one party in the conflict against the other. Some of these media organizations severally exhibited lack of sensitivity and understanding of the ethno-religious plurality and sentiments of this country, thus contributed to escalating the conflicts and also triggering new ones as in the case of Miss World riots and Danish cartoons' riots.

4.4 ETHNO-RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS, MASS MEDIA, AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This section examines the nexus between ethno-religious conflict, mass media and national development. The media are naturally attracted to conflict because conflict is intrinsically linked to journalism so much so that some definitions of news often begin with the term "conflict." Since abnormality makes news and violent conflict is an abnormality, the mass media tend to thrive on conflict as conflict attracts readers, viewers and listeners to the media. The prime news value of the media are sometimes conflict, disorder and negative events as good news stories receive less media attention than bad news.

The mass media constitute a space in which the conflicts of a society can be articulated and are more or less actors in conflicts. Also, the combatants in a conflict usually relate to each other either on the battlefield or through the way they are

represented in the media. The mass media therefore, plays a vital role in ethno-religious conflicts as an arena for the expression of the various versions of the causes of the conflict. History has shown that the media can incite people towards violence. For instance, Adolf Hitler used the media to create a worldview of hatred for Jews and other minority groups. Also, Rwanda's radio *RTL*M urged the Hutus to pick up machetes and kill their fellow Tutsis which they referred to as "the cockroaches." Broadcasters in the Balkans polarized local communities to the point where violence became an acceptable tool for addressing grievances.

The media's impact on the escalation of conflict is therefore more widely recognized than the media's impact on peace building. A common journalist principle is: "If it bleeds, it leads" (www.urbandictionary.com/define). That means that the media loves violence and conflict to form headline news, as against news of dialogue and understanding. This tendency to give priority to conflict and violence news over peace news distorts reality and leads many people to think that conflict is pervasive and peace is abnormal.

Several studies confirm that the impact of the media on conflict escalation is greater than the impact of the media on conflict prevention and peace building. Peace journalism scholar Gadi Wolfsfeld notes that there is a "fundamental contradiction between the nature of a peace process and news values, the media often play a destructive role in attempts at making peace" (2). Media and media professionals tend to favour four values: immediacy, drama, simplicity and ethnocentrism. These values make it difficult to use the media for peace. As a result of their ability to reach and influence large numbers of people, the media carry immense power in shaping the course of a conflict.

Violent conflict, whether ethno-religious, political or otherwise can destroy everything, from people, crops, infrastructures and other material resources to institutions, including education, political will, hope, and trust. Violent conflict causes poverty, suffering and is disastrous to economic development of any community and nation. Violent conflict in whatever form affects and reverses development efforts. Ethno-religious violent conflicts destroy lives, property, and the environment and as such, it is developmental in reverse.

The nexus between the development of a nation and violent conflict therefore, cannot be overemphasised. National development is a multidimensional concept that involves every segment of the nation's life. Ethno-religious violent conflict constitutes an extraordinary challenge to national development. Irrespective of where ethno-religious violent conflict occurs, victims and survivors are likewise affected by pain, suffering and trauma even long after the conflict stops. Ethno-religious violent conflict severely compromises the skills and assets that are essential to living a productive life and shortens planning and investment opportunities.

Countries with low ethno-religious conflict tend to make more rapid human development gains than countries with higher violent conflict rates. Areas experiencing high rates of ethno-religious conflict tend to experience declining levels of progress in relation to human development as measured by poverty and income. Incessant ethno-religious conflicts brings about extreme poverty, youth unemployment and increase hunger. In Nigeria, unless the incidences of violent ethno-religious conflicts are reduced the country is likely to be found in a cycle of economic decline. The political and social legacy of violent conflicts is usually miserable. Both political rights and health states do not only deteriorate during violent

conflicts, but are usually persistently made worse. Even after a decade of peace people would hardly have recovered to their pre-conflict levels.

The most common legacy is more conflict. Violent conflict digs a deep hole in the economy from which it takes many years to recover. Indeed, many of the costs of violent conflict occur after it is over. Thus, the costs of violent conflicts are very largely not borne by those responsible for them: they are borne by non-combatants but the innocent future inhabitants, and by neighbours. The mass media in Nigeria therefore, have very important roles to play in the incessant ethno-religious conflicts that have notoriously become so regular in the country since 1979. This growing recognition of the crucial role of the mass media in times of conflict and which in turn affects national development has led scholars to examine how the media can play a constructive role in conflict management and peace-building.

Ethno-religious conflicts have scared investors from investing in Nigeria as conflict prone environments are not suitable for investments. Incessant ethno-religious conflicts have also affected the nation's income and so much man hours that would have been used for productive purposes have been lost during violent conflicts in several parts of the country, especially the northern parts of the country.

In January, 2012, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in its publication titled "Nigeria Poverty Profile 2010" came out with a report concerning poverty indices in various states in Nigeria from 1980 to 2010. The NBS study shows that whereas there is a general increase in poverty levels all over the nation the poverty level of the states in the northern block is higher within the period under study when compared with other states of the federation (23). This also coincided with the period of crises recorded in the Northern part of the country. The nexus between violent conflicts, lack of development, increases in poverty rate, crimes and further violent

conflicts is strong and goes in various directions. This is because violent conflict retards development and lack of development substantially increases proneness to violent conflict and poverty. So also, lack of sensitivity on the part of the media can generate or escalate conflict. Further analysis in the next chapter will bring out this more clearly.

4.4.1 Effects of Ethno-Religious Conflicts on the Mass Media

The mass media have a special relationship with conflict situations as evidenced in this study in the previous chapters. This relationship exists because, all over the world conflict especially ethno-religious conflict is of major news value for the mass media and it is a matter of public importance and interest because of its security implications. This relationship goes in many ways. In as much as the mass media is very much interested in ethno-religious news and thus can positively or negatively affect ethno-religious conflicts, ethno-religious conflict situations and insecurity do also affect the operations of the mass media in diverse ways.

There are many perspectives on the issue of the relationship between the mass media and ethno-religious conflicts, ranging from the view that a society gets the mass media it deserves, to the argument that the mass media is a mirror that shows what a country is, what its people are and the kind of society in place. Others still explain that the mass media is only a tool which the ruling class uses to protect their interests, advance their cause, and control the society they live in and the people they govern. The mass media according to this view therefore, is a weapon of further oppression by the ruling class. .

The output of the mass media outlets depends on the professional, moral and intellectual calibre of the persons owning and manning it as much as their personal backgrounds, convictions, interests and outlook on life. Journalists are human beings like everyone. However, journalists are expected to be professionals, operating within the provisions of the ethics and the laws governing the profession. This has been demonstrated so far in the previous sections of this study. The same individuals and events are treated differently by the different media outlets. Some take one or the other side in the conflicts and become its spokesmen. Others stoke the fires subtly or not so subtly. Still others create and depict false incidents to suit their designs.

The fact remains that there is crass commercialisation of the mass media. The products of the media are being sold like any other commodity in the market, and most of those who run the media, do it mostly for purely commercial or political interests. The subtle understanding therefore, is that "anything that pays is welcome." This being the motto of profit seeking commercial media, sensationalisation of ethno-religious conflict situations are not a taboo, nor false motivated versions of the incidents.

One of the major areas that ethno-religious conflict affects the mass media is that the parties in conflicts try to use the media to further their own ends. As a result, the mass media comes heavily under all sorts of undesirable pressures and pulls and also threats. In most cases the mass media comes under duress and intimidation and the blandishment of these influences.

Moreover, ethno-religious conflicts like any other conflict are very disruptive of the normal market conditions in which the media operate. The print media in particular, faces serious production and distribution problems during conflicts. In the

past three decades of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria, many media organizations have closed shops as a result of outright government censure or seizure of printed copies of newspapers or magazines. Ethno-religious conflicts also affect advertisers and thus affect the economic fortune of the media organisations.

The media, whether local or international, will always face a considerable challenge in trying to cover conflicts. There will inevitably be commercial pressure to focus on the immediate, most violent or dramatic incidents, at the expense of explaining the background and issues that may underpin the conflict.

The mass media faces a lot of problems during ethno-religious conflicts as media professionals and members of their families are exposed to various intimidations and violence. In times of conflicts, media professionals are not safe as they have no place to run to in the discharge of their duties. During the period under study, some media professionals were killed or internally displaced with members of their family. This situation adversely affects the work environment of the journalists, their psychology and output in the discharge of their duties.

During ethno-religious conflicts, the economic situation of media organizations are precarious because the infrastructure upon which the media depends - reliable power supply, transport network, equipment- are likely to be destroyed or damaged. This of course affects the performance of the mass media adversely. Also, during ethno-religious conflicts, newspapers and news magazine organizations loss huge revenue sources when they could not sell their copies due to government seizure or insecurity which compels newspaper vendors to abandon their duty posts. This too is capable of driving media organizations out of business.

Another area ethno-religious conflicts especially insurgency affects the media is the area of intimidation and destruction of media establishments. A typical case in

point was when on 26th April, 2012 *Boko Haram* bombed some media houses for under reporting them. According to the report:

Boko Haram on Thursday explained that its grouse with *ThisDay* over alleged misrepresentation of its position and perceived bias led to the bomb attacks on its offices in Abuja and Kaduna....Suspected *Boko Haram* members bombed *ThisDay's* Abuja office as well as a complex housing *ThisDay*, the *Sun* and the *Moment* newspapers in Kaduna, leaving a number of people dead and many more injured. The sect also known as Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad said in an interview with a website, premiumtimesng.com, that it was targeting Nigerian and foreign journalists (Madunagu 1).

In their attempt to intimidate and cow the media *Boko Haram* boasted further that:

It is not only *ThisDay* that has been engaged in negative media campaign, fictional stories and constantly promoting fake stories by the JTF to give an impression that they are making headway against us; yet there is no time the media investigated further as an objective and responsible bystander in this war. But the sins of *ThisDay* are more....“They once insulted the Prophet Mohammed in 2001 and we have not forgotten...(Vanguard 1).

The Nigerian media since these series of bomb explosions have been operating under a very dangerous environment. Most of them have removed their sign boards and have gone underground in their operations. This has adversely affected the psychology and morale of the media professionals who have to be more careful in carrying out their duties to the society.

Another major area that ethno-religious conflicts affect the mass media is free access of media professionals to the areas of conflicts, mobility and safety during conflict situations in discharging their duties and reasonable access to official information. If all these requirements are denied, then obviously media professionals cannot do their jobs. If access to official information and access to the conflict areas are made possible, the quality of news coverage is again heavily dependent on the honesty and cooperation of official sources.

Not only that, the prolonged ethno-religious conflicts that have plagued this country for over three decades have adversely exposed the fact that the media professionals were mostly influenced by their ethnic and religious divides. Their professional ethics were jettisoned in favour of parochial, ethnic, religious, ideological, political and commercial interests. The rise of religious sentiments and the urge to defend "one's religion" has coloured the way news about religious crises are reported in the Nigerian mass media. During ethno-religious conflicts in the country, the news that one reads in newspapers and magazines, listens to over the radio and on television are as varied as the state of faith of the reporters. In order to properly propagate, articulate and defend their religious views, many religious organizations in some instances establish their own media outfits. Therefore, from these few examples, it is clear that in as much as the mass media influence conflicts situations, conflict in turn do affect media operations adversely.

CHAPTER FIVE

EFFECTS OF THE PATTERNS OF REPORTAGE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATION AND NORTHERN NIGERIA

The previous chapter of this study critically examined samples of mass media reportage of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria in the past three decades. It equally evaluated how factors of geographical locations of the media organisations, ethnic or religious affiliations of media owners or editors affected their pattern of reportage. It was also discovered that the mass media, whether local or international can generate, escalate or deescalate ethno-religious conflicts depending on how the media is handled. Having seen this pattern of reportage by the mass media, the question that begs for an answer is what are the effects and implications of this pattern of reportage for national development? This is the task of the next section.

5.1 IMPLICATIONS OF ETHNO-RELIGIOUS REPORTAGE ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The mass media as the watchdog of the society plays enormous roles in national development. National development on the other hand, involves changes or advancement in a nation aimed at improving the political, economic and social lives of the people (Oluwatoyin 2). National development therefore, is a multidimensional concept that involves every segments of the nation's life. However, violent ethno-religious conflicts constitute great challenges to national development because ethno-religious conflicts destroy lives, property, and the environment. The nexus between national development and violent ethno-religious conflict therefore, cannot be over emphasized.

Violent ethno-religious conflicts severely compromise the skills and assets that are essential to living a productive life and discourage planning and investment opportunities thereby leading to acute poverty. Areas experiencing high rates of

violent ethno-religious conflicts tend to experience declining levels of progress in relation to human development as measured by poverty and income. Persistent violent conflicts lead to acute poverty, high rate of unemployment and hunger. The effects of conflicts on national development have been enormous. These conflicts have affected men and women and boys and girls in different ways. These conflicts also have adverse effects on development in all ramifications.

5.1.1 Economic effects

Ethno-religious conflicts have a lot of economic consequences. Conflicts in which ever form, lead to unemployment and loss of income because of disruption of economic activities, infrastructure, uncertainty, increased cost of doing business, and capital flight. Furthermore, during conflicts social spending is often reduced to accommodate increased security spending as the economy undergoes structural changes. According to AfricanBank:

The most obvious legacy of conflict is destruction of public infrastructure. However, infrastructure does not only deteriorate as a result of direct damage from conflict as the government shifts expenditure towards restoring peace and unity, public investment and expenditure on maintenance are squeezed. The post conflict legacy of these effects is an acute shortage of public capital (17).

Violent ethno-religious conflicts have adverse affects on the economy of any society or nation from which recovery may take many years. Ethno-religious conflicts retard economic progress, hamper economic activities and consequently lead to unemployment and poverty. Ethno-religious conflicts equally disrupt small and medium scale and other commercial activities. They destroy the lives of able bodied

men and women who would have engaged in productive activities in order to contribute to the economic development of the nation or community.

The cost of rehabilitating and reconstructing destroyed property after each violent conflict in Nigeria is very high and could have been channelled for development purposes. After conflicts, government spends millions of naira to put in place infrastructures which were destroyed during crises. Resources which could have been used to improve these amenities and embark on other developmental projects would have to be used on restructuring and replacing what had been damaged during the crises. Thus persistent ethno-religious conflicts are inimical to the development of the nation as the country's source of revenue is equally affected.

For instance, imposition of curfews during conflicts bring every economic activity to a standstill because of restriction of movements until normalcy returns. Also, in the areas of investment, persistent ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria have added to the fear of foreign investors coming to Nigeria, especially with the rampant cases of kidnapping of expatriates. Conflicts therefore, have political, social and economic effects on the larger society.

5.1.2 Political Effects

The constant incidences of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria in the past three decades have contributed in overheating the nation's politics and political processes as the country is being constantly threatened with disintegration and separatism. This tensed political situation has become more severe as adherents of each of the two dominant religions in Nigeria, Islam and Christianity try to dominate the political landscape using ethnicity and religion as instruments for bargaining. The question now becomes, is he a Muslim or Christian President, Minister, Governor or Local

Government Chairman? The consequent abuse of basic human rights following these ethno-religious conflicts cannot go unnoticed.

In the face of political instability following these persistent ethno-religious conflicts in the past three decades, some Nigerians were forced to relocate to their states of origin and even to their communities for safety. Apart from this, government policies are influenced by emotional sentiments and manipulation of ethno-religious cleavages. Right from the formation of political parties to electioneering campaigns and voting patterns, all are being influenced by ethno-religious tendencies and affiliations. As a result of this, politics in Nigeria is always volatile and usually leads to violence and the destruction of lives and property.

5.1.3 Social Effects

The social effects of ethno-religious conflicts cannot be overemphasized. Incessant ethno-religious conflicts have continued to threaten the socio-economic development, peace, unity and stability of Nigeria in the past three decades. Ethno-religious conflicts have equally, adversely affected the existing social relationships between neighbours that were hitherto living peacefully. These conflicts have further negatively increased ethno-religious consciousness among Nigerians and have led to hatred, enmity and persistent suspicions among the adherents of Islam and Christianity.

In Nigeria today, ethno-religious consciousness has led to various social ills ranging from problems of ethno-religious influence on job recruitments, promotions and securing admission to schools. Also, projects like road constructions, schools, electricity, water works, health centres and other projects were either frustrated or sited in wrong places as a result of ethno-religious influences.

In the area of education, due to frequent disruption and closure of schools during ethno-religious conflicts in some parts of northern Nigeria, the educational quest of the children has been adversely affected and retarded. Apart from this, schools, students/pupils and their teachers were not spared during ethno-religious conflicts. Many schools had been burnt down while many were forced to close down for months thus affecting the schools' calendars.

Ethno-religious conflicts affect children, girls and women in various ways. Death of men during violent conflicts raise the proportion of female-headed households. After each round of ethno-religious-conflict, women tend to face a much heavier burden of caring for their various families alone. Some of the deaths during violent conflicts occur as a result of preventable communicable diseases but because public health programmes such as immunization for disease control and prevention cannot be carried out during violent conflicts. This has implications for the health of the citizens in the conflict areas. Also, the adverse effects of violent ethno-religious conflicts on women and girls' reproductive and sexual health cannot be overemphasized. This is because their psychological, reproductive and overall well-being is often greatly compromised during violent conflicts.

Violent ethno-religious conflicts tend to increase the risks of sexual violence on women and girls; rape and sexually transmitted diseases. Aside from this, health facilities are greatly disrupted during violent conflicts. The specific experience of women and girls in violent conflicts is linked to their status in societies. As noted in paragraph 135 of the Beijing Platform for Action, "while entire communities suffer the consequences of armed conflict and terrorism, women and girls are particularly affected because of their status in society and their sex."

During violent ethno-religious conflict, severe mental and social stress can be caused by deaths, separation and loss of family and friends; loss of home and social environment; exposure to violence, including witnessing or directly experiencing rape, torture and the killing of friends or relatives. So also the weakening or severing of family and community bonds, networks and material deprivation. Another major social effect of ethno-religious conflicts is the displacement of women and girls as internally displaced persons. In conflict situations, adults too need protection and are therefore, less able to support and defend their families.

5.2 FACTORS AFFECTING THE ROLE OF THE MASS MEDIA REPORTAGE ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

So far, this study has shown the effects of ethno-religious conflicts on various areas of the people's lives. The study has previously brought to the fore the fact that the mass media has crucial roles to play in the overall interest of the society, especially in times of violent ethno-religious conflicts such that has plagued this country for the past three decades. Because of these central roles of the mass media in the society and especially to the unity, stability, socio-economic/political development of Nigeria and in this instance peace building in times of conflict, the study equally examined the media codes of ethics that are supposed to serve as a guide in the discharge of these enormous responsibilities. This study has discovered that there are several factors that hinder the mass media from performing their roles responsibly as expected. Some of these factors are discussed in the next subsections.

5.2.1 Ownership Factors

The debate on the influence of media ownership on the content of mass media has been raging among scholars over the years. Various studies have shown that ownership influence affects how the mass media cover stories. The said influence may

take various forms such as direct censorship and coercion of editorial staff. The fact is that all over the world there seem to be a connection between ownership and the editorial stance of media organisations.

Ownership is one of the central factors that determines how the mass media perform their roles in any society, because as the popular saying goes “he who pays the piper dictates the tune.” Therefore, in practical terms, scholars, especially those from the Marxist perspective do not subscribe to the notion that it is possible to have a neutral media anywhere in the world. According to Karl Marx:

The class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it (qtd in Curran et al. 22).

Karl Marx argues further that the mass media simply disseminate the ideas and world views of the ruling class, and deny or defuse alternative ideas. No matter the benevolence of the government, no matter the democratic principles of the society and no matter the advancement of any society, the mass media are usually subjected to some form of control from their proprietors. It is the ownership pattern that determines the management of any media organisation because all media organizations are set up to promote certain objectives. This position from the onset challenges the objectivity theory of the liberal school. The mass media according to the Marxist school, has a class character and that is to defend the interest of the dominant class – owners of capital. The media exists to defend business interests, political interests, ideological interests or ethno-religious interests of their owners. It cannot do otherwise, for to do that, will lead to a clash of interests which will eventually determine the continuous existence of the media organization. Media

owners define the overall editorial policy, house style and the mission of the media organization which is usually guided and tailored towards the attainment of such objectives.

Media owners can also influence the outcome of media outputs by hiring and firing editors of the media organisations. Most times media owners influence is reflected in the deferential behaviour of media managers and the self-censoring of the journalist. In this case reporters and editors are selected and retained based on how well their works reflect the interests and needs of their employers. Thus a radical reporter and a more mainstream one both of the same skills and abilities would have very different careers within the media industry. Unless the radical reporter tone down their copy, they are unlikely to see it printed unedited or unchanged.

Thus the structure within the media organisation will tend to discourage radical viewpoints, encouraging an acceptance of the status quo in order to further a career. This selection process ensures that owners do not need to order editors or reporters on what to do to be successful. They will have to understand the values of their employers. A typical case is when Mr Labaran Maku was sacked from Champion newspapers when he published a news analysis on the then government of General Sani Abacha.

Therefore, the fact remains that there is no country in the world where the media enjoy absolute freedom. What cannot be denied is that the degree of freedom enjoyed by the media varies from one country to the other. Bilkisu Yusuf re-echoes this position when she submits that all over the world “...no sane newspaper proprietor would sink millions to establish a newspaper and employ editorial staff that could afford to ignore his goals in its coverage of news all in the name of press freedom” (252).

This position was clearly exhibited in the media reportage of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria in the past three decades as shown in chapter four of this study. Here the media examined showed partisan tendency towards the ethnic, religious and political inclinations of media owners. We also saw instances where media organizations did champion the interest of proprietors to the detriment of the interest of the general public as shown in the report of the *Nigeria Standard*, the *Daily Trust* newspapers among others. The foreign media were not left out as they equally showed their subjectivity in reporting mostly only one side of the conflicts.

5.2.2 Religious Factors

Nigeria unarguably, is one of the most pluralistic countries in the world. Religiously, ethnically, socially, ideologically, economically and otherwise, plurality can be seen. This factor of pluralism is crucial to the pattern of reportage of news by the mass media in Nigeria as was established in chapter four of this study. In table 3 of this study we saw that given the multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural nature of Nigeria, the mass media were not neutral in their reportage of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria during the period under study.

The mass media according to the liberal school, by its nature and as the fourth estate of the realm constitute an enormously powerful tool for the shaping of any modern society. This enormous power however, carries with it an equally grave burden of responsibilities for the practitioners, that of using the instruments at their disposal for the promotion of truth, justice, mutual respect, peace, non-violence and human solidarity. Thus, the fact remains that the complex dynamic of the modern mass media as a double edged sword places an enormous burden of responsibilities on practitioners.

Apart from the fact that factors of ethnicity, economy, political affiliation do affect the patterns of media reportage of ethno-religious conflicts, religious influence of the media owners and editors or reporters exert much more influence on the media. A Christian journalist working in a Christian owned media outfit cannot but be in favour of his religion when covering religious crisis that involves his religion and another. So also, a Muslim journalist working in a Muslim owned media organization will certainly consciously or unconsciously be biased in favour of his religion - Islam and against the other religion.

Cyril Imo has buttressed this conflict of interest on the media professionals when he states that:

...when we consider the activities of the journalist who at a given time maintains a set of religious convictions and persuasions,...how can he report facts without distorting the views and doctrines of the other religion which he is not part of it? It therefore, becomes necessary for the media to search for a ground for reporting that does justice to religious belief and recognize the multi-religious nature of contemporary societies (8).

The task of the mass media in a multi-religious society therefore, according to Cyril Imo (8) becomes more demanding, because they need to target peoples of different religious groups. This is because according to him, the reporter who belongs to one religion or the other faces not only the problem of objectivity, but the problem of neutrality as well (9). Imo further posits that the pursuit of truth by journalist may not pose any problem if it has to do with reporting political, economic and social events. However, when it comes to religion, the story is different. During the analysis in chapter four, this fact was proved that religious and ethnic affiliations of media

owners and editors or reporters did influence their pattern of reportage of the various crises examined.

5.2.3 Political Factors

There are several ways by which those who wield political power can control the mass media in any society. This can be through repressive legislation, heavy taxation, direct or indirect control of essential production inputs, rough treatment of media workers, issuing of death threats and in some extreme cases assassination of media workers (e.g Dele Giwa), censorship and closure of media houses (e.g *the Punch*, *the Daily Concord*, *OGBC*, Abeokuta during the Abacha regime) or establishing their own media organizations. In addition to the occupational hazards to which media workers are exposed under authoritarian regimes, are pressures emanating from the politicians. Journalists are sometimes forced to protect divergent political goals and interests especially of their proprietors that often run counter to the ethics of their profession.

In order to advance their political interests, many politicians and even governments set up media organizations to champion their causes. For instance, Mr. Charles Sharp, a Briton, who was given the responsibility of setting up the *New Nigerian Newspapers* by the then Premier of the Northern Region, Sir. Ahmadu Bello, says:

The creation of the New Nigerian was a political act. By 1963, the old regional government of Northern Nigeria was aware that it was losing the propaganda war in Nigeria. Northern politicians had political awareness that is in every bit as keen as their opponents in the South. But they lacked the means to communicate their political philosophy, not only

to their growing band of supporters, but also to potential supporters in other parts of the country (Kukah 67 & 68).

From the above, it is clear that the mass media could be an effective tool in the hands of politicians who use it to achieve their political interests. It is not surprising therefore, that the mass media in Nigeria is being courted by those in power who use it for both political and religious ends. Newspapers like the defunct the *National Concord*, the *Nigeria Pilot*, the *Nigerian Tribune*, the *Compass*, *The Sun*, the *Nation* and many others are all owned by politicians to champion the political interests of their owners.

5.2.4 Globalization Factors

Globalization as a powerful process is a phenomenon that has invaded all areas of human existence today and so the mass media is not left out of the influence of globalization. The mass media is also a powerful tool of globalisation. Through the mass media people across cultures, races are connected with ease hence the popular saying that “the entire world has become a global village.”

Another dimension to look at the issue of globalisation is within the media context itself. Here, the technologically advanced countries of the world dominate the media at the expense of Third World countries. This domination gives rise to imbalance in the flow of information between the rich and the poor countries. This imbalance in news circulation between developed and Third World Countries has been a subject of debate among scholars for a long time now. This imbalance may occur **at** different levels, but of concern to us here is between what is 'good news' and 'bad' news, that is news of catastrophes, failures, conflicts, setbacks, famines and wars.

To stem the imbalance, the New World Information and Communication Order was recommended by UNESCO as the way forward. The big four international news agencies- Reuters, American Associated Press (AP), United Press International and Agence France Press currently define news to the global community courtesy of globalization technology. The production and diffusion of the media by advanced countries to the detriment of Third World Countries has led to the concept of “media imperialism.” By this trend, Third World Countries in the views of Giddens (545) are “held to be especially vulnerable because they lack resources with which to maintain their own cultural independence.”

The concept of media dependency presupposes the fact that developing nations often depend on developed nations in terms of consumption of mass media messages. There is no gainsaying the fact that developed nations define news and control the minds of diverse peoples with their global media coverage. By doing this, they set the agenda for the people, dictate the pace of civilization and initiate new ways of life. Responses in the international media to the reportage of ethno-religious conflicts during the period under study in Nigeria were laced with despair that yet another African state had succumbed to the scourge of conflict. The ethnic and religious differences in the country were cited above all else as the major explanation.

According to Augustine Enahoro, due to the fact that the context of information is largely produced and distributed by the developed countries “... the image of the developing countries is frequently false and distorted. More serious still is this false image, harmful to their inner balance, is presented to the developing countries themselves” (22 &37).

As far as the international media are concerned, Africa is synonymous with war, coups, poverty, malaria, famine, social-religious and political instability, corruption, genocides, sex trade among others (Enahoro 28). As a result therefore, as far as these international media are concerned, the only positive news about Third World Countries is the activities of the Europeans in their midst. The rest are about wars, famine, natural and man-made disasters, coups de' tat and corruption among others. This informed the pattern of conflict reports which the international media organizations reported the ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria in the past three decades as examined in chapter four of this study.

The summary of this line of argument is that the mass media all over the world have a philosophy. A philosophy is usually encapsulated in the mission statement, which is basically about the objectives and goals. In other words the pattern of news reportage of the international news media has to do with their philosophy; socio-economical or ideologically. They do not appear to differ significantly from the local media in their performances. This of course confirmed the position of the critical theory which says that the mass media all over the world cannot be neutral.

5.2.5 Professional Factors

Journalists often claim that their own biases and the pressures from advertisers and media owners do not affect their work because of their professional norm of objectivity. Journalistic objectivity has two components. The first has to do with the fact that journalists should not overtly express their own views, evaluations, or beliefs. The second involves presenting the views of both sides of a controversy without favouring one side. The doctrine of journalistic objectivity ensures a certain

degree of autonomy to journalists and freedom from regulation to media organisations.

However, news reporting involves judgements about what is a good story, who will be interviewed for it, what questions will be asked, which parts of those interviews will be published or broadcast, what facts are relevant and how the story is written. Which of the observations confronting the reporter will be ignored? Which of the facts noted will be included in the story? Which of the reported events will become the first paragraph? Which story will be prominently displayed on the front page and which buried inside or discarded? The Mass media not only report the news, they also literally make the news (Lee Martin and Solomon Norman¹⁶).

Editorial boards of media houses decide what constitutes news, sometimes with pressure from external forces like interest groups, ownership pattern, ethnic-origin of the reporters or publishers or religious affiliations of the reporters or media owners. It would therefore, be presumptuous to claim that the editorial judgment of a newspaper is solely the view of the editor. While it has been established that public policies and the political climate are crucial variables which dictate the success of the mass media in performing their duty, theories of the media revolve around two opposing views. According to Bilikisu Yusuf (22), one theory attributes an independent existence and influence to the media, while another states that the media is subservient to diverse pressure groups, yet amply under control of the piper proprietor who dictates the tune. To Yusuf, Alfred Opubor subscribes to this theory when he asserts that the media need not be "objective" neither does he believe that they indeed can be so. The media, according to Opubor,

...cannot provide 'the truth' on any but the most trivial or simple issues. So the goals of objectivity and truthfulness are mirages and red herrings. However, the media can attempt to be comprehensive in their approach to reporting and analysis of events. Such comprehensiveness is a pre-requisite to justice in a pluralistic society such as ours. To attempt to be comprehensive is to attempt to be democratic because it involves considering the possibility of alternative sources or interpretation and taking them into account while not necessarily accepting them (qtd in Yusuf 22).

According to Nnaemeka

...all media operate within an ideological context. The choice of the media to cover an event rather than another in the same national environment, the emphasis and interpretations they give to events so selected are all conditioned by ideological factors albeit the cultural perspectives and value orientations (5).

Nnaemeka's emphasis is on the selectivity traits of the mass media. This proposition points to the fact that objectivity is eroded even from the very choice of the events the media decides to cover and the emphasis given to the coverage of such events.

Another major factor is the fact that there is a paradigm shift in the traditional way media professionals define news and conflict sensitive journalism practice. The new trend lays more emphasis on the media doing all it could to promote peace even if it entails suppressing facts in order to maintain peace for the interest of the larger society. This new focus is still lacking in most media training in Third World Countries like Nigeria. Until this is realised and emphasised in media training institutions, the media will continue to report conflict the way they report everyday news events. This was proven in the analysis in chapter four of this study.

5.2.6 Economic Factors

The financing of the media is dependent on the ownership whether government or private enterprise. In Third World Countries like Nigeria, government gives subvention to its media houses, even when such media organisations still source funds from other sources. As such, whether ownership is government or private, they can exercise the power at their disposal to put both financial and political pressure on such media organisations to conform to the policies and philosophy of the proprietors. Also, the technological equipment used for production by the media are very expensive to come by, especially for private proprietors and so limit the reach of most media organizations in Nigeria.

Apart from that, maintaining offices and reporters in all nooks and crannies of Nigeria for effective coverage of events and news stories is not easy for media organizations because of the cost implications. This has led many media establishments to rely on freelancers or stringers who are paid based on the number of their stories published. This method does not only lead some of them to send as many stories as they can cook up even if they are not verified, but makes some of them to churn out stories without minding the adverse effects of the story on the larger society. Also, lack of adequate remuneration and protection for media practitioners by the media organisations often lead to the suppressing of facts and succumbing to collection of gratification in order for the reporters to have their ends met or pay for transportation and facilities for sending their stories.

One of the main businesses of the media is to sell audiences to advertisers. Advertisers thus acquire a kind of *de facto* licensing authority, since without their support the media would cease to be economically viable and it is affluent audiences

that get advertisers interested. As Herman, Edward and Chomsky, Noam have observed,

As regards electronic media, in addition to "discrimination against unfriendly media institutions, advertisers also choose selectively among programs on the basis of their own principles. Large corporate advertisers on television will rarely sponsor programs that engage in serious criticisms of corporate activities (16).

Accordingly, large corporate advertisers do not normally sponsor programmes that contain serious criticisms of their activities. This means that media establishments realize that such publications or programmes will not sell and would have to be carried at a financial sacrifice, and that, in addition, they may offend powerful advertisers. More generally, as regards electronic media, advertisers will not sponsor programmes with serious complexities and disturbing controversies that will not further their business interests.

Also, political discrimination is sometimes structured into advertising allocations by wealthy companies with an emphasis on people with money to buy. In addition, many companies will always refuse to do business with ideological "enemies" and those whom they perceive as damaging their business or political interests. This has had the effect of placing radical papers at a serious disadvantage. Without access to advertising revenue, even the most popular paper will fold or price itself out of the market. This has equally encouraged self censor-ship by media owners in order to remain in business.

5.3 SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF THE EFFECTS OF MASS MEDIA REPORTAGE ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

For over three decades that Nigeria and Northern Nigerian in particular was engulfed in incessant ethno-religious conflicts the effects of these conflicts on national development have been enormous. These persistent ethno-religious conflicts retard development in all ramifications especially in the northern part of this country.

In January, 2012, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in its publication titled “Nigeria Poverty Profile 2010” published a report concerning poverty indices in various states in Nigeria from 1980 to 2010. The *Vanguard* newspaper of Monday 10th June, 2013 in a headline titled “93.9% Nigerians Poor– NBS,” published a report by Mr Yemi Kale, the Statistician-General of the Federation in which he stated that the poverty figure of 69 per cent in 2010 is higher than the 54 per cent recorded in 2004. According to him

...the North-West and North East geo-political zones recorded the highest poverty rates in the country with 77.7 per cent and 76.3 per cent respectively. Kale said the South-West geo-political zone recorded the lowest with 59.1 per cent (1).

He further stated that among the states from the North-West and North- East geo-political zones, Sokoto had the highest poverty rate with 86.4 per cent in 2010 against 95 per cent recorded by Jigawa in 2004. He said the figure was higher than the 54 per cent recorded in 2004. According to Kale:

Among the geo-political zones, the North-West and North-East recorded the highest rates at 70 per cent and 69 per cent respectively, while the South-West

had the least at 49.8 per cent. “Sokoto had the highest at 81.2 per cent, while Niger had the least at 33.8 per cent during the review period (5).

The NBS report shows that whereas there is a general increase in poverty levels all over the nation, the poverty level of the states in the northern block is higher within the period under study when compared with other states of the federation. This too coincided with the period of crises recorded in the Northern part of the country. This shows that the nexus between violent conflicts, lack of development, increases in poverty rate, crimes and further violent conflict is strong and goes in both directions. This is because, violent conflict retards development and lack of development substantially increases proneness to violent conflict and poverty.

Violent ethno-religious conflicts have adverse effects on national development of Nigeria especially the economy of the northern states in the past three decades. At the Northern Peace Conference held in Kaduna in 2004, Isawa Elaigwu, president of the Jos-based Institute of Social Research, put the number of crises between 1980 and 2004 at 50 (Demola Abimboye 1). The region has recorded so many other cases of ethno-religious conflicts since then.

Gidan Bege a non-governmental organization which specializes in Muslim/Christian community relations in the West African sub-region estimates that between 1976 and today, Nigeria has lost over 100,000 of its citizens to violent crises while billions of Naira worth of property have been destroyed in the process (Demola Abimboye 1).

This situation of adverse effects of ethno-religious conflicts was re-echoed by the Northern Governors Forum on 1st October, 2012 in Minna where the Governors

raised the alarm that the incessant crises especially the Boko Haram activities were “crippling the North’s economy.” The Governors Forum also warned that:

...the North would continue to witness disintegration following incessant ethnic and religious differences if issues relating to religious extremism, intolerance and mutual respect were not tackled by the leaders and people of the region (Adelani Adepegba 1).

In order to forestall this economic, social and political situation and put a stop to the incessant killings and wanton destruction of property, the Northern States Governors Forum, also inaugurated a 40 member committee on “reconciliation, healing and security.” The then Chairman of the Forum and Governor of Niger State, Mu’azu Babangida Aliyu, stressed that the recurring insecurity challenges in the north and around the country posed a serious threat to national stability, unity and development and charged the committee to ensure that peace and development in the North was not compromised.

According to Aliyu, the decision to constitute the 40 member committee was borne out of the deep concern of the forum over recurring incidents of violence and wanton destruction of lives and property, which “have almost crippled the economy of the northern states and paralyzed socio-political activities to the detriment of unity and national development” (Adepegba 1).

Concerned about happenings in the region, the Federal Government, in February 2012 (Premium Times 1) warned that religious extremists would destroy the region if urgent steps were not taken to curtail them. The then Information Minister, Mr. Labaran Maku, who spoke on behalf of the government, had said the region

needed peace and stability more than any other region in the country, particularly because the region was clearly lagging behind in terms of infrastructure, education and other development indices, declaring that the North's economy was on the verge of collapse.

In a paper delivered by former Governor Isa Yuguda of Bauchi state during the North East Economic Summit on 9th December, 2011, he re-echoed this issue of the adverse effects of conflict on the northern economy. According to him:

It is bad enough to lose standard in education, and worse to lose political power; but to lose economic power, and especially for the very reason it is lost, should be intolerable and a matter of great concern. Many factors are responsible for development and the decline in the vibrancy of the private sector in the north...When the going was good the North itself was not immune to the scourge of the Dutch disease that has afflicted Nigeria. This disease, otherwise known as 'resource curse,' ensures that there is poverty in the midst of plenty, which in the case of the North, is made worse by the occurrence of conflict...Yet, according to the UNDP's Human Development Index, Nigeria stands 151st out of 174 countries of the world and is 22nd out of 45 African countries... According to World Bank figures, Nigeria is behind the world with the highest rate of illiteracy; and the North is far behind southern states in the nation's unenviable position (*ThisDay* online 1).

Of the ten states in Nigeria with the highest incidence of poverty, eight are in the north, where more than three quarters of the people live below the poverty line. But whether religious, communal or political, the effect of violent conflicts had been the same. In their wake, thousands of lives had been lost, inter-religious harmony and

inter-ethnic trust had been shaken, and tension had risen as the security and law and order situation had deteriorated.

The violent ethno-religious conflicts that have engulfed the north in the past three decades have seriously undermined the conduct of business operations and have ruined the foundation of economic development of the region and Nigeria in general. Therefore, for development to take place investors must be brought back and their confidence restored with peaceful business environment.

For concrete analysis, this study will examine the following states as samples from the northern states. They are Kaduna which is the former capital of the entire Northern Region, Kano which is the largest and economic nerve centre of the entire north, Borno representing the base of the new crisis referred to as *Boko Haram* and Plateau State which has witnessed more ethno-religious crisis and representing the north central zone of the country.

The adverse effects of frequent ethno-religious conflicts on the economy, politics and social relations on Kaduna State and Kaduna town in the past three decades are quite enormous. Obviously, one of the legacy effects is hatred among the citizenry who were formerly living together. The 2000 Shariah riots in Kaduna is one major issue that marked a radical departure from cohabitation in the city. The living pattern was drastically altered as Christians and Muslims now live in separate areas of the town due to fear of the outbreak of another crisis. The Kaduna River, which demarcates Kaduna North from Kaduna South, provided a natural border for this division. After the crisis, most Christians living in Kaduna North relocated to the south of the town across the bridge, while many Muslims who were resident in the south relocated to the northern part of the city. (Demola Abimboye 12-14).

During the 19th Synod of the Anglican Church in Kaduna recently, the Bishop of Kaduna Diocese Rev. Josiah Idowu-Fearon, re-echoed the adverse effect of the incessant ethno-religious conflicts in the state and most recently the activities of Boko Haram. He admitted that frequent ethno-religious conflicts have destroyed the economic, social and religious lives of the people of Kaduna State stressing that businesses have dropped and the standard of living has also dropped drastically. According to him:

The entire North-east of the country, Jos and Kano are almost completely isolated economically, socially and politically. The understanding by many in this northern part today is that Kaduna, the “Heart Beat” of the North is the next target of this group that is bent on this mission of self-destruction (1).

Kano State, reputed to be the hub of business and commercial activities in the entire 19 northern states of Nigeria, has been greatly affected adversely by the incessant ethno-religious conflicts since the *maitatsine* riots in the 80s. Kano State is the largest commercial centre in northern Nigeria and it provides a stable and continuous market for both manufactured and semi processed goods. The volume of trading activities conducted on daily basis in Kano markets signified the state’s great potentials as a market for various products.

As a result of the frequent violent ethno-religious conflicts that Kano has witnessed over the past three decades and the daunting security challenges presently threatening the entire state, so many hitherto flourishing industries that provided employment for Nigerian youths and that boosted the state’s economy, today have closed shops (*The Sun* 1).

The security challenges have impacted negatively on both the private and public sectors of the state's economy, as many business men and traders have relocated their businesses from the city. So many Igbo traders and businessmen in the city who engaged in both small and medium scale businesses are reported to have fled to Abuja and the South-East states due to the growing insecurity posed by incessant ethno-religious conflicts and recently the activities of Boko Haram.

The indigenous business communities in the city especially the textile merchants are not faring better as they count their losses because their customers who used to patronize them no longer go to Kano for fear of insecurity. The Durbar Festival in Kano which used to attract local and international tourists may have been cancelled in 2012 due to security situations. The Kano State government lost huge revenue from this singular decision (*ThisDay* 1).

The persistent crisis has forced some of the crop farmers and pastoralists to abandon their lands and relocate to the neighbouring countries of Niger, Chad and Cameroun. In March, 2012 the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) said about 65 per cent of northern farmers migrated to the South because of the insecurity they faced. The agency warned that the country faced a famine by the end of 2013 because most of the small-scale farmers and mechanised farmers in the Nigeria's northeast were threatened by terrorist attacks. According to NEMA

...the attacks on these farmers who produce beans, onions, pepper, maize, rice, livestock and catfish in the Lake Chad area for the southern states, have forced them to migrate since the Boko Haram insurgency broke out in Borno State in July 2009. (Demola 5)

A countrywide food crisis, therefore, looms, considering NEMA's disclosure. Incessant bombings and other violent attacks on local markets pose grievous risks to northern farmers, livestock breeders and dealers in farm produce, forcing them to migrate to new locations far from their farmlands, while placing additional burden on the transportation of food and farm produce to other states. Consequently, prices of foodstuff have skyrocketed in all parts of the country.

The Programme Co-ordinator with the Social and Economic Rights Action Centre (SERAC), alleged that women, children, youths, the elderly, and other vulnerable individuals and groups have all suffered disproportionately from terror-linked molestation in the ancient city of Kano. According to her, the fear of stigma, compounded by religious prejudices has encouraged a culture of silence and unwillingness of victims to speak out and name culprits. Also the frequent curfews being imposed on Kano have severely limited people's access to healthcare and productive economic opportunities.

In Maiduguri, Borno State, the frequent insecurity challenges in the state have weighed down seriously on commercial and business activities in the city as many businesses have crumbled while many people have fled the state. A typical case is the Maiduguri Monday Market, one of the biggest markets in the city which has been seriously affected as hundreds of shop owners, especially Southerners are said to have closed their businesses and left the city. About half of the 10, 000 shops and stalls in the market were said to have been abandoned by traders who have fled the city (John Shiklam 1).

Banks and their customers are presently operating under difficult situation and have reduced their business hours due to the state of insecurity in the state. Borno

State Commissioner of Information, Mr. Inuwa Bwala, acknowledged this sad development when he admitted that it will take the state many years to recover from the current predicament it has found itself. According to the Commissioner:

...it is only natural that when you have such a situation as we have now, it will affect the economic fortunes, especially where people go out to do business under the atmosphere of fear. So there is no doubt that the crisis has taken its toll on our resources, on our business and on our economy. It will take us a very long time, not less than 20 years to recover and get to the position we were before the crisis started. "It is our prayers that those who were scared away from Borno State out of fear, those who closed shops out of fear, those who fled in the height of the crisis and the general apathy among business men to invest in Borno State, should do a rethink and come back (Shiklam 5).

So many investors have either fled the state capital Maiduguri or abandoned their businesses due to insecurity. For example, Igbo traders, who constituted the majority in trading and other businesses, were forced to leave the state. Already, Gomboru Market, Baga and Monday Markets, which attract foreigners from Chad, Niger and Cameroon Republic, have remained deserted as many stalls and shops are closed (Shiklam 5).

Another area of the economy affected by the incessant crisis is the telecommunication industry. At present, most telecommunication companies have relocated their North-East offices from Maiduguri. Because of the security challenges the then Inspector General of Police, Muhammed Abubakar, ordered that telecommunication installations across the north of the country should be placed on 24-hour surveillance. Abubakar's directives came after Boko Haram, destroyed an

MTN office and telecommunication masts in Maiduguri, the Borno state capital on September 8, 2012.

This development has compounded the problem of youth restiveness following the sack of many youths by the relocating firms and has slowed down business transactions in the area. Likewise, with the outright ban of commercial motorcycle (Okada) riders, the transportation system in the state has been made more difficult and those whose means of livelihood depends on it are rendered unemployed.

The cattle market in Gomboru popularly called *Kasuwan Shanu*, has remained a-no-go area, as series of attacks and killings are daily affairs in the market. The Baga Market popularly reputed for the sale of fish all over Nigeria has been under the seizure and control of *Boko Haram* for quite some time now. For some times now there have been uproar all over the world because of the destruction of lives and property in a series of clashes between the government forces and the Boko Haram. At the famous auto spare parts market along Post Office Road in Maiduguri, there is a decline in commercial activities. This is because before the *Boko Haram* uprising in the state, the market was a beehive of activities. But now, there is dearth of motor spare parts in the market and the entire Borno state because some traders mainly Igbos have closed their shops while others have left the town. The incessant crises and exodus of non-indigenes have therefore, heightened unemployment and created ready-made work force for further conflicts (*ThisDay* 87).

The persistent ethno-religious conflicts in Plateau State since the first major conflict started in 2001 have had enormous negative consequences not only on the economy but also on the social and political well being of the state. Plateau State has been plagued by series of crises since 2001 leading to the massive loss of lives and

property. Before the September 7th, 2001 Jos crisis, Plateau State was known as the “home of peace, and tourism,” with representations of many ethnic nationalities and religions in Nigeria residing in the state peacefully. At the height of the incessant crises in the state, the former president of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo in justifying the declaration of the State of Emergency in Plateau State on 18th May, 2004 stated among other things that:

Violence has reached unprecedented levels and hundreds have been killed with much more wounded or displaced from their homes on account of their ethnic or religious identification. Schooling for children has been disrupted and interrupted; business lost billions of naira and property worth much more destroyed (np).

The President stated further that visitors and investors had fled or were fleeing the state and that the neighbouring states had had their economies and social life disrupted and dislocated by the influx of internally displaced persons (np). The President further stressed that the Federal Government and the neighbouring states to Plateau State were incurring huge expenses in managing the socio-political and economic consequences of the incessant violent conflicts in Jos city and other parts of Plateau State (np).

The economic consequences of ethno-religious conflicts in Plateau State was re-echoed by the report of the participant of Senior Executive Course No. 26 of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) Kuru in their report of 2004 when they noted that:

...In addition to the irreplaceable loss of lives, losses in terms of property (goods, houses, business premises) have not yet been fully ascertained. Some

survivors have permanently lost all they labored for in their lives. As a result, one can safely argue that the aggregate of such instances negatively impact on the overall economy of these communities and by extension, the rest of the country; new armies of the unemployed, the destitute and highly aggrieved are added in the streets with its attendant consequences. Victims are also generally made and belonging to the economically active segments of the society (2).

The persistent crises in Plateau State have caused a lot of losses ranging from those of human lives to loss of hundreds of millions of naira worth of property. For instance in the area of tourism, the State and Jos in particular was formerly a tourists destination for both local and foreign tourists until the recurrent crises that rocked the state since 2001 and made it difficult for intending visitors. These crises have taken their toll on the state's tourism industry. Thus the state once renowned as the haven of hospitality with its European weather and food is now deserted and demarcated along religious lines. This sad situation has not only affected the tourism industry but also the entire economy of the state.

The most difficult damage in this situation is the breach of trust in the community as people now prefer to live in segregated communities where they feel that their lives and property could be safe. The frequent crises have caused damage to the peaceful cohabitation known in the Jos city before the crises began. Christians can no longer find it comfortable to build houses where Muslims are predominant and vice versa. For instance Rikkos area was before the 2001 crisis a huge construction and developing area where both Muslims and Christians owned houses and plots, but the 2001 ethno-religious conflicts in Jos has adversely affected this settlement pattern.

In Jos today, people do not just take accommodation of their fancy in any part of the town. They have to do extensive research to find out whether the area is safe.

For a Christian, only an area that is inhabited by Christians is considered safe. Today one can hardly find Muslims in areas like Jenta Adamu, Jenta Mangoro, Apata Jenta, Gada Biu, Rukuba Road, Angwan Rukuba and one can hardly find Christians in areas of the town like Angwan Rimi, Angwan Rogo, Gangare, Line Zarna and Ali Kazaure. Up till now, people in Jos are careful about places they visit. It is unwise for a Christian to visit a predominantly Muslim enclave late in the night. So also Muslims would not visit areas of Christians at night.

Livestock play a very important role in the national economy because as Fetuga argues “it has consistently contributed 5-6% of the national GDP and 15-20% of the total agricultural GDP over the years.” (Mohammed, A.S. 2) Also, livestock provide a source of employment and income for a large proportion of the rural population as well as an important source of protein in the local diet. According to Fetuga the current estimated livestock population comprises about 15.6 million cattle, 28.69 million sheep, 45.26 million goats, 5.25 million pigs, 118.59 million horses, camels and donkeys. (Fetuga, B. L. A. 161-181).

The availability of pasture as a result of the favourable rainfall, abundance of sources of water supply and the temperate climate of Plateau State makes it conducive for livestock rearing. The livestock sub-sector generates revenue for Plateau State through its many diverse upstream and downstream enterprises. For example Livestock trade tax, slaughter fees paid in government – owned abattoirs, Hides and Skins Buyers License fees and clinical treatment fees for livestock at government veterinary clinics are lucrative sources of revenue.

However, since the on-set of ethno-religious conflicts in Plateau State in 2001 a number of Fulani community leaders and herders were killed. A large number of livestock were burnt or killed. As a result a large number of the cattle herders along

with their animals fled from the State to the neighbouring states. The most significant symbol of the commercial importance of the city is the Jos Central Ultra Modern Market. This monumental edifice was built with so much amount of money in the late 70s and commissioned in 1985. It had a capacity of 4,290 stalls of various sizes, a Parking Space that could comfortably accommodate over 300 cars, 60 trailers and over 200 buses at a time. This ultra modern market was gutted by fire on 12th February, 2002, a few months after the 7th September, 2001 major ethno-religious conflict in Jos. Several billions of naira worth of wares were razed in the inferno.

In the area of education, violent ethno-religious conflicts have been a major obstacle to the development of education in Plateau state as many schools were shut down during crises periods. This of course have affected school calendars in the state and Jos city in particular especially that of University of Jos. One other effect was the killing of some Igbo traders at Dilimi area of Jos city which led to the Igbos deserting the entire Dilimi area with some relocating out of the state. These incessant violent ethno-religious conflicts experienced in the state have adversely affected practically every aspect of the development of the state and the nation as a whole.

From the foregoing, it can be concluded that incessant ethno-religious conflicts have adversely affected economic, political and social relations and have undermined national development. For over three decades now, the northern states have contended with violent ethno-religious conflicts on a regular basis which have produced a catalogue that resulted in an estimated loss of so many lives and unquantifiable psychological and mental damage to national development. Incessant violent ethno-religious conflicts affect people's economic, political and social incentives.

These conflicts over the years no doubt have scared investors from investing in the economy of Nigeria because conflict prone environments are not suitable for investments. Incessant ethno-religious conflicts too have affected the nation's income and so much man hours that would have been used for productive purposes have been lost during violent conflicts in several parts of the country especially the northern parts of the country. The attendant negative effects of these conflicts cannot be overemphasized including the increase of unemployment which may have led to the increase in the rate of criminality all over the nation. Most of the Northern States of the country have continued to wallow in economic and educational backwardness as a result of the wave of ethno-religious crisis ravaging the region in the past three decades.

This position was re-enforced by the former Governor of Central Bank Sanusi Lamido Sanusi when in the *Punch* newspaper of 3rd October, 2012 admitted that Nigerian economy was becoming increasingly vulnerable to the disruptions caused by crises pointing out that only a sound, stable and robust business environment could lead to economic growth, increased per capita income and enhances the quality of the lives of the people. The Central Bank Governor warned that the spate of crises in Nigeria was an indication that our business environment was becoming more and more threatened and there was need to safeguard lives and property and ensure stability and growth in our economic system.

With the spate of incessant bombings and destructions of the fabrics of the already poor northern economic base, it is consistent with wisdom to imply that Capital flight from the north is inevitable. With this trend of events the poor states of the north will further be impoverished with time. The north is on a downward slope

and it might take several generations to bounce back. Whether these ethno-religious conflicts take place in the East, West, South South or the North does not matter, the economy of the entire country is adversely affected by these crises.

On the effect of conflict and insecurity on the economy of Nigeria the Federal Government through the Minister of Information warned of the threats that the activities of *Boko Haram* posed to Nigeria's and her neighbours' economies, apart from the destruction of lives and infrastructure. The Minister of Information lamented the impact of the terror attacks by *Boko Haram* on northern Nigeria, saying that "its economy was on the brink of collapse." According to the Minister the region needed more peace to accelerate its development. He further stated that the attack on Kano was "an attack on not only the centre of commerce in the North but also Niger, Chad and northern Cameroun."

According to the Minister:

If a part of this country is in need of peace today, it is northern Nigeria. From all the statistics, we are still behind in infrastructure, in literacy level and in industrialisation. So, we need peace and this peace will only be made possible when all stakeholders are involved ...The attack on Kano is so significant because Kano has always been the commercial centre of Western Sudan for the past 500 years. Ever before the evolution of Nigeria, Kano was the centre of the economy of the North and the economy of Niger Republic. And it is the economy of Chad. It is the economy of northern Cameroun. So, when you destabilise peace in Kano, you threaten the foundation of economic and social well-being of all northerners (Information Nigeria 1).

Indeed, frequent incidences of ethno-religious conflicts in the North have adversely affected economic, political and social relations and have undermined national development. The then Niger State Governor Babangida Aliyu who doubled as the Chairman of Northern Governors Forum lamented that “the economy of the north has crumbled due to insecurity unleashed on the region by Boko Haram insurgence” (Mosadomi 48). The Governor further stated that there was urgent need to the revival of the Northern economy and job creation.

To buttress the seriousness of the effect of the crises and insecurity on national development, *The Guardian* newspaper of June 13, 2013 (Ade Ogidan 1) reported that Nigeria has been ranked 148th peaceful country in the world, making it one of the 14 most unsafe nations among the 162 that were assessed in this year’s Global Peace Index (GPI) carried out by the Sydney, Australia-based Institute for Economics and Peace. The yearly report usually takes into consideration the security issues prevailing in various economies, particularly the extent of conflicts and degree of militarisation. Nigeria’s low ranking among the peaceful nations around the globe may have been informed by the various crises witnessed in the country and more recently the *Boko Haram* saga in the north eastern part of the country and the pervading cases of kidnappings in several parts of the southern states.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This study has examined the mutual interactive effects of ethno-religious conflict and mass media in northern Nigeria and how the consequences of such relationships affect the development of both the northern part of the country and the nation as a whole. In doing this, the study relied mainly on secondary sources of data by critically analyzing some sample newspapers, magazines, radio, televisions, internet and news agencies reports during the period under study. The study also relied on some published books and journals to give adequate background to the topic under study. The study also extensively reviewed related and relevant literature on ethno-religious conflict, effects of ethno-religious conflict and the role of mass media on national development. In the process the study discovered gaps yet to be filled which among other things have to do with the role of the media in escalating or deescalating ethno-religious conflicts and the consequences of media reportage on national development.

As a background for critical analysis of the role and pattern of media reportage of these conflicts and its effects on the socio-economic development of Nigeria, the study elaborately chronicled and classified the major ethno-religious conflicts that took place between 1980 and 2011 into various categories. The purpose of this was to lay a sound foundation for the analysis of pattern and forms of media coverage in order to ascertain the role of the mass media on the various violent ethno-religious conflicts under study.

While analysing the mass media reportage of the various ethno-religious conflicts in the past three decades, the study found that the media reportage was

greatly influenced by ethno-religious, ownership, geographical and political-ideological tendencies to the detriment of the ethics guiding the profession. It was also discovered that the traditional pattern of viewing and reporting news cannot be adopted by media professionals when reporting ethno-religious conflicts. In the process it was also revealed that lack of sensitivity in media reportage of ethno-religious conflicts has adverse effects on the escalation of the conflicts which in turn affected national development.

This study, while examining the effects of these escalated conflicts from some states of the north established the enormous damage ethno-religious conflicts have done to their economy and Nigeria as a whole. This state of affairs was acknowledged by the Federal Government of Nigeria, government agencies like Central Bank of Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics and Northern States Governors Forum.

The study argues that bearing the influence of the mass media in mind, the media owe certain indisputable obligations to society- such obligations as encouraging the preservation of public peace, morality, and security for any meaningful development to take place. The study further argues that the principle of social responsibility is limited when it comes to ethno-religious conflict reportage which is a relatively new area in journalism practice in Third World Countries. Therefore, it requires a deep understanding of the nature and dynamics of ethno-religious conflict before the media professionals can be socially responsible and thus contribute to national development.

6.2 CONCLUSION

So far, attempts have been made to discuss the adverse effects of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria in the past three decades. This study concludes that

ethno-religious conflicts are protracted, widespread, complicated and dangerous forms of conflicts plaguing Nigeria today, especially the northern part of the country. These conflicts have lingered on for the past three decades without solutions in sight. The aftermath of these conflicts led to the destruction of lives and property, physical and mental devastation, deprivation and dislocation of many Nigerians.

The mass media's roles in escalating or deescalating these incessant conflicts have been questioned by scholars and non scholars alike. The result of this study shows that the general knowledge of journalism is not enough for most media professionals to report ethno-religious conflicts effectively. As a result, the consequence can be a reporting style that feeds on and repeats the worst stereotypes, the drama and the immediacy of conflict, and fuels their ignition into violence as the study has shown. The mass media therefore, can overcome many of the challenges of reporting ethno-religious conflicts when they understand the psychology and the emotion involved in ethnic and religious issues. Once the media practitioners are able to understand various issues and intricacies of ethno-religious conflicts, they will engage in objective and responsible reportage for a peaceful society which will lead to national development. Therefore, peaceful co-existence among adherents of various religions in Nigeria, especially Muslims and Christians, can best be promoted by the mass media for national development. National development on the other hand cannot take place in the face of incessant ethno-religious conflicts with their attendant destruction of lives and property. That is why all institutions in the society, especially the mass media should carry out their functions responsibly towards a peaceful society.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Bearing the findings of this study in mind and the reality of violent ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria in the past three decades and the attendant effects on national development, all institutions in Nigeria should perform their functions responsibly for national development. The mass media should do much more than reporting conflicts from a distance. The mass media must be involved in deliberate peace-making through their reportage for a peaceful society. Therefore, to ensure peace, unity and social equilibrium for national development in a pluralistic society like Nigeria, the study recommends the following:

- 1 Religious leaders should endeavour to give proper teachings and interpretations of their religious tenets and dogmas to their followers in order to avoid religious extremism and fundamentalism.
- 2 Because of globalization the world has become a global village. This has brought about the influx of extremist religious influences from outside into Nigeria. Government should monitor the influx of extremist religious literature and teachings that are capable of radicalizing our youths and thus making them prone to religious violence.
- 3 As a pluralistic society, the mass media while reflecting this plurality and diversity of opinions should report with sensitivity, ethno-religious issues that are capable of destabilizing and therefore affecting national development. Journalists handling religious bits should be made to acquire adequate knowledge of the major religions in Nigeria. They should note the basic beliefs and practices of the religions, especially Islam and Christianity. Taboos of these religions should be noted so as not to encroach on them like the case of *ThisDay* newspaper and Miss World controversy cited in this

study. The mass media need to avoid the use of gory pictures and sensational headlines and the use of inflammatory and derogatory language especially when reporting ethno-religious issues. For instance, “these are the bodies of the 300 Christians or Igbos killed in Kano,” instead of “these are the bodies of 300 people killed in Kano.”

- 4 International media organizations should engage more reporters on full time basis and not rely on stringers who are paid based on the number of stories published as they have done over the years.
- 5 Religious, political, ethnic and other leaders should stop using religion and ethnicity for their selfish ends to avoid ethno-religious conflict so as to ensure unity and national development.

CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

This study has made the following contributions to knowledge:

- 1 That there is a strong correlation between escalation and de-escalation of ethno-religious conflict by the nature of mass media reportage for national development.
- 2 That bearing the enormous power of the mass media, if this power is employed positively, it will certainly act as a good facilitator of the conflict resolution process. Therefore, in times of violent conflict, the media has an additional social responsibility regarding what to report, what not to report, and how to report.
- 3 The study has equally brought out the fact that issues of protracted incidences of violent ethno-religious conflicts have a very wide area of research in Nigeria and other Third World Countries. While much have been written on their causes or origins and the way forward, no serious attention is given to the

study of the effects of media reportage of ethno-religious conflicts and the implications for national development.

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