

## MORAL AND RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE: A PLURALISTIC NIGERIAN SOCIETY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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### ABSTRACT

*Pluralistic society is always characterized with diversity of beliefs and practices. What a group of people or faith beliefs to be ethical may be considered otherwise by another. The philosophical stand or religious conviction of a group may be pointing directly opposite to what another denounced, if this is not properly handle it will surely lead the society into disorder which will in turn infringe on human rights. Pluralistic society like Nigeria who has three main religions namely: Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion, 6 geo political zones with more than 371 tribes, 521 languages and 174 million people living within the same geographical zone with the mandate of political, economic and religious development that will position both the country and its citizens in a healthy and notable class among the countries of the world, the government must put some measurement in place such as code of conducts that states the human rights. It should be noted here that this paper shall focus and explain the view of tolerance in the three main religion consider to be licit in Nigeria, It is recommended among others that inter-faith dialogue in Nigeria need to take positive effects. The adherent of each religion should treat themselves equally. Also Leaders needs to emphasizes more on peace and tolerance to it adherent. Government should provide job opportunities'. Since morality cut across every sector in the society, there is need for the government to collaborate with Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in providing workshop, seminars, and symposium for the youth in society.*

### INTRODUCTION

Considering the effects of intolerance in the Nation as demonstrated by the emergence of the Niger-Delta Militant groups and Boko Haram menace that leads to insurgency in the nation which resulted to loss of lives and displacement of some people. Recently, the Punch Daily Newspaper(Fulani herdsmen's mindless Agatu killings, 2016) reported the attack of the Fulani herdsmen on the people of Agatu Local Government, Benue State. The Ebira people of Kogi State were also attacked by another groups of same ethnic group leaving about 300 farmers dead (Fulani attacks continue despite Government's investigation, 2016). If the trend continues

without provision of solution things can go out of hand and leads to war which will affect the development of this Nation.

This paper thereby aimed at considering the concept of tolerance in pluralistic society as the sustainable factor to societal development.

## **Conceptual framework**

### **Morals**

Moral is a term used to denote the system of values and norms which govern the social behavior in a group or society. (Turiel, 1983) Defined Moral as prescriptive judgments of justice, rights, and welfare pertaining to how people ought to relate to each other.” Looking at the above postulations on what moral is, it can be summarily defined as the study of what is thought to be right and what is generally done by a group, society, religion or a culture. In general, morals correspond to what actually is done in a society. Tolerance however is not an end but a means; it is the minimal essential quality of social relations that eschew violence and coercion. (UNESCO, 1994)

### **Religion**

In Social Sciences, there is no specific generally accepted definition of the word religion. However, the sociologists generally agree on the definition of religion base on two concepts: supernatural being and sacred phenomenon. Hence religion is defined as follows:

Religion is the basis of man’s behavioral attitude in the society, it is described as a recognition on the part of man, of a controlling super human power entitled to obedience, reference and worship; the feeling or the spiritual attitude of those recognizing such a controlling power with manifestation of such feeling in conduct (Oderinde, 2014). The encyclopedia Americana (1981) defines it as the pattern of belief and practice through which man communicates with or hopes to gain experience of that which lies behind the world of their ordinary experience.

Summarily, religion is a unified system of beliefs, idea and practices which have spiritual and moralistic orientation. It is a system of set of philosophies relative to sacred things- things set apart of forbidden, beliefs and practices which unite into a single community call.

### **Religious Tolerance**

(Emmanuel, 2003) Describes tolerance as the mutual understanding and cooperation between groups with different ethnicities, religions, political ideologies and economic status. It is seen as the basis for longer and deeper process of developing a culture of peace, it is the minimal essential quality of social relations that eliminate violence and coercion. This simply affirmed that tolerance is the pathway to peaceful life and community, without which national development can be attained. Religious tolerance however can be said to be ability of a religious group to appreciate and accept other religions' beliefs and practices without necessarily involve or practice it. It is respecting and relating with other peoples' religious beliefs and values (which is quite different from personal faith and beliefs), without enforcing personal interested religion on others who are not adherent followers.

### **Pluralistic Society**

Pluralistic society is a society where more than one ideology exists. It is a situation in which people of diverse persuasions co-exist and explore the richness of their different traditions for the benefit of the larger society of which they are members. Thomas Mason (1989) postulated that pluralistic society is a society characterized by expressive or active diversity, it is a society in which citizens can legally and publically hold multiple competing ethical views and are allowed to choose for themselves what ethical beliefs they wish to hold. This does not by any means negate the socially approved code of conduct that is generally accepted by such society, it however gives individual the privilege to express his idea or opinion under the generally accepted code of conduct. Nigeria is a typical example of pluralistic society due to various religious and cultural traditions that are represented in it with each making an incontrovertible mark.

### **Quran's View on Religious Tolerance**

Many mistakenly believe that Islam does not tolerate the existence of other religions present in the world. This article discusses some of the foundations the Prophet Muhammad himself laid in dealing with people of other faiths, with practical examples from his lifetime. Examples of religious tolerance for people of other faiths found in the constitution which the Prophet laid in

Medina. The Arabian Peninsula during the time of the Prophet was a region in which various faiths were present. There were Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, polytheists, and others not affiliated with any religion. When one looks into the life of the Prophet, one may draw on many examples to portray the high level of tolerance shown to people of other faiths.

In order to understand and judge this tolerance, one must look into the period in which Islam was a formal state, with the specific laws laid down by the Prophet in accordance with the tenets of religion. Even though one can observe many examples of tolerance shown by the Prophet in the thirteen years of his stay in Mecca, one may incorrectly think that it was only due to seeking to raise the profile of the Muslims and the social status of Islam and in general. For this reason, the discussion will be limited to the period which commenced with the migration of the Prophet to Medina, and specifically once the constitution was set.

### **The Saheefah**

The best example of the tolerance shown by the Prophet to other religions may be the constitution itself, called the ‘Saheefah’ by early historians. When the Prophet migrated to Medina, his role as a mere religious leader ended; he was now the political leader of a state, governed by the precepts of Islam, which demanded that clear laws of governance be laid out to ensure harmony and stability in a society which once had been distraught by decades of war, one which must ensure the peaceful coexistence of Muslims, Jews, Christians and polytheists. Due to this, the Prophet laid down a ‘constitution’ which detailed the responsibilities of all parties which resided in Medina, their obligations towards each other, and certain restrictions which were placed on each. All parties were to obey what was mentioned therein, and any breach of its articles was regarded as an act of treachery.

### **One Nation**

The first article of the constitution was that all the inhabitants of Medina, the Muslims as well as those who had entered the pact from the Jews, Christian, and idolaters, were **“one nation to the**

**exclusion of all others.”** All were considered members and citizens of Medina society regardless of religion, race, or ancestry. People of other faiths were protected from harm as much as the Muslims, as is stated in another article, **“To the Jews who follow us belong help and equity. He shall not be harmed nor his enemies be aided.”** Previously, each tribe had their alliances and enemies within and without Medina. The Prophet gathered these different tribes under one system of governance which upheld pacts of alliances previously in existence between those individual tribes. All tribes had to act as a whole with disregard to individual alliances. Any attack on other religion or tribe was considered an attack on the state and upon the Muslims as well. The lives of the practitioners of other religions in the Muslim society was also given protective status. The Prophet said: “Whoever kills a person who has a truce with the Muslims will never smell the fragrance of Paradise.” Since the upper hand was with the Muslims, the Prophet strictly warned against any maltreatment of people of other faiths. He said: “Beware! Whoever is cruel and hard on a non-Muslim minority, or curtails their rights, or burdens them with more than they can bear, or takes anything from them against their free will; I (Prophet Muhammad) will complain against the person on the Day of Judgment.”

#### **Everyone to his or her Religion:**

In another article, it states, **“the Jews have their religion and the Muslims have theirs.”** In this, it is clear that anything other than tolerance would not be tolerated, and that, although all were members of a society, each had their separate religion which could not be violated. Each was allowed to practice their beliefs freely without any hindrances, and no acts of provocation would be tolerated.

There are many other articles of this constitution which may be discussed, but emphasis will be placed on an article which states, **“If any dispute or controversy likely to cause trouble should arise, it must be referred to God and His Messenger.”** This clause maintained that all inhabitants of the state must recognize a higher level of authority, and in those matters which involved various tribes and religions, justice could not be meted out by individual leaders; rather it must be adjudicated by the leader of the state himself or his designated representatives. It was allowed, however, for individual tribes who were not Muslims, to refer to their own religious

scriptures and their learned men in regards to their own personal affairs. They could though, if they opted, ask the Prophet to judge between them in their matters. God says in the Quran:

“...If they do come to you, either judge between them or decline to interfere...” (Quran 5:42)

Here we see that the Prophet allowed each religion to judge in their own matters according to their own scriptures, as long as it did not stand in opposition to articles of the constitution, a pact which took into account the greater benefit of the peaceful co-existence of the society. There are many other examples during the lifetime of the Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, in addition to the Saheefah that practically portray the tolerance Islam shows for other religions.

### **Freedom of Religious Assembly and Religious Autonomy**

Given consent by the constitution, the Jews had the complete freedom to practice their religion. The Jews in Medina at the time of the Prophet had their own school of learning, named **Bait-ul-Midras**, where they would recite the Torah, worship and educate themselves. The Prophet emphasized in many letters to his emissaries that religious institutions should not be harmed. Here in a letter addressed to his emissary to the religious leaders of Saint Catherine in Mount Sinai who has sought the protection of the Muslims: “This is a message from Muhammad ibn Abdullah, as a covenant to those who adopt Christianity, near and far, we are with them. Verily I, the servants, the helpers, and my followers defend them, because Christians are my citizens; and by God! I hold out against anything that displeases them. No compulsion is to be on them. Neither are their judges to be removed from their jobs nor their monks from their monasteries. No one is to destroy a house of their religion, to damage it, or to carry anything from it to the Muslims’ houses. Should anyone take any of these, he would spoil God’s covenant and disobey His Prophet. Verily, they are my allies and have my secure charter against all that they hate. No one is to force them to travel or to oblige them to fight. The Muslims are to fight for them. If a female Christian is married to a Muslim, it is not to take place without her approval. She is not to be prevented from visiting her church to pray. Their churches are declared to be protected. They are neither to be prevented from repairing them nor the sacredness of their covenants. No one of the nation (Muslims) is to disobey the covenant till the Last Day (end of the world).” As

one can see, this Charter consisted of several clauses covering all important aspects of human rights, including such topics as the protection of minorities living under Islamic rule, freedom of worship and movement, freedom to appoint their own judges and to own and maintain their property, exemption from military service, and the right to protection in war. On another occasion, the Prophet received a delegation of sixty Christians from the region of Najran, then a part of Yemen, at his mosque. When the time for their prayer came, they faced the direction of east and prayed. The Prophet ordered that they be left in their state and not harmed.

### **Mohammad view on Tolerance**

There are also examples in the life of the Prophet in which he cooperated with people of other faiths in the political arena as well. He selected a non-Muslim, Amr-ibn Umaiyah-ad-Damri, as an ambassador to be sent to Negus, the King of Ethiopia. These are only some of the examples of the Prophet's tolerance of other faiths. Islam recognizes that there are a plurality of religions on this earth, and gives the right to individuals to choose the path which they believe to be true. Religion is not to be, and was never, forced upon an individual against their own will, and these examples from the life of the Prophet are an epitome of the verse of the Quran which promotes religious tolerance and sets the guideline for the Muslims' interaction with people of other faiths. God says: "...There is no compulsion in religion..." (Quran 2:256).

### **Biblical Perspective on Tolerance**

The word "*tolerance*" does not occur in the Bible. At least, it does not appear in three common English translations: King James Version, New King James, American Standard Version, New International Bible, and English Standard Version. There are very few Biblical passages that promote tolerance, in comparison with its many instances of intolerance. We could only find one reference in the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) - and it was a vague prophecy about religious peace, at some undefined time in the future. There are only a handful of examples in the Christian Scriptures (New Testament). Most of them deal only with tolerance by one Christian to another. An overall theme of the Bible is religious exclusivity and intolerance. Particularly in the Hebrew Scriptures, it often calls for the oppression of women, followers of other religions, and sexual minorities, as well as genocide and mass murder of others.

### **Jesus' tolerated People around Him**

The prophet Micah prophesied about a coming time when nation will stop making war. The various people of the world will live in peace and pursue their different religions, each worshipping their different Gods and Goddesses. Meanwhile, the Jews will continue to follow Jehovah. His prophesy came to pass for the known western world during the Roman Empire where religious were generally tolerated except for the intermittent persecution of Christians. However, late in the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE when Christianity became the official religion of Roman Empire, persecution of non-Christian became the norm. Micah 4: 3-5.

#### **Religious Tolerance in Christianity**

Jesus' disciples had rejected a healer who was exorcising demons in Jesus' name, yet was not one of Jesus direct followers. Jesus criticized his disciples and accepted the healer.

John said unto him, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name: and we forbade him, because he followed not us. But Jesus said, forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a mighty work in my name, and be able quickly to speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is for us.

**Mark 9:38-40.**

### **Jesus Refused to Curse Non-Believers**

Jesus' Teachings were rejected by the inhabitants of a village in Samaria. His disciple asked that he exterminate the people of the village by issuing a curse. Jesus refused to do it, and simply move on to the next village.

And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he were going to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven, and consume them? But he turned, and rebuked them and they went to another village. **Luke 9: 52-56**

### **Jesus Treats a Samaritan Woman with Respect**

Jesus initiated a conversation with a Samaritan woman. This is unusual in at least two ways: Jewish men did not talk to women who were not their wives or were not from their family. Also



Jews normally treated Samaritans with contempt. Jew did not have dealings with them because they had deviated from Judaism. **John 4:7-27**

### **Christians treating Jews with Respect**

The author of Luke and Acts comments that the Jews in Berea were more noble, fair-minded and receptive than the Jews of Thessalonica. **Acts 17: 10-13.**

### **Tolerance of Pagans towards Christians**

Paul was under house arrest in Rome for two years. The government granted him religious freedom and did not forbid him to preach. **Acts 28: 30-31.**

### **Toleration of fellow Christians**

St Paul commented on the range of belief among Christians. The situation by the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE was not unlike the variety of beliefs and practices seen among Christian denominations today. He called for intra-faith harmony. Paul urged believers to be tolerant of others who may follow different to be tolerant of others who may follow different dietary rules, or hold religious services on a different day. He recommends that believers avoid doing anything that might make a fellow believer stumble in faith. **Romans 14: 1-23**

### **Tolerance In African traditional Religious**

The purpose of this section is to provide the reader with an overview of the beliefs and practices of ATR as a basis for understanding the concept of tolerance in ATR. Beliefs and practices are essential parts of any religion: beliefs reveal the worldview of a people, their attitudes about the universe and towards life itself, while religious practices show how people express their beliefs in practical terms (Mbiti 1975:10). According to Mbiti, African Religion emanated from the thinking and experiences of the African people. Thus it is part of the African heritage and it does not have a script or religious book from which the various religions of Africa draw their inspiration (1975:12). ATR was not introduced by foreigners (non-Africans) for it is very much a part of the people's cultural heritage. It does not have founders; there have been no reformers or preachers of the faith. This accounts for the variation in the religious practices of the African

people. Despite variations in religious practices, certain characteristics are commonly associated with the religious beliefs of the African people in general. These common features include a belief in God, divinities (deities), ancestors, spirits, and the practice of magic (Ebohon-Igodo 2013).

### **Believe In Africa Traditional Religion**

Although the African concept of God is complex, it is no longer necessary for the enquirer to question whether ATR has a conception of God. It has been confirmed that even among the most isolated peoples on the continent of Africa, a refined concept of God is found (Bolink 1973:19-28). However, the question still remains—is the God in ATR, from a Christian point of view, the same as the Yahweh of the Bible? For the sake of brevity I will not attempt to answer this question. Suffice it to mention that God in ATR is understood fundamentally as the creator and sustainer of life and the Supreme Owner and Ruler of the universe (De La Torre 2008:221). Therefore, I will proceed with a further description of the concept of God in ATR without engaging in a debate of comparing the concept of God in ATR and Christianity.

In ATR, there is the belief in the existence of a Supreme Being whose dwelling place is in heaven (Pobee 1976:2, 4). The concept of God in ATR is expressed in the various proverbs, short statements, songs, prayers, appellations, myths, stories, and religious ceremonies of the African people and has been shaped by the historical, geographical, social, and cultural background or environment of each people. The means through which the African concept of God is expressed emanates from their experiences and perceptions of the supernatural (Mbiti 1975:42-43; 1969:29 30). Within the African tradition, it is generally believed that God is transcendent and at the same time immanent. God is considered to be all-knowing because he sees both the inside and outside of human beings. God is considered invisible yet present. God is omniscience, omnipresent, and omnipotent. God is self-existing, the creator and supplier of all human needs, he is the origin and source of everything (Mbiti 1970:3-18; Brown 1983:7-13). Most of the African peoples believe in the existence of God as shown above, and generally, have a well-organized cultic worship practice (Mbiti 1970:178-252); however, in some places God is God without temple or altar, without priest or ritual. The reason for this could easily be deduced

from the people's conception of God—how could they build a temple for God who is omnipresent, how could they present sacrifices to him who owns everything and supplies all human needs? (Bolink 1973:21-23).

According to the African view, the universe is composed of visible and invisible parts. It is often believed that in addition to God and human beings, there are other invisible beings in existence. These are the spirits. These spirits are created by God, the creator of all things and are subordinate to and dependent on him. These spirits may be described as deities or divinities (Mbiti 1975:65-66).

In various African localities God is not approached directly, this is a sign of reverence for the Supreme Being who has no equal or rival, both in heaven and on earth. As a result of this reverential attitude towards the Supreme Being, these deities or divinities become the intermediaries through which the worshipers approach God. Deities are given the status of gods, and to a larger extent are worshipped (Jemiriye 2006). In the chain of hierarchy, after the Supreme Being and the deities, come the ancestors who also serve as intermediaries between the people and their God. Ancestors can be easily confused with the deities, however, while deities are considered gods, ancestors are not gods, and are not worshipped. Ancestors are the elder members of a family or clan who are believed to have made it to the spirit world, and as spirits they possess enhanced powers that are mainly used to protect the interest of their families or clan (Oborji 2005:26).

### **The Ritual Practices in Africa Traditional Religion**

There is great variation in the religious practices of the African people; this difference in religious practices, to a large extent, is due to the fact that ATR is a monolithic religion but practices are different. (Ohaegbulam 1990:105), and the religious practices are not derived from a unified sacred scripture or holy book like the Christian Bible or the Muslim Qur'an (106). Adherents can choose their beliefs and express them in practical terms without the danger of being accused of heresy or falsehood (Mbiti 1975:15-16). The lack of holy writings for ATR introduces another dimension to the already existing challenge posed by its dynamic nature.

In ATR no attempts are made by a particular group of people to propagate their beliefs and as a result, no attempts are made to convert others. The reason for this can be attributed to the consistent common feature shared by all adherents' different communities (Ohaegbulam 1990:105- 106). Another factor is that religion in Africa is an expression of the people's culture and experiences with nature, thus no one group of people can transfer or infuse their experiences upon another group (106). In ATR, human beings are the pivotal point of God's creation, thus all religious beliefs, practices, rituals, and ceremonies are focused on enabling its adherents to find favor with God (Dyrness and Kärkkäinen 2008:21). The worship of God in ATR is eternalized in different acts and sayings, which vary from one society to another and from one area to another, all depending on the group's experiences with nature and the supernatural (Mbiti 1969:58).

Among the common acts of worship in ATR are sacrifices, offerings, prayer, invocations, blessings, and salutations which are often carried out in order to maintain good relationships between humanity and supernatural beings, and between the spirits and the physical world (Mbiti 1969:58-66). these acts of worship are sometimes done through intermediaries due to the feeling of unworthiness by the individual who seeks the face of God. As mentioned elsewhere in this paper, the reason for this practice is derived to a large extent from the people's political and social life. In most African societies, it is customarily for children to speak to their father through their mother or older siblings and most people in a community can approach their chiefs or kings only through the ruler's close associates

### **The Nature of Tolerance In Africa Traditional Religion**

The absence of any religious scriptures in ATR from which its teachings might be derived makes it difficult to present a systematic outline of the nature of its tolerance. However, the lack of religious scriptures in ATR such as the Christian's Bible and the Muslim's Qur'an from which both religions derive their teachings or doctrines and beliefs tends to provide another basis through which the nature of tolerance in ATR might be understood.

As Mbiti asserts, the lack of scriptures in ATR has enabled the religion to move with the times without producing any religious controversies. No one is in danger of being accused of falsehood

or heresy for holding different religious views (1975:15). Moreover, even though, the indigenous religious practices of the African people are determined by their different societies (Gilliland 1986:11), they share some common features in their conception of God and the supernatural. These commonly shared religious beliefs tend to discourage proselytization among and across the various African peoples, thus providing an atmosphere of peaceful co-existence (Ohaegbulam 1990:105-106). It is commonly known that most acts of religious intolerance arise due to differences in religious views and sometimes due to the desire to make converts through aggressive proclamation of religious views or doctrines. With ATR it is not so. The religion “evolved slowly through many centuries, as people responded to the situations of their lives and reflected upon their experiences” (Mbiti 1975:14). The religion does not have an individual founder who can be referred to like Jesus Christ in Christianity and Mohammed in Islam. The reference point in ATR is its traditional or cultural legacies, which have been handed down from one generation to another. Benezet Bujo, a Catholic theologian, asserts that there were no religious wars in Africa prior to the introduction of foreign religions (Christianity and Islam) to the continent (Bujo 1992:55). Similarly Ali Mazrui, an Islamic scholar, made his argument even more poignant by asserting that, among the three major religious legacies in Africa (ATR, Islam, and Christianity), ATR is the most tolerant. He further posited that it might be safe to argue that before the introduction of Christianity and Islam to Africa, there were no religious wars on the continent because the indigenous religions did not engage in any sort of proselytization activities. The absence of proselytization efforts almost automatically leads to a lack of bitter rivalry against other creeds.

Indigenous African traditions have not sought to convert the whole of humanity. The Yoruba do not seek to convert the Ibo to the Yoruba religion— or vice versa—and neither the Yoruba or the Ibo compete with each other for the souls of a third group, such as the Hausa. Because they are not proselytizing religions, indigenous African creeds have not fought with each other. Over the centuries, Africans have waged many kinds of wars with each other, but they were rarely religious ones before the Universalist creeds arrived. (Mazrui 1998:71-91).

Matthew Kukah also suggests that the tolerance displayed by adherents of traditional religion in part accounts for the spread of Islam and Christianity in Nigeria (1993:9). Mazrui's argument provides additional framework upon which the nature of tolerance in ATR might be understood. The fact that Christians and Muslims waged several religious wars in human history is undisputable. Therefore, the absence of such historical records of religious wars involving ATR provides a strong point of reference as to its tolerant nature. What is noteworthy is the nature of tolerance in ATR. Primarily, tolerance in ATR is not the result of written religious doctrines or creeds and this lack of written religious codes seems to allow for an accommodation of a variety of religious practices. Also, the absence of an individual founder of the African Religions creates an atmosphere devoid of aggressive competition or proselytization.

The evangelistic nature of Christianity and Islam is not an issue to be argued. The founders of these religions, Jesus Christ and Muhammad, admonished their followers to go make disciples. However, in ATR there is no such mandate given by an individual founder. Thus adherents of ATR are under no obligation to make converts, and by implication, there is no interference with other people's religious lives.

Moral values in ATR also contribute to the shaping of its religious tolerance. Morals address the question of what is wrong and evil in human conduct. Such morals in African communities developed over the course of time and produced customs, rules, laws, traditions, and taboos which are observed in each society (Mbiti 1975:175). In ATR moral ethics relates to belief in God, human origin, and religion in general, and because the African does not separate his or her culture from religion, everyone living within a community knows what is right or wrong or acceptable and unacceptable. The knowledge of such acceptable norms is not based on a written code or book which defines the moral values of the community, but rather the communal life lived by the people and their familiarity with the environment leads to an understanding of how situations are dealt with from past experiences (Sundermeier 1998:175). Such past experiences are often related to the people's religious practices.

The African does not believe in individualism. One does not live apart from the community; therefore, it is an ethical principle to behave in accordance with the community, and to promote and strive to maintain it. Thus, inhabitants of a community are expected to show reverence or respect for one another—reverence for humanity is a fundamental form of conduct which renders communal life pleasant and harmonious(Sundermeier 1998:180). From the perspective of the Yoruba traditional religion in Nigeria, the myth of creation holds that all humans have a universal common descent from the same Creator God. From this arises the African belief for the need to respect all human religious orientations as a condition for peaceful co-existence among peoples and nations (Abimbola 1990:138). The point is that no community crosses its boundaries to another with the aim to introduce its cultural practices based on the assumption that its religious beliefs and practices are superior to that of other communities or people. People are basically more or less concerned with their immediate communities.

In summary, the nature of tolerance in ATR may be understood from various angles. The absence of a holy book or scriptures that could provide unified doctrinal beliefs and practices allows for change in religious belief without creating religious controversies. Also, ATR does not trace its origin to an individual founder who might have commanded his or her followers to proselytize people of other faiths a situation which often leads to bitter religious rivalries and controversies. Moreover, African moral ethics, which places high value on humanity as the pivotal point of God's creation, help create an atmosphere of peaceful co-existence. In ATR, it is held that all human beings have a common universal descent from the same Creator God. This lays the foundation for respect of all human religious orientations.

## **Conclusion**

Inasmuch as we have different believe toward religious and our adherent are different, we must understand the fact that no religion embrace violence, to strengthen and sustain moral, religious tolerance in the nation.

1. The empirical research that establishes this connection discoveries in the study of freedom of religion or belief. Indeed, research has established that freedom of religion or belief, rather than being the source of religion hostilities, is instead the solution. When

governments protect and respect freedom of religion for all faiths, this grievances that can lead to religious intolerance and violence.

2. Research has also shows that not only are there fewer acts of religious tolerance when governments and societies protect and respect freedom of religion, but there are also other positive social and economic dividends. These include greater respect for other important freedoms essential to a well-functioning liberal democracy such freedom of the press, speech and assembly.
3. Perhaps of even more importance to some is that new research about to be published indicates that the main drivers of economic sustainability, that is indicators of global competitiveness, are stronger in countries where the government and civil society respect and protect freedom of religion. For instance, more than twice the share of countries with high religious freedom are strong in innovation compared with countries with low religious freedom.

### **Recommendation**

1. The need for inter-faith dialogue in Nigeria need to take positive effects than the negative the society is witnessing.
2. Every adherent of religion should treat themselves equally no matter the religion affiliation such a person belong too.
3. There is need for religious leaders to emphasizes more on peace and tolerance to it adherent which it is believe such an advice will go a long way in curbing religious havoc to the society.
4. Government should provide job opportunities' for the youth in that an idol hand is prior for the devil.
5. Since morality cut across every sector in the society, there is need for the government to collaborate with Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in providing workshop, seminars, and symposium for the youth in society.



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