

AN EXAMINATION OF THE TRENDS AND FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR CHALLENGES FACING MUSLIMS IN TARABA STATES, NIERIA (1991-2021)

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Abstract (In English). *The objective of this study was to thoroughly examine the trends and factors contributing to the challenges experienced by Muslims in Taraba State. Primary and secondary data were collected through structured interviews, participatory observation, and analysis of documentary sources. Several significant findings emerged from the study. It was observed that there was a harmonious relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims in the past, with Muslims enjoying a high socio-political and economic status that was respected by non-Muslims. However, the study identified various challenges faced by Muslims in Taraba State. These challenges included disunity, a lack of control over political power in the state, internal divisions, the flawed approach of certain early scholars, and moral decline among Muslims. Additionally, challenges such as ethnic identity, indigene and minority issues, unfavorable government policies, and the proliferation of intensive Fulbe-Hausa Christian evangelistic activities targeting Fulbe and Hausa Muslim populations were identified. The study also revealed several factors responsible for these challenges, including the lukewarm attitudes of some Muslim leaders, low levels of education in both Islamic and Western education, the failure of Muslim politicians and elites to unite for the advancement of Islam and Muslims, the breakdown of family institutions, and the absence of a sustainable financial foundation for Da'wah funding. In conclusion, the study provides recommendations for overcoming these challenges and improving the situation for Muslims in the state.*

Keywords: *Challenges, Degeneration, Examination, Factors, Resentment, Responsible, selfishness, Trends*

INTRODUCTIONS

In the pre-colonial era, the communities of Taraba State in Nigeria, as well as other regions in Africa, had amicable relationships characterized by trust and mutual respect. This peaceful and harmonious coexistence extended beyond ethnic, geopolitical, and religious boundaries, fostering broader inter-group

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connections. Various empires and states were formed during this time, incorporating diverse ethnoreligious groups, and they were able to achieve unity without resorting to violence. Inter-group conflicts that arose did not take on inter-ethnic or religious dimensions. Instead, once a balance of power was achieved, harmony and peaceful coexistence were restored among the communities.²

Before and during the early days following the creation of Taraba State, Muslims held a position of high regard and were considered individuals of great reputation. They held prominent roles as rulers within numerous royal households and occupied the highest political positions in the communities that now form Taraba State.³ Muslims and non-Muslims, as families, went to the same schools, shared common farm boundaries, and engaged in all sorts of economic activities. They grouped and shared times of joy or sadness such as weddings, birth, and death mourning.⁴ The reason for Muslims holding such esteemed positions was due to the peaceful and supportive relationships that existed in the past among the ancestors and parents in various communities of the State. It is important to mention that currently, Islam and Christianity are the dominant religions in the State, with some individuals practicing the Traditional Religion in certain areas.

Brief History, Territorial Extent and Population of Taraba State

On August 27, 1991, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida's regime established Taraba State by separating it from the former Gongola State. The state derived its name from River Taraba, which flows through its southern region, and its capital is Jalingo.⁵ Initially, Taraba State comprised twelve Local Government Areas, which later increased to sixteen with the addition of two Special Development Areas between September 1991 and 2019. The Local Government Areas within Taraba State include Ardo-Kola, Bali, Donga, Gashaka, Gassol, Ibi, Jalingo, Karim-Lamido, Kurmi, Lau, Sardauna, Takum, Ussa, Wukari, Yorro, and Zing. Furthermore, the two Special Development Areas are Yangtu Special Development Area, established in 2008 during the Danbaba administration, and Ngada Special Development Area, created in 2016 under the administration of Darius Dickson Ishaku.⁶

Taraba State is situated in the northeastern part of Nigeria, between latitude 6°30" and 9°36" north and longitude 9°0" and 10°50" east. It shares borders with Plateau State to the northwest, Nassarawa and Benue States to the west, Adamawa State, and the Cameroon Republic to the south and southeast, and Gombe State to the north. The total land area of Taraba State is approximately 60,291.82 square kilometers. The state experiences a distinct climate characterized by two main seasons. The rainy season typically occurs from April

² Elijah, Akombo Ityavkase, "The Colonial Factor in the Phenomenon of Inter-Group Conflicts in Nigeria: a Case Study of Tiv-Jukun Relations in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State", in Jalingo, *Journal of Arts & Social Sciences (J-JASS)*, Vol. 1 No. 1 June, School of Arts and Social sciences, COE, Jalingo, Taraba State, Zaria, Faith Printers International, 2009, p. 48.

³ Malam Sufyan Umar, 50 years, Director of Education, Taraba State Post Primary School Board, Jalingo, Jalingo LGA, 2nd November 2019.

⁴ Malam Abdul Rahman Jibril Mijinyawa, 60 years, Journalist Broadcast, an indigene of Wukari LGA, interviewed in Jalingo, Jalingo LGA, 22nd February, 2020.

⁵ Taraba State Government Natures Give to the Nature, Ministry of Information Culture and Tourism, Jalingo, Taraba State, 2010, n.p.

⁶ Taraba State Executive Diary, Taraba State Government, Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2019, np.

to October, while the dry season, occasionally accompanied by severe harmattan, prevails between December and February.⁷

Based on the data from the National Population Commission (NPC) and the 2006 national population census, Taraba State had a total population of 2,294,800.⁸ However, the projected population of the state in 2021 was estimated to be 3,596,967.⁹

METHOD

The survey study methodology was utilized in writing this research work. Basically, there are a variety of ways to collect data for survey research, the most popular of which are interviews and questionnaires. However, the primary data used for research is obtained through the interview and observation study methods. Finding and gathering reference materials that are relevant to the topic of this research is the first of three processes the researcher adopted when putting this piece together. Secondly, several observations and interviews have been conducted, which have been analyzed and elaborated on to fully understand the intersections of this essay. Third, as the last step, the researchers conclude specifically referring to the title raised in this study, an examination of the trends and factors responsible for challenges facing Muslims in Taraba States, Nigeria (1991-2021).

RESEARCH

An Examination of the Religious, Socio-Political and Economic Challenges Facing Muslims in Taraba State

The Islamic vision aims to foster a unified, resilient, prosperous, and healthy community, encompassing spiritual, social, political, economic, and technological aspects. The leadership of the Ummah, the Muslim community, is envisioned to be built upon principles of truth, justice, and fairness. To achieve their desired objectives, Muslims are encouraged to be guided by Islamic values. This guidance will empower them to tackle developmental challenges and establish a community that adheres to the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Such a community strives to eliminate nepotism, unemployment, illiteracy, poverty, incompetence, and hooliganism.¹⁰

One of the primary challenges faced by Muslims in Taraba State is the lack of political representation in the state's leadership. This absence of political power gives rise to various issues, including disunity and divisions among Muslims, the perceived weakness of certain scholars and Muslim leaders, the influence of Fulbe-Hausa Christian evangelism, recurring ethno-religious conflicts, a growing

⁷ Taraba State Executive Diary, Taraba State Government, Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2019, np.

⁸ Federal Republic of Nigeria Official Gazette, No.2 Vol. 96, Federal Government Printer, Abuja, Nigeria, 2009, p. 41

⁹ Alhaji Abdulkarim F. Yakubu, Head of Technical, National Population Commission, Taraba State 2021 Projected Population Figures by LGA.

¹⁰ Bashir, Abbas "Redeeming the Future: Strategic Initiative for the Growth and Development of the *Ummah*: Being an Inaugural Lecture on the Occasion of the Inauguration of the Council Committees of the Taraba State Muslim Council, 2nd Zul-Hijjah 1426 Equivalent to 1st January 2006, P.6.

trend of moral decline, challenges in managing Muslim reverts, a lag in Western education, political marginalization and imbalances in appointments, difficulties in political mobilization and during elections, concerns related to indigenes and settlers, and economic subordination. These challenges collectively impact the Muslim community in Taraba State.

Disunity and Divisiveness between Muslim Organizations in Taraba State

The cooperation among Muslims in Taraba State, particularly within the middle and lower classes, has generally been positive both before and after the state's creation. However, there has been a persistent antagonistic relationship among Muslims in the higher class, often attributed to electoral failures.¹¹ Since the creation of Taraba State, there has been a noticeable emergence of greed and corrupt tendencies among some Muslims. This pursuit of power and personal gain has led to divisions and hindered the unity of Muslims in the state. Consequently, mistrust and a lack of confidence have become prevalent characteristics among the Muslim community in Taraba State.¹²

Despite the presence of the Taraba State Muslim Council, Jalingo as an umbrella organization, which comprises many Muslim organizations in the State, the unity of the Muslims is in shamble. The Muslims are divided into religious sects and organizations and are not willing to work together. This provides ample opportunity for the non-Muslims to exploit the divisions, especially in politics. In addition to sectarian differences, Muslims are equally divided on tribal affiliations. There are numerous tribal associations in defense of the culture and traditions of respective ethnic groups in the State.¹³

Indeed, it is rare to find an ethnic group in Taraba State that does not have Muslim members. However, the existence of tribal associations has often prioritized ethnic or tribal bonds over Islamic brotherhood. These associations have gained significant influence and serve as a means for communities to assert their identity and liberation from historical allegations of Fulbe slavery. In response, the Fulbe community has formed its own associations to protect the interests of the Fulbe people in the state. The tribal affiliations and organizations pose a significant challenge to Muslim unity and contribute to the resurgence of ethnic nationalism within the State. This obstacle hinders their efforts to achieve political cohesion and accomplish their goals.

Weakness of Some Scholars and Leaders of Muslim Organizations

It is disheartening to note that certain scholars and leaders of Islamic organizations have been accused of prioritizing personal gain over working for the betterment of Islam and Muslims in the State. This tendency has left Muslims in some areas, particularly remote regions, feeling powerless. Consequently, despite their significant numbers, Muslims face challenges in winning elective

¹¹ Alhaji Lawal Yakubu, 50 years, Permanent Secretary, an indigene of Bali LGA interviewed in Jalingo, Jalingo LGA, 1st October 2019.

¹² Alhaji Hamman Gaji Chindo, 59 years, Certified Public Accountant, from Lau LGA, interviewed in Jalingo, Jalingo LGA, 1st October 2019.

¹³ Muhammad Sani Ibrahim Mahmood (Ph.D.), 55 years, Chairman Council of Ulamah, JIBWIS, Jos, Taraba State Branch, Jalingo, Jalingo Local Government Area, 29th April 2010.

positions.¹⁴ According to an informant, these political difficulties faced by Muslims can be attributed to the materialistic inclinations of some scholars. This situation poses a serious threat to the political influence of Muslims, rendering them defenseless in Taraba State.¹⁵ Additionally, there have been allegations against other scholars who were accused of endorsing an unsuitable candidate based on flawed assessments and inadequate knowledge of pertinent legal issues. An example of this occurred in 2019 when a candidate, endorsed by a group of scholars, was later disqualified due to inconsistencies in his age-related documents.¹⁶

At times, the government and politicians would provide financial support to individual members and Muslim organizations, particularly during election periods. It has been observed that several members were involved in this practice, as the distribution method involved dividing whatever funds came to the Taraba State Muslim Council into three parts: for the Council itself, the individual members, and the organizations represented within the Council.¹⁷ On multiple occasions, the Council became a tool manipulated by the government and politicians during election campaigns. The influence exerted by the government and politicians on the Council makes it challenging for Muslims to have trustworthy and credible candidates in most elections, especially when it comes to selecting gubernatorial candidates.

Fulbe Christian Evangelism

Fulbe Christian Evangelism refers to the practice of spreading the message of Christianity among the Fulbe community through means such as building friendships, showing compassion, distributing literature, and providing materials related to Community Health Evangelism. There have been efforts by Christians to enter the Bantaje area in Wukari Local Government Area with the aim of converting Muslims to Christianity. These efforts involve increased frequencies of evangelistic activities by organizations such as Sabon Rai Don Kowa (New Life for Everybody), the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN), and Pentecostal Churches. As part of their outreach, these organizations provide incentives to individuals willing to convert to Christianity. These incentives may include the provision of food items, free medical services such as surgeries, eye care, malaria tests, and medication, as well as the construction of boreholes and even houses for victims of crises. Consequently, some individuals who have converted to Islam but are not well supported or managed may easily accept these offers and renounce the Islamic faith in favor of Christianity.¹⁸

Ali's findings highlight the significant challenge of apostasy (Riddah), particularly among those who have converted to Islam. Instances of apostasy were observed in various communities within the State. For instance, in

¹⁴ Malam Abdullahi Magaji Kunini, 51 years, Civil Servant, Lau, Lau LGA, 5th November, 2019.

¹⁵ Malam Yusuf Abubakar, 40 years, Civil Servant, Jalingo, Jalingo LGA, 9th October, 2019.

¹⁶ Sale Abubakar (Ph.D.), 70 years, Academic, an indigene of Jalingo, Jalingo LGA, interviewed in Kaduna, Kaduna State, 15th March, 2020.

¹⁷ Qadi Muhammad Badamasi Aliyu (Ph.D.), 54 years, Qadi, Taraba State Shari'ah Court of Appeal, Jalingo, Jalingo LGA, 28th April, 2010.

¹⁸ Malam Abdul-Rahman Jibril Mijinyawa, 60 years, Journalist Broad Cast, indigene of Wukari LGA, interviewed in Jalingo, Jalingo LGA, 22nd February, 2020.

Kwaghaondo and Vingiri villages in Takum Local Government Area, a considerable number of individuals who had embraced Islam renounced their faith and converted to Christianity. Similarly, in Jauro Jalo of Gashaka Local Government Area, there were cases of apostasy where some individuals who had initially accepted Islam reverted to Christianity. Informants in the area also noted a few instances of apostasy among Muslims in Mbamnga, Sardauna Local Government Area. These findings indicate the prevalence of apostasy as a significant phenomenon affecting the Muslim community in the State.¹⁹

The Fulbe-Christian settlements located behind the General Hospital in Wukari serve as a notable example, among others, of the efforts made in Fulbe-Christian Evangelism.²⁰ This coordination is endeavor aims to convert nomadic Fulbe individuals to Christianity in various areas across the State, including Wukari, Takum, Donga LGAs, and beyond. The condition of this evangelistic work is at an advanced stage in these areas due to the utilization of previously converted Fulbe individuals who have received training in different fields such as Bible and theological studies, animal husbandry, and health science. These trained individuals play a role in facilitating the conversion process and furthering the objectives of Fulbe-Christian Evangelism.²¹

The presence of Fulbe missionaries in Wukari Local Government Area has been confirmed up to the present time. However, their evangelistic activities are limited to the immediate vicinity of Wukari town.²² This limitation is primarily due to the prevailing insecurity that hampers their ability to extend their outreach to remote areas. The challenging security situation prevents the missionaries from venturing further and conducting their evangelism efforts in those distant regions.

Continual Ethno-Religious Conflicts in the State

Ethno-religious crises are a significant concern not only in Nigeria but also in Taraba State specifically. These crises have been a recurring phenomenon, persisting in national, state, and local contexts, both in the past and in recent times. The presence of mutual suspicion and a lack of harmony among different ethnic groups and religious factions contribute to ethnic rivalry and religious intolerance, often resulting in clashes triggered by even the slightest provocations.²³ Abubakar, in his observations, highlights that; numerous ethno-religious crises have occurred throughout Taraba State. While some of these conflicts may have underlying social or political factors, religion has often been used as a cover or catalyst for these confrontations.²⁴

Conflicts can arise from various triggers, including interpersonal, communal, ethnic, or religious factors. In the case of the State, the conflicts predominantly

¹⁹ Ali Bello "Muslims and *Da'wah* in Taraba State: Prospects and Challenges", Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, Nigeria, 2014, (M. A. Islamic Studies), pp.148-149.

²⁰ Malam Bukhari Bello Abu-Bakr, 55 years, Civil Servant, Bantaje, Wukari LGA, 27th January, 2020.

²¹ Ali, Bello "Muslims and *Da'wah* in Taraba State: Prospects and Challenges", *Op. Cit*

²² Malam Ibarhim Abokin Sarki, 50yrs, Director Absari School, Wukari, 14th March, 2020.

²³ Salawu, B. "Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Nigeria: Causal Analysis and Proposals for New Management Strategies" *European Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 13, No, 2010, 3, P. 345,

²⁴ Abubakar, Muhammad, "Ethno-Religious Crises in Taraba State: Causes, Effects and Solutions from Islamic Perspective", Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria, 1439H (2017), (M. A. Islamic Studies), P.3.

have an ethnoreligious nature, with the involvement of individuals driven by their ethnic or religious affiliations. The division among Muslims based on language and ethnicity poses a significant challenge to their unity. Factors such as envy, malice, intolerance, slandering, and backbiting contribute to the perpetuation of ethnic conflicts in numerous localities across the State.²⁵ The division of Muslims along ethnic and sectional lines is observed in many areas, including the State capital. One notable example is the conflict that occurred in Sardauna Local Government Area in 2017 between the Fulbe and Mambilla ethnic groups. Tragically, during this conflict, Muslims, primarily due to their ethnic identities, suffered significant casualties as they turned against each other.²⁶ Regrettably, during this conflict, Muslims, driven by their ethnic identities, experienced substantial losses as they engaged in conflict with one another.

The Emerging Trend of Moral Decadence among Muslims

The declining public image of Muslims poses a significant challenge in Taraba State. Muslim individuals, especially the youth, are involved in various forms of criminal activities across the state. As a result, Muslims have been negatively perceived and stigmatized by non-Muslims in many villages throughout the local government areas of Taraba State.²⁷ The curiosity and vulnerability of the youth have driven some of them to engage in drug abuse, particularly prominent among the youth in Jalingo, the state capital. The youth find the experience of taking drugs pleasurable, leading them to become addicted. This addiction, in turn, fuels numerous criminal activities such as political thuggery, kidnapping, robbery, banditry, rape cases, assault, and inter-group fights (known as "*Sara-Suka*") between youths from different groups in the state. In Jalingo alone, there are fifty-three youth groups involved in various criminal activities and thirty-three locations where illicit drugs are sold.

The issue of drug use and abuse has reached a critical level in Taraba State, posing a significant threat to peaceful coexistence. The consumption of psychotropic substances, particularly Tramadol and other similar drugs, has seen a surge in contrast to the traditional use and trade of Indian hemp in the state. It is evident that there is a strong correlation between drug abuse and the prevalence of crimes such as kidnapping, robbery, terrorism, and other social vices across the state. The increased use of drugs has not only led to individual health problems but also contributes to the perpetuation of criminal activities and instability in the society. Addressing the issue of drug abuse becomes crucial in maintaining peace and fostering a safe environment for the residents of Taraba State.²⁸

It is indeed concerning that Muslims, particularly the youth and women, are involved in various social vices occurring in the state. The vices listed, such as kidnapping, armed robbery, political thuggery, inter-group rivalry (*Sara-Suka*),

²⁵ Alhaji Aliyu Idris Tanimu (Esq), 59 years, Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Nigeria, Ibi LGA, interviewed in Jalingo, Jalingo LGA, 31st October, 2019.

²⁶ Alhaji Jamilu Yayawa Muhammad, 34 years, Nurse, indigene of Gassol LGA, interviewed in Jalingo, 14th January, 2020.

²⁷ Malam Musa Muhammad Masho, 39 years, Civil Servant, Pantisawa, Yorro LGA, 19th September, 2019.

²⁸ The Brief of NDLEA Taraba State Commander Sulaiman Jadi CN, FSI at the Meeting of Federal and State Security Administrators Held in Jalingo on the Days of 31st October and 1st November, 2019, p.1.

drug abuse, homosexuality, and lesbianism, highlight the extent of the problem.²⁹ The researcher's interactions with relatives and victims of kidnapping further indicate that Muslims, particularly the youth, are often involved in many reported kidnapping cases across Taraba State. It is important to address these issues and work towards promoting positive values and behavior among all members of society, regardless of their religious or ethnic backgrounds, to foster a safer and more harmonious environment for everyone.

Reverts Management

The management of reverts (converts) is indeed a challenging aspect of Da'wah (Islamic outreach). It involves addressing the needs and concerns of the converts themselves, the preachers or mentors working with them, and the broader Muslim community (Ummah). Reverts often face numerous challenges, including rejection and expulsion from their families, as well as constant threats from missionary groups operating in the state. These circumstances can lead to stigmatization by their relatives and a sense of inferiority complex when interacting with the wider Muslim population. Achieving social integration into the mainstream Muslim community becomes a significant challenge for reverts. For instance, female reverts may find it difficult to find suitable husbands, and even those who are married may face challenges from the families of their husbands. They may be subjected to derogatory terms such as "*Batubakiyya*" (repented) or "Kabila" (non-Fulbe or non-Hausa). Additionally, their children may experience neglect from the Muslim community. These challenges hinder the reverts' ability to fully integrate into the Muslim community and can have a detrimental impact on their overall well-being.³⁰

The issue of underage reverts presents constitutional and security challenges to the Muslim community, particularly cases related to child trafficking and kidnapping. There have been instances where scholars have been imprisoned for keeping underage converts under their custody.³¹ An example is the case of Malam Adamu Salihu, the Assistant Secretary of the Taraba State Muslim Council in Jalingo, who was arrested and spent several days in police custody in 2019 for converting a girl, who was underage, to Islam. The incident also involved Hajjiya Halima, the wife of Alhaji Umaru Garba Alasure, who spent one day in the Nigerian Correctional Centre in Jalingo before being granted bail.³² These cases

²⁹ Ustaz Bashir Modibbo Hamman Adama, 59 years, Deputy Director Programme, Taraba State Broadcasting Service (TSBS), Jalingo, Jalingo LGA, 21st April, 2020 and Dr. Muhammad Sani Ibrahim Mahmood, 55 years, Chairman, Council of Ulama, JIBWIS, Taraba State Branch, Jalingo, Jalingo LGA, 29th April, 2020.

³⁰ Tijjani Usman Karofi (PhD), 55 years, Chief Lecturer, College of Education, Zing, interviewed in Jalingo, Jalingo LGA, 9th April, 2020.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Malam Adamu Salihu, 54 years, Assistant Secretary, Taraba State Muslim Council, Jalingo, Jalingo LGA, 31st May, 2020. It was on 15th May, 2018 that Patience Iliya (18 years old) was converted to Islam at Taraba State Muslim Council, Jalingo. Patience was advised to get a female teacher for lessons about Islam. Malam Adamu Salihu in company with Alhaji Sani Modibbo officially inform the parents of Patience of her conversion to Islam. Hajjiya Halima, a female Islamic preacher was close to Patience resident, thus, Patience decided to go to her for lesson. On 17th May, 2018, the parents of Patience reported Malam Adamu Salihu to police station accusing him of kidnapping their daughter whom was presented to the police on the same date. However, on 22nd May, 2018 both Malam Adamu Salihu and Hajjiya Halima were charged to court from

highlight the legal complexities surrounding the conversion of underage individuals and the potential security concerns associated with such situations.

Bashir Hamman Adama suggests that the reoccurrence of incidents involving the conversion of individuals, particularly adult women, may be attributed to the lack of an organized and lawful management system to support and protect Islamic preachers (*Du'at*). This lack of support puts them at a disadvantageous position when faced with legal challenges or accusations.³³ To address these issues, it is important to establish proper management systems that provide support and protection for Islamic preachers and ensure adherence to legal and ethical guidelines in the conversion process.

The education of the individuals who have reverted has been negatively impacted due to the inadequate and temporary arrangements made for the learning facilities intended for teaching them. There was a lack of sufficient staff to educate this potential reverts throughout the entire state. In many cases, the preachers themselves lacked the capacity to adequately train the reverts, as they often lacked the necessary resources to attend training centers and enhance their skills.³⁴

It is evident that when the reverts are not properly educated, there is a higher likelihood of them returning to their previous religion or easily converting to Christianity. It is important to note that Muslim organizations primarily focus on urban areas, with little to no attention given to rural areas. This stands in contrast to Christian evangelist groups, which frequently prioritize outreach to remote and rural areas within the state.

Backwardness in Western Education

Educational backwardness is a significant issue in Taraba State, particularly affecting the less privileged regions. The overall low level of education among the population, especially among Muslims, contributes to many of the development problems faced by the state. This issue is even more pronounced among children whose parents have limited or no education.³⁵ While Muslims may constitute the majority in the state, the civil service is primarily dominated by non-Muslims. This, along with the segregation reported by some sources, further exacerbates the challenges of educational backwardness faced by Muslims. The attitudes of the two communities, Muslims, and non-Muslims, towards education differ, particularly in terms of standards, quality, and the competence of teaching staff. The lack of strong orientation, guidance, and counseling among Muslims affects their ability to identify areas of need and prioritize them. As a result, there is a shortage of professionals among the Muslim population, which hampers the development of human resources. In contrast to the number of schools owned by

where they were taken to the Correctional Centre, Jalingo. It was on 23rd May, 2018 that they were released on bail and Patience was forced to renounce Islam and taken to Missionary School in Jos, Plateau State.

³³ Hamman Adama, Bashir, "*Da'awah* and Revertees management in Islam with Reference to Jalingo Metropolis: Issues, Problems and Prospects (2000 to 2015)", Bayero University, Kano, Muharram 1437AH/October, 2015C.E., (M.A. Islamic Studies), P. 50.

³⁴ Tijjani Usman Karofi (PhD), Op. Cit.

³⁵ Sa'ad, Abdulmumini, "Muslims and Education in Taraba State: Issues, Challenges and the Way-out", Being a Paper Presented at the Taraba State Education Summit Organized by National Islamic Centre, Taraba State Chapter, Held in Dome Tent, Jalingo Motel, Jalingo, 24th to 25th October, 2009, p.9.

Muslims, there is a significant proliferation of private schools (both primary and secondary) established by non-Muslims across the state. This further widens the disparity in educational opportunities.³⁶

The data obtained from the Ministry of Education regarding private schools further supports the observation that there is an inadequate number of schools owned by Muslims in Taraba State. According to the records, out of the total five hundred and thirty-five private primary schools, only one hundred and eight (20.19%) are owned by Muslims. Similarly, out of the four hundred and thirty-three private secondary schools as of July 26, 2019, only one hundred and eight (24.94%) are owned by Muslims.³⁷ Additionally, there is evidence to suggest that during the period under review, the number of private secondary schools owned by non-Muslims surpassed the number of public secondary schools in the state. This can be deduced from the fact that there were only two hundred and ninety-five public secondary schools compared to four hundred and thirty-three private secondary schools owned by non-Muslims as of August 2019.³⁸

These figures indicate that non-Muslims have a greater influence in the education sector in the state. Furthermore, it is evident that many schools, both public and private, suffer from insufficient funding and inadequate supervision. As a result, vocational and technical education, as well as information and communication technology (ICT), are not given the necessary attention they require in these schools.

Political Marginalization and Imbalance in Employment and Appointment

Various indicators indicate that Muslims and non-Muslims in the state participate in political and socio-economic activities together, as mentioned earlier. However, this relationship has become strained due to feelings of injustice, marginalization, and imbalance in political appointments, provision of basic infrastructure, and employment opportunities, particularly against Muslims by non-Muslims in the state. This has led to the emergence of hatred, animosity, and conflicts.³⁹ An informant has observed that Muslims are often denied appropriate positions and appointments in the state. This may be attributed to the non-Muslims' control over power through the civil service, which is predominantly composed of non-Muslims.⁴⁰

According to an informant, religion was brought into Taraba politics during the tenure of Reverend Jolly Tavoro Nyame. It is alleged that towards the end of his last term, Reverend Nyame handpicked late Danbaba Suntai, who was a Christian and had not gone through the primaries and utilized his influence and state resources to impose him on the people of Taraba. Regrettably, this negative precedent was perpetuated by subsequent administrations.⁴¹ The composition of

³⁶ Sale Abubakar (Ph.D.), Op. Cit.

³⁷ List of Registered Private Schools in Taraba State by Local Government Areas by Mr. Amos Adi, Director, Private School, Ministry of Education as 26th July, 2019.

³⁸ The List of public secondary schools by Ezra Haruna, Director Planning, Research and Statistics, Taraba State Post Primary School Management Board as of 28th August, 2019.

³⁹ Justice Isa Muhammed Sambo, 62 Years, High Court Judge, Taraba State High Court of Justice, Jalingo, 2nd October, 2019 and Alhaji Abdullahi Gambo, 51 years, Journalist, Taraba State Broadcasting Service (TSBS), indigene of Takum, interviewed in Jalingo, Jalingo LGA, 5th January, 2020.

⁴⁰ Sale Abubakar (Ph.D.), Op. Cit.

⁴¹ Barrister Jamilu Muhammad Awwal, 38 years, Private Solicitor, Jalingo, Jalingo LGA, 18th August, 2019.

the executive and other political appointments in the state serves as evident examples that support this claim.

Indigenes and Settlers Issues

The issue of indigene-ship and settler status has created suspicion and mistrust among different ethnic groups in Taraba State. Examples of such tensions can be seen between the Tiv and Jukun, Tiv and Fulbe, Jukun and Fulbe, Jukun and Hausa in Wukari, Jukun/Chamba and Kuteb in Takum, Fulbe and Mambilla on the Mambila Plateau, and Fulbe and Tiv in Gassol, Bali, Donga, and Takum. These conflicts primarily stem from competing claims of land ownership, with each ethnic group asserting that they were the first to settle in the disputed areas. Unfortunately, these disputes over indigene-ship have resulted in civil disagreements and loss of lives within the affected communities in the state.⁴²

Ahmad Abubakar Adi expresses concern over how the notions of indigene and settlers have threatened inter-group relations on the Mambilla Plateau, leading to conflicts in 1982 and 2002. Adi argues that the Mambilla people's desire to assert their ownership over the land has created hostility with the Fulbe, who traditionally have significant grazing lands. The Mambilla general sentiment is that they are the rightful owners of the land, and they believe that the distribution of farming and grazing areas, which favors pastoralists, is unjust and should be revised.⁴³

The Taraba State Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law, 2017 A1-A11, provides a supportive inclination for the afore mentioned act. In general term.

The Taraba State Grazing Reserve Law 1993 or any other Grazing Reserve Law for the State is hereby repealed, and all State and Local Government Area Land previously designated as grazing reserves under the repealed law (s) shall be re-organized, improved and maintained as general ranches for the rearing and grazing of all livestock.⁴⁴

Despite the concerns and suggestions raised by the Taraba State Muslim Council in Jalingo regarding amendments needed in the Taraba State Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Bill of 2017, the bill was passed without considering all the issues mentioned in the council's submission. The Muslim Council specifically highlighted the inherent risks associated with the approach taken in the bill and emphasized the need for alternatives, particularly concerning the repeal of the nine gazette grazing reserves and thirty-three non-

⁴² Alhaji Rabiou Ismaila Agwaru, 51 years, Civil Servant, Jalingo, Jalingo LGA, 11th April, 2020 and Alhaji Tijjani Adamu, 51 years, Lecturer, Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola, interviewed in Jalingo, Jalingo LGA, 11th April, 2020.

⁴³ Aliyu, Badamasi Muhammad, "Ethno-Religious Conflicts and Insecurity in Taraba State, Nigeria: Islamic Perspective a Panacea", *University of Bakht Al-Ruda*, Sudan, 1438 A.H. (2017 C.E.), (Ph.D., Islamic Studies), p. 192.

⁴⁴ Abubakar Ahmadu Adi "Ethnic Identity and Political Crises on the Mambilla Plateau, Taraba State, 1979 – 2002, University of Maiduguri, 2015, (M.A. History Political History), pp.129-130.

gazette reserve areas in the state.⁴⁵ Regrettably, the final version of the bill did not adequately address the concerns raised by the Taraba State Muslim Council. Despite their efforts to highlight the inherent dangers and propose alternatives, the bill was passed without taking the council's suggestions into proper consideration. This lack of response to their concerns leaves the Muslim community in Taraba State with unresolved issues regarding the bill and its potential implications.

Economic Insubordination

The recurring ethnoreligious crises in Taraba State have had a significant negative impact on the state's economy. These conflicts have created an overall unfavorable and unattractive economic environment. Farming activities, which are crucial for the state's economy, have been severely disrupted and destroyed as a result of these crises. Examples of such conflicts include the Karimjo-Fulbe crisis in Karim Lamido (1996), the Mambila-Fulani crisis in Sardauna (2002), the Jole-Shomo crisis in Lau (2001, 2006, and 2008), Jukun-Kuteb, Tiv-Jukun crisis in Wukari (2001), Lauhabe-Hausa/Fulbe crisis in Lau (2006), Jukun-Hausa/Fulbe crisis in Wukari and Ibi (2014-2016), and Tiv-Fulbe crisis in Bali and Gassol (2014-2015).⁴⁶ These crises have significantly hampered the prospects of economic growth and prosperity in the state. The constant state of unrest has deterred new enterprises and viable investments, leading to stagnation in the state's economy. The development indices have suffered, and the promised benefits of democracy have become elusive. One notable incident during a crisis between the Tiv and Fulani in 2001 resulted in the loss of 22 lives, the burning of 2,226 huts, and the death of 49,265 animals, further highlighting the devastating impact of these conflicts on both human lives and economic assets.⁴⁷

In the past, Muslims had a significant presence and influence in various economic activities in Taraba State. However, it is observed that state policies have become unfavorable towards the economic activities of Muslims, as exemplified by the Taraba State Commercial Motorcycle Operation Law of 2008, the Taraba State Open Grazing and Ranches Establishment Law of 2007, and policies that restrict Muslims from other states from accessing economic opportunities in the state.⁴⁸ These policies seem to have been designed to undermine and impede the economic activities of Muslims, creating obstacles and hindrances to their participation and success in various sectors.

Factors Responsible for Challenges Facing the Muslims in Taraba State

⁴⁵ Taraba State of Nigeria Official Gazette Taraba State Legal Notice Law No.1. Published by Authority, No. 7 Jalingo-20th September, 2017 Vol. 1- The Taraba State Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law, 2017 AI-All, Government of Taraba State, p.10.

⁴⁶ Muslim Council of Taraba State, "Input by the Muslim Council of Taraba State in Respect of the Taraba State Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Bill, 2017" to the Secretary, Committee on Justice, Judiciary and Cabinet Affairs, Taraba State House of Assembly, 3rd July, 2017.

⁴⁷ Abubakar, Muhammad, "Ethno-Religious Crises in Taraba State: Causes, Effects and Solutions from Islamic Perspective", Bayero University Kano, Nigeria, 1439/2017, (M.A. Islamic Studies), p.93.

⁴⁸ O. Alubo, in Abubakar, Muhammad, "Ethno-Religious Crises in Taraba State: Causes, Effects and Solutions from Islamic Perspective", Bayero University Kano, Nigeria, 1439/2017, (M.A. Islamic Studies), 2008, P. 114.

Muslims face numerous challenges, and the primary factors contributing to these difficulties encompass several aspects. These include the lukewarm approach of Muslim rulers, the ineffectiveness of Muslim organizations, the disregard for Islamic values and teachings, the breakdown of family institutions, and the prevalence of self-centeredness and antagonism among Muslims. Additionally, other contributing factors consist of limited financial resources, the absence of unifying and accountable leadership, and the failure of Muslim elites to establish a cohesive alliance.

Lukewarm Attitudes of Leaders

Undoubtedly, Muslims held prominent positions within various communities both prior to and following the establishment of Taraba State. However, one unfortunate failure on the part of certain Muslim rulers and politicians was their inability to leverage their privileged positions to attract non-Muslim subjects to embrace Islam.⁴⁹ While a few Muslim rulers made efforts to propagate Islam in communities during the early days, the lukewarm attitude displayed by some rulers significantly contributed to the challenges faced by Muslims in the state.⁵⁰ In present times, the power of Muslim rulers, such as Emirs and Chiefs, has diminished with the creation of additional chiefdoms. In many areas, particularly where non-Muslims are appointed as Chairmen of Local Government Areas, Muslim rulers find themselves rendered powerless. Consequently, even those with a genuine interest in promoting Islam find it challenging to fully participate or support Islamic preachers due to fears of intimidation and the risk of being dethroned from positions of leadership by the state authorities.

Lack of Effective Strategic Plan for the Muslim Organizations

Muslim organizations often fail to prioritize the development of concrete plans to combat the recurring attacks on Muslims or establish robust mechanisms to address the plight of Muslim victims. There have been numerous allegations that some leaders misappropriate relief materials intended for victims of conflicts, which are donated by government bodies, NGOs, and individuals.⁵¹ These Muslim organizations primarily focus on resolving disputes and disagreements within couples and families, but they lack an effective blueprint to address significant challenges, particularly the ethnoreligious crises that perplex Muslims in the state.⁵²

The approach adopted by Muslim organizations often tends to further alienate other groups. This situation is particularly evident in the conflicts between two factions of JIBWIS and one faction with followers of the Tijaniyyah Sufi Order. These conflicts have escalated to the point where disrespectful exchanges occur

⁴⁹ Alhaji Tijjani Adamu, 51 Years, Lecturer, Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola, interviewed in Jalingo, Jalingo LGA, 11th April, 2020.

⁵⁰ Malam Abdur Rahman Jibril Mijinyawa, 60 years, Journalist Broadcast, Taraba Television, an indigene of Wukari LGA, interviewed in Jalingo, Jalingo LGA, 22th February, 2020.

⁵¹ Malam Abdullahi Magaji Kunini, 51 years, Acting Director, Taraba State Mass Education Board, Jalingo, indigene of Lau LGA, interviewed in Jalingo, Jalingo LGA, 5th November, 2019.

⁵² Justice Isa Muhammad Sambo, Op. Cit.

on social media platforms, particularly Facebook, displaying a lack of restraint and accountability.

Negligence of Islamic Values and Teachings

The disregard for Islamic teachings among Muslims constitutes one of the primary factors contributing to the challenges they face in the state. Jealousy, selfishness, laziness, hatred, greediness, and a lack of self-esteem have unfortunately become prevalent in the lives of many Muslims. These attitudes contradict the teachings of Islam and have resulted in a state of permanent enmity among Muslims themselves and with other ethnic groups, leading to blood feuds.⁵³ The negligence and disobedience of Allah's commandments have been responsible for His punishment on the Muslims. It is disheartening that a significant number of Muslims prioritize individual or group interests over the well-being of Muslim communities.⁵⁴

The Islamic economic system has been replaced by capitalism, which is considered the root of all evils, as it perpetuates wealth concentration, leaving the poor at a disadvantage. Fraud and deceit have become common practices among Muslim traders, who adulterate goods to maximize profits. Many Muslim elites engage in multipurpose businesses involving interest, both in their workplace transactions and bank dealings. These actions have incurred the wrath of Allah, affecting even innocent souls among the Muslims in the state.

Collapse of the Family Institutions

The institution of the family bears the responsibility of nurturing individuals who will contribute positively to society through proper training and education. However, many families in Taraba State, similar to other parts of Nigeria, find themselves economically and educationally disadvantaged. This circumstance leaves numerous families unable to provide their children with the necessary care, training, and discipline that align with the core values of an Islamic society, including respect for human dignity and education. Consequently, many families end up raising children who adopt negative values such as truancy and engage in delinquent behaviors.⁵⁵ Parental responsibilities have disintegrated, as parents are often not fulfilling their obligations. This has given rise to criminals and various forms of criminality among Muslims in Taraba State. The collapse of the family institution has left Muslim children and youth roaming the streets armed with knives, daggers, and other dangerous weapons.⁵⁶

The sense of isolation experienced by these children and youth has compelled them to form or join gangs involved in activities such as robbery, kidnapping, banditry, and other atrocities within the state. Children whose parents

⁵³ Malam Bashir Muhammad, 48 years, Civil Servant, Bantaje, Wukari Local Government Area, 1st February, 2020

⁵⁴ Malam Aminu Abdullahi, 49 years, Senior Scientific Officer, NABDA, Bio Resources Development Centre, Jalingo, Taraba State, Jalingo LGA, 14th October, 2019.

⁵⁵ Qadi Muhammad Badamasi Aliyu (Ph.D.), Op. Cit.

⁵⁶ Abdul-Mumin Sa'ad, "Muslims and Education in Taraba State: Issues, Challenges and the Way out", Being a Paper Presented at the Taraba State Education Summit Organized by the National Islamic Centre, Taraba State Chapter, Held in Dome Tent, Jalingo Motel, Jalingo, 24th & 25th October, 2009.

have failed to provide for their education often become dependent on politicians and other members of society who, unfortunately, introduce them to numerous social vices.

Self-Centeredness and Antagonism among the Muslims

The selfish tendencies of Muslim politicians have historically led to their failures in Senatorial and House of Representative elections in predominantly Muslim areas. As an example, in the 1979 elections, Senator Luka Zanya Zing of UPN emerged victorious in the Muri Senatorial Zone, defeating Aliyu Ibrahim of GNPP, Buba Yero Mafindi of NPN, and Alhaji Bobboi Hamman of PRP. Similarly, in the Federal House of Representative Election of 1979, D.B. Kammai of GNPP won the Jalingo Federal Constituency against Umaru Sale of NPN, Musa B. Kona of UPN, and Sulai A. Sunkani of PRP.⁵⁷

Severe disparities and disagreements among Muslims have hindered their ability to provide strong leadership and succeed in gubernatorial elections in the state. This situation significantly impacts the political strength of Muslims, as seen in the 1992 political struggle between Dr. Ahmad Usman Jalingo, the gubernatorial candidate of NRC, and Reverend Jolly T. Nyame of SDP. Reverend Jolly T. Nyame emerged victorious in the election due to the Tsohon Sarki - Sabon Sarki dispute within the Muri Emirate.⁵⁸ During the 1992 election, Muslims were divided between SDP and NRC, resulting in the victory of Reverend Jolly T. Nyame of SDP against Dr. Ahmad Usman Jalingo of NRC.⁵⁹

In the 2003 gubernatorial election, Reverend Jolly T. Nyame of PDP contested against ANPP and DPP, respectively. Similarly, in the 2007 election, Pharm. Dan Fulani Dan Baba Suntai of PDP ACN and ANPP, respectively. In both the 2003 and 2007 gubernatorial elections, two strong Muslim candidates contested against one non-Muslim candidate. Ultimately, Reverend Jolly T. Nyame emerged as the winner in 2003, while Danbaba Danfulani Suntai emerged victorious in 2007, defeating their Muslim opponents.⁶⁰ Furthermore, in the 2011 gubernatorial election, Muslim candidates were defeated by Danbaba Danfulani Suntai due to internal conflicts within the CPC.

Inadequate Financial Resources

Funding for *Da'wah* activities in Taraba State is generally provided on a relatively small scale through voluntary contributions by individual Muslims, often in the form of *Fisabilillah* (charitable donations). The usual practice involves making appeals to individual Muslims, typically in mosques, to fund most of the

⁵⁷ Malam Bobboi Abubakr Umar, 52 years, Lecturer, College of Education, Zing, Zing LGA. He is an indigene of Sardauna LGA

⁵⁸ Aminu Jika, et al, "Report of the Committee for Investigation of Youth Restiveness and Drugs Abuse in Jalingo Local Government Area" Submitted to Alhaji Abdul-Nasir Bobboji, Executive Chairman, Jalingo LGA, 5th May, 2018, p.15.

⁵⁹ Corrigenda: The General Elections 1979 Report by Federal Electoral Commission, issued by Federal Electoral Commission, 2 King George V. Avenue, Lagos., PP. 14 and 213-256.

⁶⁰ Qadi Abdulmumini Abubakar, Jalingo, 72 years, Vice Chairman/Chairman Council of '*Ulamah*, Taraba State Muslims Council, Jalingo, Jalingo LGA, 16th May, 2020.

Da'wah activities in the state.⁶¹ Another method is for members of *Da'wah* groups to contribute and finance some of their activities. For example, in Yorro LGA, members contribute 300 Naira every two weeks to support their activities, but this limited funding makes it difficult for them to cover more than one village at a time, and they do not receive external financial support.⁶²

The inability of these organizations to engage in business ventures, such as Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) or cooperative societies, to generate internal funding for *Da'wah* activities and achieve self-reliance has resulted in a heavy reliance on government institutions. This over-reliance on the government greatly affects the social and economic interactions of Muslim scholars in the state. As a result, accountability and transparency become challenging, leading to suspicion among followers toward Muslim organizations and scholars. This lack of effective synergy and coordination among the state's numerous Muslim organizations, *Da'wah* groups, and scholars becomes inevitable.⁶³

Consequently, the culture of investment is lacking in most Muslim organizations in the state. The inadequate financial resources have a negative impact on the input and output of the *Du'at* (preachers). This is evident from how other missionary groups, through various poverty alleviation programs, micro-credit schemes, and economic empowerment initiatives, have been able to facilitate their efforts in attracting and retaining followers.

Lack of Unifying and Responsible leadership

The absence of responsible leadership within the Muslim community in Taraba State has resulted in institutional weakness, ignorance, poverty, unemployment, and individualistic tendencies. This has had a significant impact on the socio-political and economic strength of Muslims in the state. The struggle for political relevance, appointments, economic advantages, and social recognition among some members of the Taraba State Muslim Council in Jalingo has led to divisions and conflicts among scholars and Muslim leaders.⁶⁴

The lack of central leadership and the presence of numerous Islamic sects and organizations seriously threaten the political strength and social cohesion of Muslims. This sentiment is echoed by Malam Ahmad Muhammad Boyi, Chairman of the Council of *Ulamah* of JIBWIS in Kaduna.⁶⁵ This reflects the position of Abbas Bashir that; The absence of a central authority or leadership structure to which all Muslims can submit, politically and economically, is considered a major weakness of the Muslim *Ummah*.⁶⁶

The political strength of Muslims has suffered greatly due to the political miscalculations of Muslim scholars, leaders, and elites in the state. The absence of these stakeholders on the political center stage makes it difficult for Muslims to have a viable political agenda. This has been one of the contributing factors to

⁶¹ Senator Ibrahim Goje Gassol, 63 years, Politician, indigene of Gassol LGA, interviewed in Jalingo, Jalingo LGA, 5th January, 2020.

⁶² Qadi Abdulmumini Abubakar, Jalingo, *Op. Cit.*

⁶³ All informants are unanimous on this.

⁶⁴ Malam Nasiru Sindi Albani, 39 Years, Amir, *Da'wah* Group. Pantisawa, Yorro LGA, Taraba State, 27th April, 2020.

⁶⁵ Tijjani Usman Karofi (Ph.D.), *Op. Cit.*

⁶⁶ Arch. Ibrahim Kawuwa, 45 years, Registered Architect, Jalingo, Jalingo LGA, 6th January 2020.

the turbulent socio-political situations faced by Muslims in Taraba State since 1991.

The inability of Muslim Elites to form a United Front

The Muslim elites played a significant role in the creation of Taraba State and the establishment Jalingo as its headquarters. However, after the state was created, many of these Muslim elites demonstrated a lack of enthusiasm and engagement in various activities within the state. They failed to stay and work towards solidifying the power and influence of Muslims for future benefits.⁶⁷ The attitude of Muslim elites towards politics is seen as a major cause of the challenges facing Muslims in Taraba State. Many elites prioritize their individual interests over the collective interests of Muslims in the state. This lukewarm attitude of the elites has led to internal crises and the loss of political relevance for Muslims in the state.⁶⁸

The inability of Muslim elites to form a united front has a negative impact on the progress and development of Muslims in Taraba State and the propagation of Islam in general. The elites are often accused of being self-centered and antagonistic towards each other, which hampers the Muslims' ability to attain political power and contributes to economic, social, and moral decline within the Muslim population.⁶⁹ Indeed, the absence of external support from Muslim elites and bourgeoisie residing outside the state makes it challenging for Muslims in Taraba State to organize concerted efforts to address their socio-political and economic challenges.

CONCLUSION

Taraba State exhibits religious diversity, with the presence of the three major religions in Nigeria: African Traditional Religion, Islam, and Christianity. The traditional religion was the earliest belief system among various ethnic groups in the state. Islam gradually spread in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, while Christianity arrived in the state around the early twentieth century. As a result, Taraba State has become a multi-religious society with a significant number of adherents to Islam and Christianity.

Historically, Muslims in Taraba State have been known for their loyalty, obedience, tolerance, and law-abiding nature. They value good neighborliness, tolerance, and support not only within their own community but also towards people of different faiths. Muslims in the past held significant socio-economic and political influence in their respective areas. However, from 2003 to 2020, the strength and unity of Muslims in the state began to decline due to divisions along political, ethnic, sectarian, and organizational lines.

Internal conflicts and disputes, such as disagreements over chieftaincy positions and power struggles, have contributed to the division among Muslims.

⁶⁷ Justice Isa Muhammad Sambo, *Op. Cit.*

⁶⁸ Bashir, Abbas, "Redeeming the Future Strategic Initiative for the Growth and Development of the Muslim Ummah", Being an Inaugural Lecture delivered on the Occasion of the Inauguration of the Council Committees of the Taraba State Muslim Council, 2nd Zul-Hijjah 1426, Equivalent to 1st January, 2006, p.7

⁶⁹ Qadi Muhammad Badamasi Aliyu, *Op. Cit.*

Lack of cohesive power, internal divisions on minor issues, lack of patriotism, the pursuit of vengeance, illiteracy, lack of exposure, fear, and greed are among the factors that have bewildered the socio-political and economic status of Muslims in Taraba State.

It is important to note that these challenges are not unique to Muslims but can be observed in various communities and religious groups across different regions. Overcoming these divisions and promoting unity, tolerance, and mutual respect among the religious groups is crucial for the progress and development of Taraba State as a whole.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Certainly, here are some recommendations to address the challenges and promote unity and development among Muslims in Taraba State:

- i. Muslim organizations should strive to foster greater unity among Muslims in the state by promoting a sense of shared purpose and working towards a unified leadership structure. This can help in coordinating efforts and addressing common concerns.
- ii. Muslim scholars, religious leaders, elites, and politicians should actively promote tolerance, understanding, and harmonious relationships between different groups in the state. Emphasizing the importance of mutual respect and cooperation can help bridge divides and promote a more inclusive society.
- iii. Islamic organizations and individual investors should consider investing in the communication industry, such as electronic and print media, as well as computer and internet services. This can provide platforms for effective da'wah and facilitate the dissemination of Islamic knowledge and teachings.
- iv. Islamic organizations and philanthropists should establish an Educational Trust Fund dedicated to addressing the educational backwardness among Muslims. This can support initiatives such as scholarships, school infrastructure development, and educational programs aimed at improving the educational opportunities for Muslim children and youth.
- v. Muslim rulers, in collaboration with the Muslim council, should work towards strengthening institutions of Zakat and Waqf. These institutions can be utilized to implement poverty alleviation and economic empowerment programs that directly benefit the Muslim community.
- vi. Muslim professionals should consider forming Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Human and Civil Rights Groups focused on defending the interests of Islam and Muslims in the state. These organizations can advocate for the rights of Muslims, promote social justice, and contribute to the overall development of the community.

By implementing these recommendations, it is hoped that Muslims in Taraba State can overcome their challenges, foster unity, and work towards the

socio-economic and political development of their communities while upholding the values of Islam.

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