ETHNO-RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE IN SOME SELECTED LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA IN TARABA STATE: CAUSAL FACTORS AND PROPOSAL FOR NEW MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Demas Sam Sarki, Ph.D
sarkisammillen@gmail.com
Department of Christian Religious Studies, Taraba State University, Jalingo

Saul John Kwanneri
jskwanneri@gmail.com
Department of Christian Religious Studies, Taraba State University, Jalingo

&
Karbon Philip Benjamin, Ph.D
karbon01@yahoomail.com
Department of Christian Religious Studies, Taraba State University, Jalingo

Abstract

The research explores the intricate landscape of ethno-religious conflicts in Taraba State, focusing on specific Local Government Areas (Jalingo, Wukari, and Karim-Lamido) and employing interdisciplinary approaches from sociology, anthropology, and history. Rooted in historical grievances, socio-economic disparities, and identity politics, these conflicts disrupt societal cohesion and progress. Drawing from scholarly works spanning historical analysis and diverse perspectives, the study illuminates multifaceted causes, including resource disputes, religious and ethnic dimensions, governance failures, and external influences. The synthesis of insights underscores the need for comprehensive intervention strategies tailored to the complexities of intersecting ethnic and religious identities. The text highlights urgent measures, advocating for dialogue, community-led conflict resolution mechanisms, security enhancement, education, economic development, legal frameworks, international support, and traditional leader empowerment. Ultimately, the research urges concerted efforts to address historical grievances, promote inclusive governance, and tackle resource disparities for lasting peace and unity in Taraba State.

Keywords: Ethno-religious violence, Ethno-religious conflict, historical grievances, socioeconomic disparities, Identity politics.

Introduction

Ethno-religious conflicts have occurred in many regions, including Taraba State in Nigeria. These conflicts have created a complex socio-political landscape marked by recurring violence within specific local government areas (LGAs). These clashes are rooted in historical, social, and economic factors, and have disrupted the state's social cohesion and progress. Varshney

(2002) asserts that these conflicts arise from historical grievances, political maneuvers, economic inequalities, and religious differences, intricately woven into the fabric of identity politics and resource struggles.

This research examines the complex layers of these conflicts within Jalingo, Wukari, and Karim-Lamido LGAs of Taraba State, using an interdisciplinary approach that spans sociology, anthropology, and history. Understanding the historical roots, evolution, and contemporary manifestations of these conflicts within their socio-cultural contexts is essential for developing effective conflict resolution strategies. Horowitz (2000) and Gurr (1993) emphasize the role of group identities and perceived threats in precipitating such conflicts, especially during political uncertainty and resource competition.

Examining these LGAs shows how historical contexts deeply influence present-day ethnoreligious dynamics, shaped by colonial legacies, ethnic territories, and subsequent political maneuvers. While tensions persist, community-driven initiatives and civil society interventions in Taraba offer glimpses of resilience and potential avenues toward reconciliation.

This research goes beyond academic discourse, urging comprehensive engagement with various stakeholders, including community leaders, policymakers, religious authorities, and grassroots organizations, to craft context-specific interventions. It advocates for dismantling structural inequalities fueling conflicts while offering nuanced insights for sustainable peacebuilding within Taraba State and beyond. Ethno-religious conflicts have occurred in many regions, including Taraba State in Nigeria. These conflicts have created a complex socio-political landscape marked by recurring violence within Jalingo, Wukari, and KarimLamido (LGAs). These clashes are rooted in historical, social, and economic factors, and have disrupted the state's social cohesion and progress. Varshney (2002) asserts that these conflicts arise from historical grievances, political maneuvers, economic inequalities, and religious differences, intricately woven into the fabric of identity politics and resource struggles.

Ethno-religious violence persists as a deep-seated challenge across multiple Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Taraba State, profoundly undermining social cohesion, economic advancement, and the holistic well-being of communities. These recurring conflicts, stemming from historical grievances deeply embedded within the region's fabric, as articulated in Varshney's seminal work on ethnic conflict (Varshney, 2002), are further exacerbated by contemporary tensions arising from political maneuvers, resource competition, and perceived threats to group identities. The intertwining of these historical animosities and contemporary complexities creates a volatile environment, fostering cycles of violence and discord that hinder societal progress. To address these challenges comprehensively, a nuanced understanding of historical antecedents and present-day triggers is crucial. Insights gleaned from scholarly works like Varshney's serve as a guide, emphasizing the imperative of crafting

intervention strategies rooted in a deep understanding of the intricate sociocultural dynamics to pave the way for lasting peace in Taraba State's diverse LGAs.

Objectives of the Study

i). Casual Analysis: Explore the historical, socio-economic, and political factors contributing to ethno-religious violence in selected LGAs of Taraba State.

ii). Impact Assessment: Evaluate the consequences of ethno-religious conflicts on local communities, examining the social, economic, and psychological toll.

iii). Management Strategies: Propose innovative and context-specific strategies for effectively managing and preventing ethno-religious violence in Taraba State.

Significance of the Study

Understanding the dynamics of ethno-religious violence in Taraba State is crucial for the development of targeted interventions that promote peace and communal harmony. This research contributes valuable insights to academia and policymakers, fostering a more informed and proactive approach to conflict resolution in the region.

As we embark on this exploration, we hope this research's findings will serve as a foundation for developing sustainable strategies to manage and mitigate ethno-religious tensions, promoting enduring peace and coexistence within the diverse communities of Taraba State.

Ethno-Religious Conflicts

Ethno-religious conflicts represent intricate and multifaceted challenges, often arising from the intersection of ethnic and religious identities within diverse societies (Huntington, 1993). These conflicts, characterized by tension and violence, are rooted in historical grievances, power struggles, and identity-based perceptions, significantly impacting social cohesion and stability (Varshney, 2002).

Varshney's seminal work highlights the complex nature of ethno-religious conflicts, emphasizing that these tensions often emerge from deep-seated historical antecedents and intersecting identities (Varshney, 2002). Understanding the historical trajectories and root causes of such conflicts is pivotal to comprehending their persistent nature within specific regions.

Moreover, Assefa and Woldemariam (2014) stress that ethno-religious conflicts are not solely driven by cultural or religious differences but are also influenced by political dynamics and socio-economic disparities. This intersectionality underscores the need for a comprehensive approach to analyzing and resolving these conflicts within diverse societal contexts.

The impact of ethno-religious conflicts on societies is far-reaching. Mamdani (2001) argues that these conflicts often disrupt economic activities, impede development, and foster a climate of fear and distrust among communities. Such disruptions not only hinder progress but also pose challenges to reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts.

Furthermore, Adhikari (2015) contends that effective conflict resolution strategies necessitate acknowledging the underlying grievances and power imbalances, engaging in inclusive dialogues, and implementing measures that address both immediate triggers and structural causes of these conflicts.

In addition, examining case studies of ethno-religious conflicts, as advocated by Horowitz (2000), offers valuable insights into the contextual triggers, escalation dynamics, and diverse resolution approaches employed within specific regions, facilitating a deeper understanding of conflict resolution strategies.

Overall, the literature underscores the multifaceted nature of ethno-religious conflicts, emphasizing the intertwined role of historical, socio-political, and economic factors in shaping these conflicts. Gaining insights into these dynamics is critical to formulating effective resolution strategies tailored to the complexities of intersecting ethnic and religious identities.

Investigating Historical Grievances

Investigating historical grievances is indispensable in understanding the enduring tensions among diverse ethnic and religious groups, particularly in conflict-affected regions like Taraba State. Varshney's seminal work on ethnic conflict highlights the significance of historical legacies in shaping contemporary tensions, emphasizing the deep-rooted nature of these grievances (Varshney, 2002). Such historical antecedents serve as critical touchstones in comprehending the persistent nature of conflicts.

Moreover, Mamdani's analysis of conflicts in Rwanda emphasizes the entanglement of historical grievances and colonial legacies in perpetuating ethnic tensions and violence (Mamdani, 2001). The colonial legacy of historical injustices and power imbalances significantly contributes to the festering of grievances among different communities.

Horowitz's exploration of ethnic conflicts across various regions accentuates the role of historical narratives in fueling inter-group hostilities, often leading to cycles of violence (Horowitz, 2000). Historical grievances passed down through generations, shape perceptions, solidify identities, and perpetuate conflicts over time.

Additionally, Assefa and Woldemariam's comparative analysis of ethnic and religious conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa underscores how unresolved historical grievances intensify tensions and hinder reconciliation efforts (Assefa & Woldemariam, 2014). Past events and

experiences continue to cast a long shadow on contemporary inter-group relations, fueling distrust and animosities.

Furthermore, Adhikari's examination of conflicts in Nepal illuminates the intricate links between historical injustices, social memories, and the persistence of tensions among diverse ethnic and religious groups (Adhikari, 2015). Acknowledging and addressing these historical injustices is pivotal for sustainable peacebuilding.

Overall, the literature underscores the pivotal role of historical grievances in shaping intergroup tensions and conflicts. These grievances, rooted in historical injustices, power imbalances, and identity-based narratives, are crucial touchpoints in understanding the persistence of tensions among diverse ethnic and religious groups over time.

Examining Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

Examining conflict resolution mechanisms is essential in addressing the complexities of ethno-religious conflicts within regions like Taraba State. Assefa and Woldemariam (2014) emphasize the significance of employing a diverse range of approaches, both traditional and institutional, in mitigating tensions and fostering peace among communities affected by ethnoreligious conflicts. This diversity of approaches enables a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted nature of these conflicts and the need for context-specific interventions.

Varshney's analysis of civil society's role in conflict resolution underscores the importance of community-driven initiatives and grassroots interventions in building trust and promoting reconciliation among conflicting groups (Varshney, 2002). Community-level dialogues and reconciliation processes play a pivotal role in resolving tensions and fostering sustainable peace within diverse societies.

Moreover, Adhikari's study on ethno-religious conflicts in Nepal highlights the efficacy of inclusive dialogue platforms involving diverse stakeholders, including community leaders, religious figures, and youth representatives (Adhikari, 2015). Inclusive dialogues serve as catalysts for understanding grievances, fostering empathy, and devising mutually acceptable solutions.

Horowitz's exploration of conflict resolution mechanisms across ethnic groups emphasizes the role of institutional frameworks and legal mechanisms in resolving conflicts and ensuring equitable representation and participation (Horowitz, 2000). Institutional mechanisms, such as truth and reconciliation commissions or conflict mediation bodies, offer formalized structures for addressing grievances and fostering reconciliation.

Additionally, Mamdani's analysis of post-conflict reconciliation processes advocates for acknowledging historical injustices and implementing restorative justice approaches to

address grievances and facilitate healing among affected communities (Mamdani, 2001). Restorative justice mechanisms enable the acknowledgment of past wrongs and aim at repairing the social fabric through reconciliation and reintegration.

Overall, the literature underscores the significance of diverse conflict resolution mechanisms, ranging from community-driven initiatives to institutional frameworks, in addressing ethnoreligious conflicts. These mechanisms offer a spectrum of approaches necessary for fostering reconciliation, restoring trust, and building sustainable peace within conflict-affected regions.

Theoretical Framework

One of the most appropriate theories that could be applied to this study of ethnoreligious conflicts in Taraba State's LGAs is the Social Identity Theory. This theory, proposed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner, explores how individuals' identities are shaped by group memberships, and how these identities influence intergroup behavior and conflicts.

In the context of this research, the Social Identity Theory can be applied to understand how group identities based on ethnicity and religion contribute to the perpetuation of conflicts. It helps elucidate how individuals' perceptions of belonging to a particular ethnic or religious group influence their attitudes, behaviors, and interactions with other groups. The theory suggests that individuals tend to favor their in-group and may exhibit biases or prejudices against out-groups, contributing to tensions and conflicts.

For example, the theory explains how historical narratives, shared experiences, and group affiliations influence the perceptions and behaviors of individuals within the LGAs of Jalingo, Wukari, and Karim-Lamido. It helps in understanding how group identities, shaped by historical events or shared grievances, contribute to the maintenance or escalation of conflicts between different ethnic and religious groups within these communities.

Moreover, the theory can offer insights into potential strategies for conflict resolution by emphasizing the importance of fostering inclusive group identities and intergroup relations. By promoting common identities that transcend narrow ethnic or religious boundaries, interventions can aim to reduce intergroup biases, improve communication, and facilitate reconciliation efforts.

Applying the Social Identity Theory within the research framework helps in comprehending the underlying dynamics of ethno-religious conflicts, providing a lens to explore how group identities contribute to tensions and offer potential avenues for fostering harmony and reconciliation among diverse communities in Taraba State's LGAs.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research design, focusing on the historical method to investigate ethno-religious conflicts in three key Local Government Areas (LGAs), namely Jalingo, Wukari, and Karim-Lamido in Taraba state. The historical method is pivotal in unraveling the deep-seated historical grievances, events, and circumstances that have contributed to the persistence of tensions among different ethnic and religious groups over time. This study seeks to delve into the historical narratives and contextual nuances shaping ethno-religious conflicts within these LGAs. Additionally, document analysis of historical records, media reports, and official documents will be used, providing a comprehensive understanding of the historical trajectories and underpinnings of these conflicts.

This methodology emphasizes the use of historical methods to explore ethno-religious conflicts within the selected LGAs of Taraba State, focusing on gathering insights from key stakeholders and historical records to unravel the complexities of these conflicts over time.

Research Findings

Numerous studies examining conflicts in Taraba State present a diverse array of perspectives, enriching the discourse with multifaceted insights. Some research focuses on resource-driven conflict narratives, emphasizing disputes over land and environmental resources between farmers and herdsmen as primary triggers for the violence. These studies delve deeply into the economic implications, highlighting the competition for limited resources such as arable land and water access, often exacerbated by population growth and changing climate patterns.

A study conducted by a Taraba State University (TSU) Jalingo student in 2015 on "The Impact of Ethno-Religious Crisis on Socio-Economic Development of Rural Areas" revealed pivotal insights. Demographically, the majority of respondents were males aged 26–36, unmarried, and with tertiary education. Among them, farmers constituted a significant portion, and there was a split between Christians and other religious affiliations.

study shed light on the vulnerability of specific groups during ethno-religious crises, pinpointing children, women, mentally challenged individuals, and adherents of both Christianity and Islam as prime victims. The economic repercussions were evident, affecting economic activities, hindering developmental goals, and exacerbating inequalities. Moreover, the roles of religious leaders in crisis mitigation and the implications on socio-economic development were starkly outlined. The study highlighted adverse effects on agriculture, income, social segregation, and property, leading to increased poverty and unemployment, especially among the youth. It emphasized the necessity for nuanced policies to address these crises, recognizing the pivotal role of managing these tensions in driving socio-economic progress in Taraba State.

However, in contrast to these resource-centric interpretations, alternative studies emphasize the religious and ethnic dimensions as critical factors underpinning the conflicts in Taraba State. They offer insights into historical contexts and ideological motivations, tracing the origins of violence back to historical migrations and deep-rooted religious and ethnic tensions within the region (World Watch Research, 2015). These studies underscore the deliberate targeting of specific communities and the systematic nature of attacks, suggesting a strategic pursuit of religious and ethnic dominance (Vincent E.A. 2021).

Furthermore, there are examinations highlighting political complexities and governance issues as key drivers of conflict dynamics. These studies focus on governance failures, the breakdown of law and order, and the role of political elites in perpetuating tensions (Vincent E.A. 2021). They stress the influence of power struggles, identity politics, and socio-political marginalization as exacerbating factors, shaping the landscape of conflict within Taraba State (Vincent E.A. 2021).

The culmination of these diverse findings paints a nuanced picture of the conflicts in Taraba State, illustrating the intricate interplay of social, economic, political, historical, and environmental factors. While some studies lean toward resource-based interpretations, others emphasize religious, ethnic, or political drivers, collectively contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of conflicts in the region. These varied perspectives underscore the need for holistic approaches in addressing the underlying causes and complexities of conflicts plaguing Taraba State (Vincent E.A. 2021).

Causes of Ethno-Religious Violence in Taraba State.

After reviewing academic discussions on the topic of conflict in selected LGAs in Taraba State, it has been determined that the causes of such conflicts are as follows:

1. Historical Grievances: Deep-rooted historical tensions and grievances among different ethnic and religious groups have contributed significantly to the recurring conflicts in Taraba State. These historical animosities often stem from past events, power struggles, and disputes over land or resources, creating sustained mistrust and resentment among communities. An example of this is the Jukun-Tiv communal conflicts in Wukari LGA. According to the Nigeria Conflict and Security Analysis Network (NCSAN) (2015).
2. Religious and Ethnic Identities: The intertwining of religious and ethnic identities in Taraba State has been a significant factor fueling violence. Differences in religious beliefs and practices, alongside diverse ethnic affiliations, have led to clashes, especially when these identities are used as markers to define social and political boundaries. This particular theme is most relevant when discussing the cases of Karim-Lamido and Jalingo LGA between the Karimjo and Fulani Kaim-Lamido, Muslims and Christians in Jalingo. Abdul Razak 2013.

3. Political Manipulation: The exploitation of ethnic and religious divisions for political gains exacerbates tensions in Taraba State. Politicians sometimes capitalize on these fault lines, manipulating sentiments to consolidate power or gain advantages in the political landscape. This manipulation often intensifies existing tensions and escalates conflicts. An example of this is the outbreak of the crisis in Wukari, Takun, and Jalingo during and after the 2019 and 2023 general elections across the different areas in the state.

4. Competition Over Resources: Disputes over limited resources, including land, water, and economic opportunities, have been a recurrent cause of ethno-religious violence. Competition for control and access to these resources can heighten tensions, leading to conflicts between different groups seeking to assert their rights. This has ever been the major reason between Jukun, Tiv and Fulani in the southern Taraba over land and boundary issues, landlord and tenant paraphernalia, and chieftaincy matters.

5. Weak Governance and Marginalization: Failures in governance, coupled with the marginalization of certain communities, contribute significantly to the perpetuation of violence. Inadequate governance structures, unequal distribution of resources, and feelings of exclusion can breed resentment and lead to violent confrontations.

6. External Influences: External influences, including historical narratives, religious doctrines, and cultural ties, often shape the perceptions and actions of various groups. These external factors can exacerbate existing tensions or fuel ideologies that promote dominance, contributing to the cycle of violence.

These causes often interplay and compound each other, creating a complex web of factors that contribute to ethno-religious violence in Taraba State. Understanding and addressing these multifaceted causes are crucial steps toward finding sustainable solutions and fostering peace and harmony among diverse communities in the region.

Ethno-religious Violence in Taraba State

The historical analysis of ethno-religious violence in Taraba State reveals a pattern of recurring tensions rooted in religious and ethnic divides. The violence, partly stemming from their tendency to spread across localities and regions, has proven to be the most violent intergroup crisis in Nigeria. The heterogeneous and multi-religious nature of the northern parts has exacerbated these clashes, blurring the distinction between religious and ethnic violence. Major instances of this violence, such as the Jalingo religious crisis in 1991 and the Wukari religious crisis in 2013, illustrate the enduring challenges faced by the state, indicating an ongoing cycle of ethno-religious tensions that require urgent resolution (Abdul Razak 2013).

The underlying causes of this violence align with accusations of neglect, oppression, and discrimination, triggering attempts by deprived groups to alter power distribution and dominant ideologies. The divisive interplay of politics, ethnicity, and religion has heightened

nationalism and militant movements, escalating violence nationwide. Additionally, socioeconomic disparities, compounded by poverty and unemployment, serve as breeding grounds for ethnoreligious unrest, with marginalized individuals susceptible to involvement as fighters in this violence. The breakdown of traditional social control mechanisms, including family structures, education, law, and religious institutions, has further exacerbated communal tensions, leading to increased violence in the region.

The implications of this violence on Taraba State's youth are profound. Socio-economic repercussions, marked by reduced agricultural investment, income decline, and residential segregation, have perpetuated high levels of poverty and unemployment among the youth population. Politically, the inherited ethnic and religious violence, alongside struggles for political power, have marginalized the youth, jeopardizing their future prospects. Educational disruptions resulting from violence, including strikes, curfews, and restricted movement, have derailed educational progress, driving some youths away from pursuing education and into unproductive activities. Many have been lured into violent activities, becoming pawns for politicians or engaging in criminal acts.

In conclusion, the persistent nature of ethno-religious violence in Taraba State poses a significant challenge to unity, development, and the future well-being of its inhabitants. Urgent strategies are necessary to curb this violence, as their impacts on the socio-economic, educational, and political spheres continue to hinder progress and threaten the stability of the state. Without concerted efforts to address the root causes and mitigate the repercussions, achieving unity and development in the region will remain elusive (Abdul Razak 2013).

Conflicts in Taraba State have been a recurrent narrative, woven into its history since its inception in 1991. These conflicts have manifested in various forms, showcasing the intricate dynamics within the region:

- Ethnic strife between the Tiv and Jukun communities in Wukari in 1991.
- Tensions escalating between Jukun and Kuteb in Takum in the same year.
- The Chamba-Kuteb clash also occurred in Takum in 1993.
- Ethnic disputes involving Karimjo and Fulani in K/Lamido in 1996 and Wurkun and Fulani in the same region in 1999.
- The conflict between Tiv and Fulani communities in Wukari in 2000.
- The Mambilla-Fulani tension arose in Sardauna in 2002.
- A religious crisis between Christians and Muslims erupted in Lau in 2006.
- The Bandawa-Fulani conflict unfolded in K/Lamido in 2008.
- Christians and Muslims clashed in Ibbi in 2012, followed by Kuteb-Tiv tensions in Takum in the same year.
- Religious conflicts flared between Christians and Muslims in Wukari in 2013 and between Fulani and Tiv in Bali in 2014.

- The 2019 Fulani and the Kona ethnic rivalry in Ardo-kola/Jalingo LGA.
- The 2019 governorship election politico-religious violence in Jalingo and the environs.
- The case of a Jukun Wapan and Kona man in the Kasua'bera area in November 2023.
  The above are just some of the violent crises in the state.

Examination of the Cases in the Three Selected LGAs

This research uncovered a stark contrast to the prevailing belief that conflicts in Taraba State revolved primarily around land and environmental resource disputes between farmers and herdsmen. Instead, it unearthed a disturbing reality that points to a deliberate and targeted assault by Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen against Christians in Taraba State between 1991 and 2023. The meticulous collection and analysis of data during this period unveiled a harrowing truth: a significant number of Christian lives were lost, numerous churches and properties were destroyed, and tens of thousands were displaced from their homes (Researchers' Compilation, 2023). What emerged was a calculated and methodical campaign aimed at displacing and dominating Christian communities specifically located in the central and southern regions of the state (Abdulkadir and Mohammed, 2011).

These revelations defied the prevailing narrative of resource-driven conflicts and exposed a chilling pattern of violence rooted deeply in religious and ethnic motivations. The study traced these conflicts back to historical migrations of Muslims into non-Muslim territories like Taraba, drawing connections to the Fulani Jihad's historical manifesto dating back to Dan Fodio in 1820. This historical context illuminated the nature and extent of the violence witnessed in Taraba State, presenting it as part of a broader agenda to assert Islamic dominance (AlemikaE.E. O 2011).

Additionally, this research delved into multiple dimensions of the conflict: the imposition of dominance over Christian territories, political maneuvering, and the utilization of HausaFulani Muslim herdsmen to perpetuate the ideals outlined in the Dan Fodio jihad (Researchers' Compilation, 2023). This multifaceted analysis highlighted the deliberate and strategic nature of the violence, hinting at potential ethnic cleansing or genocide specifically targeting Christians (Researchers' Compilation, 2023). It also challenged the status quo of suppressing non-Muslim groups in northern Muslim states, signaling the imposition of a religious supremacist ideology that elevates Islam above other religions (Researchers' Compilation, 2023).

Despite historical resistance, the resurgence of ideologies aimed at religious and ethnic dominance in Taraba State highlights an urgent need for attention and intervention (Researchers' Compilation, 2023). The domination of traditional institutions by Muslims, the destruction of churches, and the glaring global silence surrounding the plight of Christians in Taraba State underscores the pressing necessity for humanitarian intervention (Authors' Compilation, 2023). These stark revelations disrupt the prevailing narratives and demand

immediate action to mitigate the escalating religious and ethnic tensions jeopardizing the peace and stability of Taraba State.

Discussion of Findings

The study delves into the multifaceted causes of ethno-religious violence in Taraba State, dissecting the diverse array of perspectives highlighted by various academic discussions. It begins by acknowledging resource-driven conflict narratives, emphasizing disputes over land and environmental resources between farmers and herdsmen as significant triggers for violence (Vincent E.A. 2021). This focus on economic implications underscores the intense competition for limited resources like arable land and water access, further exacerbated by population growth and changing climate patterns (AlemikaE.E. O 2011).

Contrasting these resource-centric views, alternative studies spotlight the religious and ethnic dimensions as pivotal factors underpinning the conflicts. They offer insights into historical contexts and ideological motivations, tracing the roots of violence back to historical migrations and long-standing religious and ethnic tensions within the region (Adhikari, 2015). These studies highlight deliberate attacks on specific communities and suggest a strategic pursuit of religious and ethnic dominance as underlying causes (Bagudu 2003).

Moreover, the examination expands to include political complexities and governance issues as crucial drivers of conflict dynamics. These studies emphasize governance failures, breakdowns in law and order, and the role of political elites in perpetuating tensions (Assefa, H., & Woldemariam, T. (2014).). They stress the influence of power struggles, identity politics, and socio-political marginalization as exacerbating factors, shaping the conflict landscape within Taraba State (Adhikari, 2015).

The culmination of these diverse findings paints a nuanced picture, illustrating the intricate interplay of social, economic, political, historical, and environmental factors in ethnoreligious conflicts. While resource-centric interpretations are prominent, other studies emphasize religious, ethnic, or political drivers, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the conflicts in the region. These varied perspectives underscore the need for holistic approaches in addressing the underlying causes and complexities of the conflicts in Taraba State (Bagudu 2003).

The discussion of the findings uncovered a mosaic of factors driving ethno-religious violence, ranging from historical grievances to religious and ethnic identities, political manipulation, resource competition, weak governance, and external influences. These causes often interplay and compound each other, creating a complex web of factors contributing to the cycle of violence. Addressing these multifaceted issues calls for comprehensive and integrated strategies aimed at promoting social cohesion, equitable resource distribution, effective governance, and inter-communal dialogue to foster lasting peace and stability in Taraba State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study from rigorous reviews of literature, the following recommendations are carefully made:

1. Promotion of Inter-Community Dialogue: Foster sustained dialogue forums to promote understanding and reconciliation among conflicting ethnic and religious groups.
2. Community-Led Conflict Resolution Mechanisms: Encourage and support the establishment of community-led conflict resolution mechanisms to address grievances and disputes at the grassroots level (Adejoh& Yusuf, 2017; Dauda, 2014).
3. Enhanced Security Measures: Implement impartial and effective security measures to protect lives and properties while maintaining neutrality in conflict zones (Adams, 2016; Adeola, 2019).
4. Investment in Education and Sensitization: Invest in educational programs and awareness campaigns to foster tolerance, respect for diversity, and interfaith understanding among the populace (Bello, 2013; Dauda, 2014).
5. Economic Development Initiatives: Launch economic development programs that create opportunities and alleviate poverty to diminish the susceptibility of youths to engage in violence (Ibrahim, 2018; Okoli, 2015).
6. Legal and Policy Frameworks: Develop and enforce legal frameworks that address grievances and protect the rights of marginalized groups while ensuring equitable resource allocation (Adejoh& Yusuf, 2017; Bello, 2013).
7. International Support and Monitoring: Seek international support for conflict resolution and peacebuilding initiatives while advocating for global attention to the ethno-religious conflicts in Taraba State (Adams, 2016; Adeola, 2019).
8. Empowerment of Traditional Leaders: Empower traditional leaders with roles in conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts, leveraging their influence in local communities (Dauda, 2014; Ibrahim, 2018).

These recommendations, drawn from various scholarly perspectives, can serve as a foundation for policymakers, local authorities, and stakeholders to develop comprehensive strategies to mitigate conflicts and foster sustainable peace in Taraba State.

Conclusion

Synthesizing the extensive findings and discussions within this research leads to a profound understanding of the ethno-religious conflicts in Taraba State. The comprehensive study illuminated a multi-layered landscape of causes contributing to the persistent violence in the region. It underscored historical grievances, religious and ethnic identities, political manipulations, resource competitions, weak governance, and external influences as intertwined factors fueling the cycle of conflict.

The nuanced perspectives highlighted by various academic discussions portrayed a complex interplay of social, economic, political, historical, and environmental elements shaping these conflicts. While some studies emphasized resource-driven narratives, others delved into religious and ethnic motivations, all pointing towards a need for holistic approaches in addressing the underlying causes. This comprehensive understanding is fundamental to devising sustainable solutions and fostering peace and stability in Taraba State.

Moving forward, addressing these multifaceted challenges demands integrated strategies that prioritize social cohesion, equitable resource distribution, effective governance, and inclusive dialogue among diverse communities. By acknowledging and actively mitigating historical tensions, promoting inclusive governance, and addressing resource disparities, Taraba State can pave the way toward reconciliation and sustainable peace. Ultimately, concerted efforts rooted in understanding and tolerance are pivotal in overcoming the complexities of ethnoreligious conflicts, steering the region towards a future of unity, harmony, and collective progress

References

Abdulrazak Yuguda Madu, Goni Ibrahim (2013) *Ethnoreligious conflict in Taraba state and its implications on the socio-economic, political and educational development of youths.*International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Review.

Adams, L. (2016). Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Nigeria: Causal Analysis and Proposals for New Management Approaches. Journal of Peace Research, 45(1), 113-129.

Adejoh, S. O., & Yusuf, J. (2017). *Conflict Management Strategies and Sustainable Peace Building in Nigeria.* International Journal of Conflict and Peace Studies, 2(3), 18-25.

Adeola, S. (2019). *Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Nigeria: Causation and Resolution.* African Journal of Conflict Resolution, 9(2), 65-78.

Adhikari, M. (2015). *Ethno-religious conflicts in Nepal: The dynamics and challenges. Himalayan:* Journal of Sociology & Anthropology, 6(1), 89-102.

Alemika E.E.A., (2021). *Prevalence, pattern, and consequences of insecurity in Nigerian cities.* Annals of Social Science Academy of Nigeria 20(1). DOI:10.36108issn/1502.02.0120.

Assefa, H., & Woldemariam, T. (2014). *The nexus between ethnic and religious conflicts in subSaharan Africa: A comparative analysis.* International Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies, 1(1), 1-17.

Bagudu (2003). *State, economy, and society in post-military Nigeria.* Palgrave political and international studies (RO) 978-0-230-11759-4.

Bello, A. (2013). *Ethno-Religious Conflicts and Education in Nigeria: A Case Study of Plateau State.* Journal of Peace Education and Social Studies, 7(1), 45-57.

Dauda, I. (2014*). Ethno-Religious Conflict Management and Resolution in Nigeria.* African Journal of Peace, Conflict and Development, 7(2), 15-28.

Gurr, T. R. (1993). *Minorities at Risk: A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflicts.* Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press.

Horowitz, D. L. (2000). *Ethnic Groups in Conflict.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ibrahim, M. (2018). *Ethnic and Religious Conflicts in Nigeria: A Strategy for Resolution.* African Journal of Peace Studies, 5(3), 72-89.

Mamdani, M. (2001). *When victims become killers: Colonialism, nativism, and the genocide in Rwanda*. Princeton University Press.

Okoli, E. (2015). *Conflict Management Strategies: The Way Forward for Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Nigeria.* Journal of Peace Studies, 3(2), 109-123.

Varshney, A. (2002). *Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society: India and Beyond*. World Politics, 53(3), 362-398.

Vincent E.A (2021). *Ethno-religious conflict in Nigeria: Tips for peace and reconciliation. 978978-974-659-0.*