Peace-Building In Nigeria: Evaluating The Influence Of Tolerance And Peace Education In A Heterogeneous Society

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Abstract:

Violent conflicts have inflicted immeasurable damage on man and his environment, yet there seems no end to conflicts. While there have been debates over the connection between religion and violent conflicts, the world has not relented in the quest for solutions to the causes of religious and many other conflicts around the world; and especially in heterogeneous societies. In Nigeria for example, religion has been a major source of devastating violent conflicts which have ravaged the country for decades. Religion is replayed at almost every facet of the society as it has become a determining factor in the country's quest for lasting peace and development; yet it is not clear whether it is religion itself or the faithful that is the problem. No doubt, religion has a great impact on the actions and mind of man. This paper contends that the neglect of comprehensive peace education which centers on 'effective religious tolerance' and failure to inculcate the tenets of peaceful co-existence in Nigeria have been responsible for the unending rise in religious violence which have subjected the country to socio-economic retardation and human debasement. Hence, the paper examines the roles of religious faithful in promoting religious tolerance/violence. It evaluates the attitude of religious teachers/leaders in propagating violence; while emphasizing on the need to adopt comprehensive peace education. It shall answer questions on the roles of the government, family, school and mass media in teaching and encouraging a culture of tolerance and peaceful co-existence among members of the society; while making policy recommendations.

Keywords: **Nigeria, peace education, religion, tolerance, violence.**