

FOSTERING PEACE IN NIGERIA: THE INTERCONNECTED THREADS OF RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The Nigerian nation has been in dire need of peace and sustainable development since her independence in 1960. It is commonly accepted that peace and sustainable development complement each other. There can be no sustainable development without peace. The trajectory is that peace cannot thrive except the relevant developmental ethos is strengthened. The paper addresses how religion and philosophy, and their inalienable ethics could promote peace in Nigeria's developmental landscape. In addition, the study explores the role of religious and philosophical principles in advancing peace-building and sustainable development in Nigeria. The paper employed the historical research design as its methodology, through relevant primary and secondary sources of data. The religious and ethnic diversities in Nigeria are expected to foster rich sustainable development for the citizens. It is noteworthy that indigenous African philosophy and religious paradigm can bring about the desired sustainable development in the nation. The study elucidates the interconnectedness of religion, philosophy and communal values in the drive towards peace and sustainable development. The objective of the paper is to explicate the role of religion and philosophical paradigm as genuine pathway for peace-building in Nigeria. The integration of these would impact the social norm and governance, and promote sustainable development of the nation. The quest for peace in the nation should remain sacrosanct in the drive for sustainable development.

Keywords: Nigeria, Peace, Philosophy, Religion, and Sustainable Development

Introduction

Fostering peace in Nigeria through religion, philosophy and sustainable development entails integrating religious and philosophical principles and practices. This would enhance peace, harmony, and sustainable growth within the nation. Nigeria is characterized by rich religious and philosophical diversity which is propelled by the coexistence of multiple ethnic groups and cultures; each of them possesses its own religious and philosophical traditions. Religion and

philosophy serve as fundamental pillars in the nation, as they influence the various aspects of life and guide individuals and communities towards ethical harmonious and sustainable practices. Peace-building and sustainable development is crucial area of focus in Nigeria. They aim at addressing social, economic and political challenges in order to advance peace, prosperity and holistic well-being by promoting lasting peace and prosperity for the nation and holistic well-being for the citizens.

Religion is one of the principal concepts to be examined in this discourse. It is noteworthy that Okwueze (2003, in Uyanga, 2019:504) submits that “religion is a means of regulating a pattern of the life of a group of people, which also embraces experience, beliefs and knowledge of man that helps him to understand himself in relation to others, his social, physical and metaphysical world”. This definition replicates the interaction between man, his fellow man, his society, the cosmos and the Supreme Being. Ayantayo (2023:3) states that “various people have varied interpretations of what religion means in terms of its purpose, core, and significance. The term has been defined from sociological, anthropological, psychological, comparative, and philosophical perspectives since it is practised or understood by man”. The paper sets to examine the role of religion in enhancing peace and sustainable development in the Nigeria.

The nexus between philosophy and other concepts in the paper would be articulated. However, according to Omomia (2018) Philosophy is divided into four major branches which includes metaphysics (deals mainly with concepts beyond the physical realm). Metaphysics is divided into ontology, which deals with the meaning and nature of being, and, cosmology, which deals with the origin and structure of the world. Epistemology (deals with the origin and structure of knowledge). Knowledge can be acquired through reasoning, revelation, empiricism and intuition. Axiology (consists of ethics, which deals with human conduct and character, and, aesthetics,deals with beauty and man’s response to it). The fourth classification is logic (the science of reasoning or argument).

The paper attempts to contextualize philosophy within the “looking glass” of peace. It could be stated from the philosophical standpoint, that peace “is the presumption state of man in society, as God established it, that is, it is a divine state of perfection or earthly expression of God’s kingdom that is yet uncorrupted” (Enamudu, Ojo, Ebobo and Adeniji, 2015:11). Two notable philosophers examined the philosophical definition of peace. Saint Augustine of

Hippo drew a distinction between “two cities”, the first city he referred to as the “city of God”. This is built on perfect heavenly tranquillity and spiritual salvation. The second is the “earthly city of man” which is built on greed, corruption and possessive impulses (Enamudu et al, 2015). Another philosopher, John Jacques Rousseau saw man from his original state, without obvious desires. He stated that at that original state, man existed as a free and gentle savage, not causing any harm. Man at that state was free with very few desires, which later became corrupted, with greed setting in. This development interrupted the former state of tranquillity enjoyed by man. The predominant consequence of the relationship between philosophy and peace emphasizes the interconnectedness of man, society and culture. It actually draws out man’s responsibility towards his community and fellow man. This would foster communal responsibility, ethical relationship, equitable development and environmental stewardship. The resultant effect is sustainable development. The paper addresses how philosophy deals with issues that engender sustainable development in Nigeria.

Peace as an existential phenomenon has been subjected to varied interpretations and understanding. It is misleading to presume that the absence of war often signifies the presence of peace. War is one form of violence which is physical and direct. Negative peace means no direct violence. The other aspect of war (violence) is replete in negative social conditions such as “poverty, exclusion, intimidation, oppression, want, fear and several psychological pressures” (Ibeanu, 2019:4). These are clogs in the wheel of sustainable development. The opposite of this is a “state of law or civil government, a state of justice or goodness, a balance or equilibrium of powers” (Enamudu, Ojo, Ebobo and Adeniji, 2015:6). The desire for peace and sustainable development would continue to elude any nation, even without war, when there is “pervasive poverty, oppression of the poor by the rich, police brutality, intimidation of ordinary people by those in power, oppression of women and monopolization of resources and power by a section of the society” (Ibeanu, 2019:4).

Positive and negative peace represents different dimensions of peace and conflict. These concepts were made popular by Johann Galtung (1968), a Norwegian Sociologist. He explained negative peace as the absence of direct violence or obvious conflict. This is frequently characterised by a ceasefire or the end of a war. One of the features is that in negative peace, there may not be active hostilities or open warfare, but underlying tensions and root causes of conflicts are left unaddressed. Negative peace focuses on the absence of something (violence)

rather than the presence of something positive. On the other hand, positive peace is not ordinary absence of violence. It involves the presence of social justice, equality, and the conditions that foster a stable and sustainable society. Positive peace addresses the underlying structural and systemic issues that can lead to conflict. For example good governance, human rights, economic development, access to education, and social well-being. Positive peace is about creating a society where people not only avoid violence but enjoy a high quality of life and social harmony.

The phrase Peace Building is closely tied to the concept, peace. It deals with important dialogue strategies that are applied towards resolving misunderstanding and violence peacefully. Diplomacy Network (2023:1) defined peace building as “a comprehensive approach to addressing the root causes of conflicts and building sustainable peace. It includes a wide range of activities aimed at addressing the underlying political, economic, social and cultural factors that contribute to the outbreak and exclamation of conflicts”. It involves the study of the causes of conflicts and providing the right conditions for harmoniously resolving the conflict (David, 2006). This is important as conflict and violence of different magnitude had continued to fester. Toki, Gambari and Hadi (2015:114) surmised that “Nigeria is a religio-political society which has featured several turbulent waves of religious intolerance. Sustainable development cannot be achieved in an atmosphere of sporadic religious violence”. Diplomacy Network (2023:2) listed the elements of peace building as “conflict resolution, security sector reform, institution-building, economic and social development, governance and democracy, gender main-streaming and trauma healing and reconciliation”. It also listed the importance of peace building as “addressing the root cause of conflict, promoting stability and security, supporting economic and social development, enhancing democratic governance, promoting human rights and rule of law and supporting gender equality” (Diplomacy Network, 2023:2).

On the other hand, sustainable development according to Uyanga (2019:507) refers to “meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of the future generations”. Ntamu, Abia, Ediyang and Eneji (2014, in Uyanga, 2019:507) noted that “sustainable development is a process of and ideologies where national government implement and develop policies and programmes that are lasting and continuous which are beneficial to the present generation while still being useful to the generations yet unborn”. In the real sense, it means that the gifts of nature are harnessed and used without

overexploitation (Ibe, 2003). The position of these scholars draws heavily from the Human Development Report (1991, in, Uyanga, 2019:507). It states explicitly that “sustainable development is that development that is participatory and people-centred, where men, women and children must be the centre of attention, with development woven around people and not people on development”. The overall goal of sustainable development is the holistic well-being of man in the present situation, and the future assurance for the upcoming generation. The intention of sustainable development is to overcome poverty, usher in prosperity and secure the environment for the present and future generation. The nexus between religion and sustainable development is that religion orchestrates ethical values and allows sustainable development to thrive. Once religious and ethical values are not allowed to influence the society, sustainable development would not thrive.

The objectives of the study include an examination of how religious and philosophical principles impact peace and sustainable development in Nigeria. The study considered some of the challenges and obstacles in implementing religious and philosophical approaches to peace-building in Nigeria. Another objective is the examination of the African philosophical concept of “Ubuntu” as one of the recipes for peace-building and sustainable development in Nigeria. In addition, the study considered how philosophy affects peace-building and sustainable development. Lastly, it engaged the role of peace-building in the enhancement of sustainable development, and the interface between peace-building, democracy and sustainable development in Nigeria.

The study holds tremendous significance due to its potential impact on different aspects of the nation. Some of these include promotion of harmony and social cohesion which fosters tolerance and unity among the different religious and cultural groups. The study also emphasizes sustainable development through religious and philosophical principles. This would encourage proper resource use and environmental stewardship for the preservation of the environment and the well-being of the citizens and future generations. In addition, ethical and philosophical principles in governance would shape policies, enhance welfare of the people and justice. The study would also strengthen interfaith dialogue, which improves relationship among different religious communities. It encourages social justice and equity; enhance education and awareness about peace-building and sustainable development. The study would contribute to the Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as it reinforces the importance of achieving a prosperous future for the citizens. The significance of the study is summed up in

its positive influence on societal values, governance, environmental stewardship, international relationship and collaboration and sustainable future for the nation.

The study applied historical research design as its methodology. This involves the collection of relevant data from both primary and secondary sources. There were various literatures that addressed the issue of religion, peace and sustainable development. Exploring these sources of data gave a robust perspective to the process of investigation and the ultimate result of the study.

Conceptual Clarification of Religion, Philosophy, Peace and Sustainable development

Religion does not have a generally accepted definition. According to Ugwu (2002) the definition of religion which would embrace all aspects is quite difficult to achieve. Some scholars have addressed this challenge by classifying religion into various schools of thought and defining religion according to their disciplines and world-view (Uyanga, 2019). This paper would view religion as the relationship between man and the Supreme Being. The second concept to be addressed in this paper is Philosophy. Philosophy does not have a single acceptable definition. Etymologically, philosophy originated from two Greek words: *Philo* and *Sophia*. *Philo* refers to love, while *Sophia* refers to wisdom. Philosophy refers to love of wisdom. Oshitelo (2015:11) defined philosophy as “a critical systematisation of all knowledge drawn from empirical, rational learning and common experience”. Philosophy addresses and interrogates several issues, subjecting them to reasoning.

Conceptualizing peace could be a challenging task. However, there is an over-generalized view of peace that tends to see it from the perspective of a state of perfect tranquillity. It is tempting to conclude that the expectation of a state of calmness as an acceptable meaning of peace might be a delusion. There is an oversimplified conceptualization of peace as the absence of war or a state of harmony and fairness. The former refers to negative peace while the latter, the state of harmony and fairness, refers to positive peace. Peace could also be seen as the condition that guarantees justice and social stability, consequently enhancing sustainable development. Suffice it to state that Sustainable Development is one of the crucial concepts to our discourse. This is contingent on the fact that the absence of peace is usually unfavourable to sustainable development in any society. The Brundland Commission Report (Schaefer and Crane, 2005) is regarded as presenting the most popular definition of sustainable development.

The report states that sustainable development is the form of development that caters for the needs of the present generation without jeopardizing the ability of the upcoming generations to meet their own needs. According to Mensah (2019:1) it “centres around inter and intra-generational equity anchored essentially on three-dimensional distinct but interconnected pillars, namely the environment, economy and society”.

Impact of Religious and Philosophical Principles on Peace and Sustainable Development

Religious and philosophical principles can significantly impact peace and sustainable development in Nigeria. This is made apparent by shaping individuals' values, attitudes and behaviours towards ensuring a more harmonious and sustainable society. It is noteworthy that values, attitudes and behaviours are moulded and sharpened through the right religious and philosophical principles. The contributions of religious and philosophical principles would ensure tolerance and understanding among citizens. Religious teachings emphasize the importance of tolerance, understanding and mutual respect. The consequence is that individuals are encouraged to embrace religious diversity and live peacefully together. They are made to eschew ethnicity and cultural differences in order to reduce conflict and achieve a more peaceful society. The tenets of most religions and philosophical teachings emphasize social justice, fairness and assisting those in need. As adherents embrace these teachings they are able to address societal inequalities and drive towards a fair distribution of resources. This promotes economic and social well-being of the citizens by contributing to sustainable development.

In addition, religious and philosophical principles emphasize the importance of environmental stewardship. The inaccurate belief by man that the Biblical injunction to “subdue the earth and have dominion” means abuse of the earth, must be reviewed. The phrase “subdue the earth and have dominion” is part of the declaration in Genesis 1:26. After the creation of man, God gave the instruction of granting man “dominion” over the earth and other creatures. The word dominion also means to: “have complete authority”, “be responsible for”, “rule over”, “be masters over”. The original Hebrew rendition of the phrase “...and let them have dominion” is transliterated as *wa-yir-du* (Bible works 6, 2013). This is a *qal* imperfect 3rd person singular verb from (*radah*), which means “to rule” or “to have dominion” or “to dominate” (Benson Commentary, Online

Edition: <https://www.biblehub.com>, 2024). The implication is that the ability to rule, or dominate both the aquatic and terrestrial animals mentioned was not implicit in the man; it was given to him by God himself. *Yahweh* caused man to have this dominion. By implication, the ability to dominate or subdue the earth is a means to an end not an end in itself. The man was empowered to prevail against any of the animal that tried to launch an attack against him. This ability is given to man so that he can prevail against such an animal. The plural shows that God was speaking not just about Adam (and Eve), but the entire human race that Adam represents. This shows that mankind is a carrier of the image and likeness of God and this image belongs to the whole species of man. The verb used established the relationship between the man and the other creatures. This relationship is that of sovereign rule. The capacities of right thinking, right willing, and right acting, or of knowledge, holiness, in which man resembles God, qualify him to have dominion over other creatures (Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Online version: <https://www.biblehub.com>, 2024). Mankind is not to become ruthless and destructive to the animal world or to devour them all in the name of subduing them, thereby causing their extinctions, but man is to exercise control and tame the animals for orderliness in the world. Man is expected to be a responsible caretaker, there is need for man to yield to *Yahweh's* instruction on relating to his creatures. This actually means merciful stewardship and not to act the way you please with respect to managing the earth and the creatures of God (Omomia and Babalola, 2012). Man must therefore "do all to keep land in its proper shape by observing land replenishing practices. This involves avoiding bush burning, tree felling and applying manure to replenish the soil nutrients regularly" (Omomia and Babalola, 2012:100). Most religious and philosophical beliefs emphasize the importance of caring for the environment and stewardship of the earth. The encouragement of sustainable practices and conservation efforts would improve the environment and promote sustainable development.

Religious and philosophical principles also emphasize the value of knowledge. As a result of educational initiatives which are supported through knowledge and skills, communities are empowered. These principles would adequately contribute to sustainable development by fostering a well informed and empowered citizenry who make right and informed decisions. There is a common consensus that religious teachings promotes unity, peace and cooperation among citizens of the nation, consequently a cohesive society that works together towards a common goal is built, and this guarantees sustainable

development. Most religious and philosophical teachings also advocate for ethical and just governance. Leaders are encouraged to govern with integrity, fairness and commitment to the overall well-being of the citizens. These religious and philosophical principles would contribute to a stable and peaceful society, thereby facilitating sustainable development. It should be noted that religious and philosophical beliefs often emphasize non-violence and peaceful conflict resolution. Peaceful resolution of disputes can be achieved by first re-orienting the citizens towards appreciating the value of peace and its ultimate contribution towards achieving enduring tranquillity in the society. A change in the world-view of the citizens is one of the enduring requirements for achieving peace through dialogue. This will contribute immensely to peace and stability in the society. This is the right foundation for sustainable development. Religious principles also emphasize on the importance of serving others. This is achieved as individuals are encouraged to be involved in community services and forms of volunteer activities. Religious and philosophical principles would contribute to sustainable development by addressing social needs and building a paradigm of giving back. The incorporation of these religious and philosophical principles into policies, educational systems and community services can promote peace, social harmony and sustainable development.

Challenges in Implementing Religious and Philosophical Approaches to Peace Building

The diversity of religious beliefs, ethnicities and cultural backgrounds has engendered manifold challenges and obstacles in the implementation of religious and philosophical approaches to peace building in Nigeria. One of the challenges confronting the implementation of religious and philosophical approaches to peace building is the marked religious diversity of the Nigerian nation. This diversity often leads to tension, conflicts, distrust and disagreement among the different faiths. It is difficult to implement religiously designed peace-building approaches that would embrace all the faiths. The outbreak of violence between religious groups affects the implementation of religious and philosophical approaches to peace building in Nigeria. Peace building effort can be achieved through addressing conflicts and building trust between the different religious communities. The rise of extremists' ideologies within certain religious groups poses a major challenge to peace building efforts. It has been observed that extremist groups may reject peaceful dialogue and rather advocate for violence.

This would definitely make it difficult to engage them in religious and philosophical approaches towards peace building. Coupled with this is the misinterpretation or selective interpretation of religious texts. This can serve as hindrance to peace building. There are situations where different groups may interpret their religious texts in ways that justifies violence or exclusion. This can create obstacles to the implementation of peaceful approaches grounded in religious teachings by the different groups.

Another obstacle is political exploitation of religion by some politicians for their gains. They perpetrate this by creating challenging environment for implementing peace building strategies based on religious principles. In addition, socio-economic inequalities in the access to resources could lead to grievances and tensions among communities. These grievances and tensions are often intertwined with religious identities. In some other occasions these tensions and grievances are intertwined with ethnic identities. Lack of Interfaith Dialogue also affects the efforts of peace building. Inadequate dialogue and understanding between the different religious communities could affect the efforts to implement peace-building approaches. It should be noted that for successful implementation there must be the deliberate attempt to bridge the gaps in understanding, fostering dialogue and encouraging cooperation between various religious groups. In addition, Lack of education about the tenets of various religions and philosophies could hinder effective implementation of the principles of peace building. The act of comprehensive education about different religious beliefs and philosophies can nurture greater understanding and acceptance by the different religious groups. Resource constraints could manifest in insufficient financial, human and infrastructure resources dedicated towards the implementation of religious and philosophical peace building approaches. The problem of historical grievances, unresolved conflicts and trauma from past experience of violence could affect the desire of communities to engage in peace building efforts based on religious and philosophical principles.

To address the challenges and obstacles confronting peace building strategies requires a multifaceted approach. This should involve education, interfaith dialogue, community engagement, policy reforms and cooperation. In order to effectively implement peace building strategies in the nation, there must be a deliberate attempt at fostering an environment of inclusiveness, understanding and respect for diverse religious and philosophical beliefs.

African Philosophical Concept “Ubuntu” as panacea for Peace-building in Nigeria

The African Philosophical concept, “Ubuntu” could serve as a recipe for peace-building and sustainable development in Nigeria. “Ubuntu” refers to a philosophical and ethical concept that is rooted in the indigenous African cultures, particularly in southern Africa. The influence and relevance of the Ubuntu philosophy extends throughout the African continent. The term Ubuntu is said to have originated from the Bantu languages, including Zulu, Xhosa, Swazi and Ndebele, among others (Ubuntu, www.google.search, 2023). Although the concept does not have a direct translation into English, it is rendered as “humanity towards others”. It is also rendered as “I am because we are”. The Ubuntu philosophy actually emphasizes communal bonds, relationship and a clear sense of shared humanity. The concept revolves around the interconnectedness and interdependence of all people. There are key aspects of the Ubuntu philosophy that serve as clear catalyst to peace building and sustainable development. The concept focuses on the well-being of man within the society, and the ultimate consequence of same on the society and sustainable development. Ubuntu emphasizes the fact that individuals are indirectly connected to one another; the well-being of one person is closely linked to the well-being of the entire community. This means that the well-being of the community is also intimately linked to the well-being of the individual. The ethical consequence of this is wrapped in the belief that our actions and decisions should always consider the ultimate impact on the society and others.

Ubuntu as an African philosophical concept places great value on community and communal life. It emphasizes on the fact that individuals have the collective responsibility to contribute positively to the welfare of the community. In this instance the fundamental core of the Ubuntu philosophy is cooperation, collaboration and mutual support. Ubuntu philosophy places premium on the value of treating every individual with respect, dignity and empathy. It enables everyone to achieve this by recognizing the inherent worth and value in others despite their background, status and beliefs. It demonstrates compassion and empathy which is central to the Ubuntu philosophy. The understanding is that sharing the experiences and feeling of others is seen as a way to establish a compassionate society. The act of empathy is foundational to the belief that if one person suffers, the whole community is affected. Ubuntu philosophy promotes a culture of sharing and generosity. The major intent is that individuals are

encouraged to share resources, knowledge and support with one another. The consequence is that everyone benefits and the overall well-being of the community is guaranteed and uplifted.

In addition, Ubuntu provides a workable framework for resolving conflicts through dialogue, mediation and reconciliation. It promotes understanding and forgiveness so as to restore harmony and maintain peaceful relationships among members of the community. The Ubuntu philosophy also enhances human flourishing and fulfilment through a sense of belonging, purpose and meaningful relationships. It argues that true fulfilment can only be achieved through one's positive contributions to the well-being of others and the entire society. Ubuntu is intertwined with spirituality and also seen as connected to the ancestors. It acknowledges the wisdom and guidance passed through generations. As a result of this, it recognizes the role of spirituality in shaping ethical conduct and relationships. This is in the overall interest of the individuals and the society. Ubuntu as a philosophical and ethical concept has gained outstanding international recognition. This is hinged on its ability to influence ethical decision-making, social justice, and conflict resolution. The key principles of Ubuntu serve as a foundation for building inclusive and harmonious societies that places high value on the welfare of individuals and the society. The goals of Ubuntu when well harnessed would promote peace-building and guaranty sustainable development.

"Ubuntu" as a philosophical concept has faced marked criticisms from some scholars. Scholars like Matolino and Kwaindingwi (2013), in their paper, title: "The end of Ubuntu", had argued principally that Ubuntu fosters conformity rather than freedom. This argument may have received an obvious support from the Financial Study Association Groningen (2024:3). It posits that, "Ubuntu views the collective above any individual. The problem with this is that it seems to force a feeling of community, at the expense of an individual's well-being. This can create an atmosphere in which people experience perceived restraint on their personal freedom and feel obliged to be loyal to the group without questioning much of the authoritative powers or changes within the group". It is also the view of Matolino and Kwaindingwi (2013) that the promotion of Ubuntu in post-apartheid South African could be seen as a project orchestrated by the new black elites in South Africa. They also argued that Ubuntu breeds tension and conflict due to the fact that communities that embraced Ubuntu is seen to often demonstrate morbid dislike for outsiders. Some have even stretched this argument

further by concluding that such communities usually experience overt manifestation of xenophobic activities. The key criticisms by Matolino and Kwaindingwi received a rebuttal from Koenane and Olatunji (2017). They hung their rebuttal on an earlier argument by Stubbs (2011), who draws a unique similarity between Ubuntu and Christianity as both advocate and promote desirable ethos. On his part, Praeg (2014) puts Ubuntu at the same level with Aristotelian virtue ethic and African socialism. The climax to this rebuttal is the one posited by Ramose (2002), who surmised that Ubuntu is about being, and a way of life, hence defines what it means to be human. On the strength of its philosophical posture, Ubuntu contributes immensely to human rights, as every person in the community is seen as a brother or sister (Swanson, 2007).

Suffice it to state that “Ubuntu” as a philosophical concept has faced marked criticisms from some scholars. However, it is not the main objective of this paper to address these criticisms but to orchestrate the fact that Ubuntu, as a philosophical concept can catalyse the process of peace building and sustainable development in Nigeria.

How Philosophy affects Peace-building and Sustainable Development in Nigeria

Philosophy plays a significant role in peace-building and sustainable development in Nigeria. It provides the theoretical and ethical frameworks that guide actions, policies and strategies. Philosophy influences the way individuals, communities and institutions perceive, analyse and address the challenge of conflicts, inequalities and environmental challenges. The role played by philosophy affects peace-building and sustainable development in Nigeria. Therefore philosophy affects peace-building and sustainable development in different ways. First, it provides ethical frameworks for decision-making. The major role of philosophical principles is the provision of ethical foundations for decision making in peace-building and sustainable development. It is generally believed that when ethical considerations are upheld, they guide actions which are morally sound, just and beneficial to the society. This would promote peace and sustainable development. Second, Philosophical approaches that emphasize dialogue, negotiation and understanding often serve as a guide for conflict resolution strategies. For example, philosophies such as non-violence and reconciliation would assist in mitigating conflicts, thus promoting peace within communities and beyond. Thirdly, it promotes social justice and equality.

Philosophies that emphasize equality, fairness and social justice are instrumental in addressing socio-economic differences. These philosophies serve as tools for guiding policies and initiatives; therefore they work towards the reduction of inequality and promote inclusiveness, which is highly required for peace and sustainable development.

Philosophical approaches and principles encourage understanding and respect for diverse cultures, beliefs and perspectives. As the nation embraces cultural diversities, she is able to promote social cohesion, reduce tension and foster an inclusive environment. These are essential for peace and sustainable development. The fifth role of philosophy is education and awareness. Any education based on philosophical principles is bound to inculcate values of peace, sustainability, critical thinking and problem-solving skills in the citizens. These are necessary for sustainable development. Also worthy of note is that philosophical thinking would engender long-term planning and vision which would be aligned with the goals of sustainable development. Philosophical thinking helps in considering the implication of actions over time, thereby making decisions that have a positive and lasting impact on the society and sustainable development. Policy formulation is also an important effect as philosophies and concepts inform the formulation of policies aimed at promoting peace, justice and sustainable development. Policies that are grounded in ethical and philosophical principles are quite useful for societal well-being and development. Lastly, philosophical principles are capable of encouraging community engagement, participation and empowerment. When communities are encouraged to participate in decision-making processes would ensure that their needs, aspirations and perspectives are taken into consideration. This would promote a sense of ownership and sustainable development.

The above considerations explicates that philosophy provides intellectual underpinnings for decision making, social transformation and sustainable development. This means that philosophy plays a critical role in shaping a peaceful nation and guaranteeing sustainable development.

Role of Peace-building in the Enhancement of Sustainable Development

The role of peace-building in enhancing sustainable development in Nigeria is quite vital. Sustainable development and peace are deeply interconnected. This is premised on the fact that one is a prerequisite to the other. The position maintained by this paper is that when peace is maintained it creates

an enabling environment for pursuing sustainable development. There are different ways through which peace-building can contribute to the enhancement of sustainable development in Nigeria. First, it builds stability and confidence in investors. Peace and stability in Nigeria easily attracts local and international investors because a stable environment encourages investments in different sectors, for example infrastructure, education, healthcare and technology. This would definitely drive economic growth and contribute to sustainable development. Secondly, peace fosters economic growth, as it allows businesses to flourish, creates employment opportunities and reduces poverty. The implication is that a stable economy and reduced poverty are important components of sustainable development.

Peace-building also promotes social cohesion through a sense of unity and understanding among diverse groups. This would also engender inclusiveness through policies and practices. It is then ensured through these policies and practices that all segments of society have equal access to opportunities and resources. The consequence is the promotion of a more equitable and sustainable society. The fourth benefit is that prevalence of peace in the Nigerian nation would enable the government to focus on education, healthcare and skill development. This would enhance human capital. The outstanding panacea for sustainable development is a well-educated and healthy population. This is based on the fact that it can contribute to a highly productive workforce and societal development. In addition, peace building enhances proper management of natural resources and environmental sustainability. Most regions affected by conflicts, crises and violence often experience environmental degradation. Peace-building can assist in managing and protecting natural resources more effectively. This is achieved through ensuring environmental sustainability, which is required for long-term development. Peace building also allows for planning towards the development of infrastructures. It is only within a society where peace is prevalent that the planning, funding, and construction of basic infrastructures like roads, bridge, power and others can thrive. Improved infrastructures contribute to economic growth, social well-being and overall sustainable development. Peace-building is a fundamental requirement for sustainable development in Nigeria. Peace-building creates an environment which encourages local and international investments, economic growth, social cohesion and environmental sustainability. The overall benefit is that it sets the stage for a prosperous Nigerian nation and inclusiveness for all citizens.

Democracy, Peace-building and sustainable development in Nigeria

The relationship between democracy, peace-building and sustainable development is believed to be intricate and interdependent. The right democratic system can contribute to peace and stability in Nigeria. This would engender an environment that is conducive to sustainable development. On the other hand the wrong democratic system is antithetical to peace and national stability. This paper considered the elements that are interconnected to enhancing the importance of democracy, peace building and sustainable development in Nigeria. There are three cardinal processes that must be ensured in an attempt to achieve democratic governance and peace-building in Nigeria. They include a functioning democracy that vests power in the hands of the people through free and fair elections. Secondly, a stable democratic system that manages diversities, reduce political tension and prevent conflicts which are aftermath of disputed elections. Finally, highly ethical democratic institutions for example independent judiciary and free press play a role in upholding rule of law and ensure justice. This would ensure maintenance of peace.

On the other hand democratic process in Nigeria should provide mechanisms for peaceful resolution of conflicts through dialogue. This would allow for the resolution of electoral disagreement and communal conflicts. Democracy also encourages active citizen participation by empowering various communities and ethnic groups. This would promote social harmony and mitigate potential conflicts. An ideal democratic government must have right representation and participation. This would contribute to sustainable development. The value of accountability through checks and balances would promote responsible governance and sustainable development.

There are other key elements that enhance sustainable development, through peace and democracy. The importance of human rights as valuable element of true democracy cannot be overemphasized. Democracy upholds human rights, social justice and equality which are vital elements of sustainable development. It must be noted that a democratic Nigeria must be involved in peaceful diplomacy and international cooperation that would promote stability and peace. The prevalence of peaceful international relations is necessary drivers for economic partnership, trade and investments which are essential for sustainable development. As the Nigerian nation engages in a stable democracy, this would promote peace building and sustainable development. It allows for participation, accountability, inclusiveness and responsible governance. The

ultimate benefit is long-term prosperity for the citizens in particular and the nation in general.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Fostering peace in Nigeria through religion, philosophy and sustainable development attracts some recommendations that would guide the process of well-being of the citizens and future generations. First, it would encourage interfaith dialogue to bring together religious leaders from different faiths in order to promote understanding and cooperation which would enhance peaceful co-existence. Secondly, it would integrate diverse religious and philosophical principles into the Nigerian educational system so as to promote values, compassion, empathy and social justice. On the other hand, advocacy with respect to policies that agree with philosophical values which include social equity, environmental sustainability and planning that drives sustainable development would be achieved. In addition, launch public awareness campaigns that would educate the citizens about the role of religion and philosophical principles in peace-building process and sustainable development. Fourthly, there is the need to facilitate community-led conflict resolution initiatives that are based on religious and philosophical principles. These principles encourage dialogue, understanding and reconciliation, in order to prevent and resolve conflict peacefully.

The paper concludes that fostering peace in Nigeria through religion, philosophy and sustainable development as pathway to peace-building would guaranty a framework that is rooted in the Nigerian rich culture and spiritual heritage. As the nation incorporates the ethical and moral principles in the religious and philosophical traditions, she would be able to foster peace, social cohesion and sustainable development. Through the promotion of interfaith dialogue and aligning various vital policies with same, the nation can harness the potentials of religious and philosophical principles to achieving a more harmonious and peaceful society. There is the need to address societal disparities which often lead to conflict and foster environmental stewardship which would lead to a sustainable and prosperous nation. The aforementioned recommendations would set the stage for peaceful and sustainable development in the nation.

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