

RELIGIOUS PLURALISM AND SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

ONAH NKECHINYERE G

Department of Religion and Cultural Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Nigeria as a nation is passing through developmental crisis. Contemporary events in the country seem to suggest that religious pluralism appears to be the greatest challenge to sustainable development and unity of the nation. Nigeria's religious diversity is evidenced in the three main religions; African Traditional Religion, Christianity and Islam, which are widely practiced in the country. These religions dominate the daily lives of their practitioners and because their adherence tends to be ethnically oriented, they have generated intolerance and deadly violence that threaten the corporate existence and development of Nigeria as a nation. This paper therefore, seeks to examine some of the religion-related crises that have taken place in the country and how they have transformed the national psyche and patriotism of the citizens. The paper also attempts to establish the link between religion and the sustainable development of Nigeria. Recommendations are made for peaceful coexistence for sustainable development. In presenting the arguments, both the historical and analytical methods have been adopted.

KEYWORDS: Nigeria, Religion, Religious Pluralism, Sustainable Development