

CLIMATE AND INTERCULTURAL CRISIS: CLIMATE CHANGE AS A SOURCE OF INTER-RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE IN KANO, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Globally, climate change has posed a huge challenge to mankind. In Kano, it has produced a litany of contradictions such as high temperature, flooding, shortage in the volume of rainfall, to mention a few. The *modus operandi* of this paper is to provide intellectual illumination on the role played by climate change in the emerging inter-religious crisis in Kano. In fulfilling this objective, the study sets out to explain how the phenomenon of climate change has attracted sectarian violence in Kano since 1980s. Theoretically, the paper does not contend that climate change can independently be responsible for this inter-religious violence, but the contradictions it creates have attracted environmental scarcity, which has in turn exacerbated the existing intercultural conflict between the Muslim-hosts and Christian-Settlers in Kano. The paper concludes that the growing environmental pollution should be checked and attempts should be made to reduce the effects of climate change on the people.

Key Words: Climate-Change, Muslim-Christian relation, Kano, environmental-scarcity, Inter-religious violence

Climate change has been an age-long phenomenon but it has in recent times attracted a growing interest among the world population due to its impact on the weather and natural resources as well as agriculture. From decade to decade, a change in the climate has continued to be evident. Since the start of the 21st century, the world has been witnessing the warmest in the instrumental weather record. Normally, climate change can be said to be part of the Earth's natural variability. It is a subject of the connections among the atmosphere, ocean, and land, as well as changes in the amount of solar radiation reaching the earth. From country to country, community to community, the challenges mounted by change in climate cannot be underestimated. For instance, in Kano, the attendant consequences of climate change are awesome, having overwhelmed socio-economic and environmental lives of the state. The state has been experiencing the warmest period in the last 2 decades, and it is most unfortunate that it has continued to experience environmental depletion and degradation, with direct effect on the climate.

Historically, Kano is one of the 3 greatest economic centers in Nigeria, and due to the incidence of incessant religious riots that it experiences, Kano is often regarded as a hotbed of sectarian violence not only in Nigeria, but also in the entire West Africa. This violence does not only manifest itself in inter-religious form (between Muslims and Christians) but it is also exhibited within intra-religious milieu (between 2 Muslim groups). This problem could be traced to the start of the 1980s.

During this time, the intercultural violence was not between the Muslims and Christians or indigenes against settlers. It was a violent conflict between the corrupt political elites against the Islamic reformists led by Mohammed Marwa, also known as Maitatsine (see Lubeck 1991 & Albert 1999). The Maitatsine riots were not basically religious but a clash between anti-material and socially deprived group, and the corrupt, insensitive and irresponsible ruling elites whose basic preoccupation was to enjoy the state security apparatus, reinforcing state machineries to acquire huge wealth. The long depravity and frustration suffered by the majority of youths in Kano and elsewhere exposed them to the temptation to affiliate with Islamic sect(s) that can help them to meet their basic needs. The modus operandi of this paper is to illuminate on how climate change has affected the conflict relationship between the Muslims and Christians in Kano from the one based on joking relationship to the one involving violent engagement. We shall begin our task by explaining climate change. We are also going to draw our analytic compass on the activities that promote climate change and the implications emanating from the interplay between climate change and some other factors on the inter-religious behaviour of the people in the area of study.

THEORETICAL DISCOURSE

Before the dawn of 1970s, environmentalism as a concept had begun to gain increasing ground within the intellectual space. The emergent model contends that there is a correlation between man's actions towards his environment and the conditions produced by his environment, which also have impact on him. Therefore, man and his environment affect each other. The climate variability is now growing at unexpected progression, to the extent that the ecosystem is brawly degraded beyond the imagination of the world population. Alas, the experience has shown that the sea level has been abominably on the rise, while problems of growing food insecurity, catastrophic damage of the ecology, trouncing of biodiversity and mounting warm temperature among other negativities appear to be phenomenal.

Meanwhile, a number of great powers have been accused of being largely responsible for the rising problem of climate change since the last two centuries. According to a Nigerian environmentalist, Sunday Kolade who argued that the two leading culprits of the incidence of climate change, plaguing the entire global system are the United States and China. (see The Guardian Newspaper, Tuesday, June 13 2009, p. 19). Naturally, variability in climate is normal but it becomes worrisome if such change is significant as experienced in recent time. The truth of the matter is that the manifest mishandling of the environment through various industrial and anthropogenic factors especially emission of carbon dioxide has attracted significant change in the climate, thereby putting man and the ecosystem in great quandary. Certainly, the effects of climate change are counter-productive and unlike great metropolises like the US, in Kano, the highest contributors of this problem can be traced to a great number of anthropogenic agents (manmade). Though, industrial activities also account for the emission of gases into the atmosphere creating climate change but manmade factors are largely responsible for the problem. In Kano, there has been increasing emission of occurring gases like carbon dioxide (CO₂) and water vapor (H₂O), which usually attracts heat in the atmosphere, which can cause climate change. Also, the customary attitude of burning of fossil fuels can also provoke trapping of the atmosphere with CO₂ that can fertilize a significant variability in climate. And the continued damage of the ozone layer has become a source of worry.

Making the matter worse, there has been a great challenge emanating from the prevailing incidence of population explosion (in Nigeria) particularly as it relates to over-stretching of available socio-economic and infrastructural facilities (see Gilbert 1992 & Drakakis-Smith 1996). This problem is very much evident in Kano city. The problem of environmental degradation hugely exists in Kano while the phenomenon of deforestation has also put the state on the verge of ecological collapse. Nonetheless, change in climate has had negative impact on the environmental sustainability, and the attendant environmental changes it creates, have continued to pose a huge challenge to mankind. Thus, increasing degradation and depletion of environmental resources are capable of pollinating socio-economic tension in any area especially where population explosion is present. A shortage in the amount of renewable resources coupled with experience of population explosion can likely result in struggle among contending groups over resource distribution, a situation that can germinate a situation of violent conflict. This view is also shared by McClintock, according to him:

...if population increases while the soil deteriorates, food production per-capita can be expected to decline (McClintock 1984: 63).

Bearing in mind the foregoing, one may contend that enough efforts should be reinforced to develop alternative means to feed the growing population, especially due to the flight of rural farmers to urban centers resulting from lack of social amenities and poor agricultural yields. The droughts that are often experienced in most parts of the northern Nigeria including Kano have continued to be a source of worry. It is argued by several experts that twentieth century recorded significant increase in the temperature of the area(s), and that region has been seriously affected by droughts, which propelled an abominable increase in rural-urban migration where the absence of (adequate) rainfall and drought forced the rural farmers to be in search of greener pasture in the urban centers, to survive, even at marginal level. It is no gainsaying that “at least two of these droughts have severely affected large areas of northern Nigeria and the Sahel region farther north. These drought periods are indications of the great variability of climate across tropical Africa, the most serious effects of which are usually felt at the drier margins of agricultural zones or in the regions occupied primarily by pastoral groups” (<http://countrystudies.us/nigeria/33.htm>).

However, in order to prevent an upsurge of violence resulting from environmental scarcity, there is a need to alleviate the suffering of the people through “adequate social and technical ingenuity” (Homer-Dixon 1994), which are highly absent in Kano and Nigeria as a whole. Since the era of petro-Naira when Nigeria became a major exporter of crude oil, agricultural began to receive very little or no attention from government coupled with problem of climate change, leading to the lackadaisical state the sector finds itself. The maladministration and poor economic profile nevertheless deepened intercultural tension in the country notably violent ethno-religious conflicts. The country that was once self-sufficient in food production now imports everything including food items, and even tooth-picks. This prevailing condition explains why many of the unemployed migrant youths and Koranic students became very vulnerable and pawns in the hands of ‘religious’ anarchists and desperate political class. The predicament arising from their long depravity and unemployment, coupled with their inability to compete for salaried jobs due to lack of basic Western education qualification, has heightened their sense of frustration. The anger that accompanies such frustration always makes them to be on the verge of getting exploded easily for

transcendent or mundane reasons. This explains why most of them easily get affiliated with any sect(s) that they consider can help them meet their basic needs as evident in Maitatsine episode in the 1980s (Lubeck 1991).

INTER-RELIGIOUS ENVIRONMENT IN KANO

Lawuyi (1991) describes how the incidence of incessant religious violence poses a great danger to national integration in Nigeria. He, however, supports the view of several other writers (Albert 1999; Ukoha 2003 & Ibrahim 1991), arguing that the problem of religious violence is peculiar to northern Nigeria. Ibrahim and Toure (2003) blame the incessant nature of violent religious conflicts in Nigeria on “the impact of the rise of religiosity on democratic political culture”. According to them, religion has become the fundamental element of public affairs, and it is more integrated into state administration in the Muslim north including Kano than elsewhere in Nigeria. Religiously speaking, Kano is often regarded as the cradle of Islamic civilization in the northern Nigeria. Islam penetrated Kano and the entire Hausaland in 1370 (Sani 2007). The religion was introduced to the local people by merchants and scholars from Western Sudan (Mali) during the reign of Ali Tsamiam between the period of 1349 and 1385. Ali Tsamiam was also known as *Sarkin Jaji* due to his hot temperament.

During this period, Tsamiam was the ruler of the entire Hausaland. When introduced, Islam never suffered any substantial rejection by the rulers at that time, many of whom though, may not adhere strictly to Islamic principles, yet never failed to show much respect and admiration to the religion. This was evident in the way the six succeeding monarchs in Kano after the demise of Tsamiam failed to fully embrace Islam. They still practiced their traditional religions side by side with Islam, until Islam became deeply rooted into the Hausa society in general, especially through the Jihad revolution led by Utman dan Fodio in the 19th century. It was that revolt that disconnected the majority of Hausa population from their ancestral and traditional worship and made Islam further entrenched among the *Maguzawa* people (Hausas), many of whom were idol worshipers (see Sani 2007).

Christianity unlike Islam never enjoyed any considerable patronage among the *Kanawa* (Kano indigenes). The evangelical activities of various Christian missionaries yielded very little or no fruits in most parts of the northern Nigeria including Kano. Even, during the colonial era when most Christian missionaries thought that the Muslim north would be vulnerable to religious infiltration of the Christian preachers, the region appeared more blanketed in Islamic ideology due to the policy of the colonizers, not to meddle into the religious affairs of the local people. It was no surprising that many Christian missionaries resulted into lampooning the colonial authorities for undermining the Christian evangelization project, which according to them ought to be integral part of colonial administration. All efforts by the Christian evangelizers to influence the colonial authorities proved abortive. Rather, the colonial authorities argued that it would amount to an abuse of trust, if the local people were coerced into accepting a religion that they did not cherish. For instance, Lord Lugard was quoted as saying:

I hold that it would be a misuse of the power and authority of the Government if that power were used to compel natives of the country to accept a mission which they resented and which they would not accept unless compelled by superior force (CMS.A3/L5/1898-1905: 479).

With a view to intimate the colonial authorities of the looming danger, if the colonizers allowed themselves to be cowed by the Christian preachers, and the consequences such would have on the general colonial administration of the region, that a former Emir of Kano reminded the colonial authorities that “Mohammedanism is a matter of the heart. Our fathers and grand fathers were Muslim. For many generations we have been Muslim” (quoted in Crampton 1979). And no doubt, this position was reinforced in the letter to Morel by Emir, which read as follow:

Know that as regards the preaching (of Christianity) which we discussed here, my opinion is that it is better to stop it altogether, from the first- because, if our people are disturbed about their religion they will become suspicious and afraid. Hence the country will become unsettled. Neither you nor we desire the country to become unsettled for that would be harmful. On the other hand as regards secular matters and affairs of the world, we can do anything (Morel 1962: 135).

The foregoing dispelled any possibility to accommodate Christianity by the *Kanawa*. The suspicion that dominated Muslim-Christian relation was largely responsible for failure of Western education to be popular in Kano and several other parts of the Muslim north. Another reason was lack of political will by the colonizers to expose the local people to European civilization because of the fear they had. Most colonial officers believed that through exposure to Western education, the local people could begin to challenge the colonial administration as was experienced in the southern Nigeria. Another factor responsible was the way Western education was introduced side by side with Christianity, which the local population, majority of whom were Muslim did not have any fancy for. Rather than taking Western education, the local people distanced themselves because of the fear that such an option could jeopardize the interest of Islam in the region. Different from the aforementioned reasons, Tibenderana (2003: 1) contends that educational policy of the British colonial authorities failed in the northern Nigeria due to the ethnocentric mentality of the colonizers who believed that the local people had never had any education forgetting that no society could exist without education.

Foreseeing the possibility of the Muslim-Christian relation in generating tension, the colonial authorities decided to create a separate settlement for non-indigenes and missionaries in Kano. This settlement is known as *Sabon gari*. Literally, *Sabon gari* means new town. Historically, creation of *Sabon gari* could be traced to 1907 when the London and Kano Company was operating in the city. During that time, Church Missionary Society (CMS) was lobbying to be allowed into the city. As a result, the Company was asked to withdraw from the city, a situation that led to the establishment of *Sabon gari* to accommodate settlers including missionaries, traders, and non-native skilled workers, most of whom migrated from southern Nigeria (Crampton 1979: 58).

At independence in October 1960, Kano never embraced Christianity but there was harmonious relationship between the Muslim dominated local population and the Christian settlers in the city. Rather than engaging each other in sectarian violence, in spite of their religious differences, the indigenes and settlers continued to live peacefully until 1980s. Albert throws more light on the peaceful coexistence between Muslims and Christians, and according to him:

Up to the early 1980s, there was no open hostility between the Christians and Muslims in Kano beyond the often joking relationship of the Muslims referring to the Christians as *kafirai* (infidels) and the latter too referring to the Kanawa as *Kulle-kulle* (meaning those who lock up their wives) (Albert 1999: 289).

Prior to the 1980s, the relationship between Muslims and Christians was cordial as evident in the appointment of a number of Christians into the cabinet of Sir Ahmadu Bello, the slain premier of the northern Nigeria, despite his connection with Islamic network as the leader of the Muslim community in the entire region and Nigeria as a whole. Even after the 1966 counter coup masterminded by young military officers in the region many of whom were Muslims of Hausa-Fulani origin, to protest the killing of the leading political figures of the region including Sir Ahmadu Bello and Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa in a coup led by Major Kaduna and several other military officers most of whom were from Christian dominated south-eastern Nigeria. In the aftermath of the coup, the first Military Head of States, Gen. Aguyi-Ironsi (a Christian and an indigene of south eastern Nigeria) was assassinated, and instead of installing a Muslim officer of Hausa-Fulani extraction as the new Military ruler, a Christian officer from the middle-belt region, Col. (later General) Yakubu Gowon, was made the new Head of State. Evidently, there was little or no religious segregation in the entire region before 1980s.

The first religious violence occurred at the time when Nigeria began to experience economic downturn due to crash in the prices of crude oil in international market. The economic decline even led to budget deficits and severe implications on the masses. The truth of the matter is that the first recorded sectarian violence (*Maitatsine*) in Kano and elsewhere was not in any way religious but a bloody conflict between Muslim reformists and corrupt ruling elite. Again, during that period, most industries in Kano began to experience less employment capabilities where many employees were laid-off, and absorbing the growing army of job seekers in the city became a tall order. For instance, in Kano Textile Limited, the number of its employees dropped from 1,150 in 1978 to 900 in 1981 (Bashir 1985: 111). The situation that moved from bad to worse, and by the close of the 20th century most of these industries have gone into comatose. Resulting from poor power generation by National Electric Power Authority (NEPA), which is now known as Power Holden Company of Nigeria (PHCN) as well as unfavourable business climate, many investors have been forced to close down their factories. This situation has attracted a sharp increase in the problem of unemployment in the country. The role of rapid change in climate in Kano and the entire northern Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized. Its implications have facilitated a new dimension to the crisis of unemployment and environmental scarcity in Kano, exacerbating the underlying tension in the relation between the Muslim indigenes and Christian settlers.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE EMERGING INTER-RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE

The natural vegetation of Kano is perhaps the savannah type (Olofin 1985: 8). The city is located in the semi-arid savannah belt, with an annual average rainfall of 700mm within the period of 1961-1991. It is also characterized by a lengthy dry season from late September to May. The state is familiar with significant variation in both the amount and frequency of rainfall year in, year out. Therefore, cultivation can only be carried-out during dry season where there is existence of irrigation or/and low lying areas in river valleys where the surface is locked to the water table. Here, one challenge that is

usually encountered is the poor handling of these waters due to pollution, such that industrial wastes, tanneries and other pollutants are discharged into the rivers. This problem becomes more compounded during the dry season when there is no rainfall to reduce the harmful effect of the toxins produced by these pollutants (Lewcock 1995). The danger posed by this pollution is enormous. The huge chromium salts and several other toxins, it produces largely have adverse effect on water quality.

Undoubtedly, Kano state of Nigeria has had its own share of the bitter pills that climate change produces. Kano is estimated to have almost 10 million inhabitants if the result of the 2006 National Census conducted in Nigeria is anything to go by. This population report shows that Kano is the most populous state in Nigeria, except Lagos that claims to be more populous than Kano. Kano is located in the northern region of Nigeria, West Africa at 12° N of the equator in the tropical continental. There are variations in the temperature in Kano. Sometimes, the temperature goes as high as 35°C in April, and may drop as low as 25°C in January and December. The state experiences huge concentration of the sun with an output of 1kw/m² at a constant rate, meaning that the area is generally very warm throughout the year but with cooler seasons (see Shevah 1993). The problem of climate change has been further complicated with growing environmental damage by anthropogenic factors. These anthropogenic factors like bush burning, reckless defecating, urinating, washing and bathing in public places, coupled with presence of insufficient sewerage facilities, have continued to damage the environment. Adding a new twist to the problem, the presence of rapid population growth in most urban centers in the country including Kano has further deepened the effect of climate change, thereby making it more difficult for government to meet the basic needs of the people, in the face of perpetual economic meltdown. A discourse on the rising population of Kano cannot be complete without looking at the migration trend. By 19th century, Kano became one of the three greatest economies in Nigeria. The tremendous economic dominance enjoyed by its textile industry covered the entire northern region and extended to Murzuk, Chart, even as far as Tripoli and other places. (Bashir 1985: 104). This development influenced the decision of Hopkins to submit that, by the 19th century Kano appeared to have become the Manchester of West Africa due to its economic influence (Hopkins, 1973: 48-49) In addition, according to Ado-Kurawa (2007: 361), Kano continues to be a center of attraction in the region due to the greater economic opportunities it provides for labourers and Koranic teachers and students. Since 1960s, several migrants from the southern Nigeria began to seek refuge in the city for commercial and economic motives. Even, prior to Nigeria's independence in October 1960, many of these southerners were recruited to render various services to the colonial authorities due to their early access to Western education. Apart from the southern immigrants, Kano also hosts a quite number of other people who include migrant youths in the region, Islamic students who migrated from their various native homes or communities for Islamic scholarship and discipline.

Also, several local and foreign Muslim clerics do migrate to the state either temporarily or permanently, due to its status as a cradle of Islamic education and civilization in West Africa. There are other foreign migrants from neighboring countries like Niger and Chad hosted by Kano, who left their home countries due to experience of ravaging droughts necessitated largely by climate change, in search of either cultivation sites blessed with friendly climate, which can enhance good agricultural yields, or greener pasture due to the position of Kano as a commercial nerve center in West Africa. For instance, the Taureg from Niger migrated to Kano due to persistent problem of drought in their land, and upon arrival in Kano, the hopes of majority of

them were dashed due to contradictions created by climate change in Kano, their inability to have legitimate access to land for cultivation as well as unfriendly economic environment. Many of these Tuareg find themselves in deepening state of frustration. The effect of climate change has posed a huge threat to their existence because many of them rely largely on subsistence farming for survival. On homefront, the introduction of basic Western education has actually rendered most of the local people not employable for salaried positions, and the problem of corruption has undermined the ability of government to facilitate any sufficient social and technical initiatives to engage the mass of unemployed people especially the youths (see Lubeck 1991).

The growing population in Kano has continued to overstretch the available socio-economic facilities in the city while the problem of deforestation has become very endemic. For this reason, quite a number of scholars contend that if this ugly situation is not checked timely, there would be total extinction of trees in Kano. This view is corroborated by Eckholm *et al.* (1984: 28), and according to them:

over the last 25 years commercial wood demands have led to severe deforestation and the collapse of a sustainable agricultural system ... now farmland within a 40 km radius of the city (of Kano) has been largely stripped of trees.

Unfortunately, in Kano and several other urban centers in Africa, the population keeps growing at geometric progression while resources are also dwindling by the day at geometric progression. Thus, it is ironical that, in developing countries where there exist very little or no prospects for human and social development, there experienced a huge population growth, and of course, the sub Saharan Africa including Nigeria is where most rapid population growth is experienced with an annual population growth of 2.6% between 1995 and 2000 (World Resources Institute 1999). The world population has moved from one billion in 1800 to six billion in 1999 (Rourke 2005: 9). Some writers have linked this population growth to environmental degradation (Meadows *et al.* 1992), whilst others contend that there is no direct link between environmental degradation and population growth (Mortimore 1998 & Tiffen *et al.* 1994).

Right from the period of oil economy in Nigeria in the 1970s, Kano has been experiencing rapid urbanization growth, and most of the settlements of the poor were taken over by the government for industrial purposes under the guise of the Land Use Decree of 1978. It is no news that most of the political elite in Kano and elsewhere have been accused of sharing the larger percentage of the acquired land among themselves. It is most unpalatable as greater number of the people whose lands were occupied by government did not receive any adequate compensation. The industrialization drive of Kano government in the 1970s rendered many *Kanawa* homeless in the city, many of whom migrated to rural areas with the hope of engaging in full time farming but their hope of surviving through subsistence farming was short-lived by the rapid reduction of rainfall occasioned by climate change.

The pains and agonies produced by climate change have continued to be evident in Kano, and the poor population is the most affected, such that surviving at the marginal level appears to be a utopian task. One cannot but concur with Archbishop

Desmond Tutu who argued that the change in climate has actually led to a crisis in human history, which can be simply described as “adaptation apartheid” (Tutu quoted in Human Development Report 2008:26). The point being made here is that the chief contributors (developed countries) suffer less from the problem of climate change than the people of the developing countries like Africa. For instance, the US alone is responsible for no less than 5.7 tonnes of emission, which accounts for almost 23% of the total world production. Ironically, Africa where the impact of climate change is most felt considering the acute famine, increasing food insecurity and endemic poverty pervading the continent, and as posited by Kolade, only accounts for the least and negligible percent of the emissions that provoke climate change (see The Guardian Newspaper, Tuesday, June 13 2009, p. 19). Notwithstanding, the incidence of environmental damage in Kano and elsewhere has continued unabated. Apart from anthropogenic factors like uncontrolled deforestation and burning of fossil fuels emitting CO₂ into the atmosphere, plenty of fumes is also emitted into the air through industrial activities and the use of generating sets due to lackadaisical energy sector which cannot guarantee consistently provision of even 2000 megawatts of electricity for public consumption in a country with a population of 140 million, have been causing more heat waves, droughts and flooding that have posed a danger to agricultural production.

Since 1988, the state of Kano has continued to be trapped with flooding, which has amounted to huge loss of lives and property both in rural and urban communities in the state (see Barau 2008). Traditionally, the migrant male youths used to work in urban centers and relocated to rural settlements during the rainy season for cultivation or planting. This cultural practice is known as *cin rani*. It has been an age-long practice dated pre-colonial era (Mortimore 1998; Siddle & Swindell 1990). Evidently, there has been a decrease in the volume of rainfall in Kano, and virtually all parts of northern Nigeria. Between the period of 1974 and 1990, the annual average of rainfall stood at 684mm, the situation which has had adverse effect on the irrigation (see Simon 1997).

Culturally such problem arising from inadequate rainfall especially during dry season, was still being addressed by the people through *fadama* (irrigation) but apart from shortage in rainfall, persistent contamination of irrigation by industrial effluents from factories poses further threat to farming activities in the state leading to an environmental scarcity resulting from the inadequate food production. The acute food shortage has led to insecurity, especially as the merchants continue to hoard food items with the aim of making more profits, a situation that has mounted a deepened sense of frustration and anger among the people (see Lubeck 1991). Again, most farmers in Kano often apply solid wastes from tanneries as fertilizer on their farms. Apart from offensive odour, such wastes are also capable of breeding disease vectors, which may cause health hazard to the consumers.

Moreover, the adverse effect of these pollutants on farming would have been minimal, if there has been presence of adequate volume of rainfall. This shows that climate change has posed a huge threat not only to the capacity of the state to secure food sufficiency as an agrarian society, but also its ability to maintain the public health. By the year 2007, the problem of climate change became much more evident in Kano considering the fact that she has been coping with the problems of increasing incidence of flooding, higher prevalence rate of health problems like outbreak of meningitis, dry skins, bronchial problems,

to mention a few. And the problems associated with climate change have also affected several sectors of the economy including transport, aviation and above all, agricultural production in the state (Nigerian Meteorological Agency 2008).

In the last twenty-five years, sharp variability in the climate coupled with the problem of economic mismanagement and persistently growing population has put Nigeria on brink of intercultural crisis. The people have been showing more loyalty to sub-state creatures like ethnic and religious associations far above the state, making nation-building a very difficult task to accomplish. Many of the youths in Kano and elsewhere have become very vulnerable and can easily be manipulated by different forces especially religious models and political elite due to the continued psychological disorder and frustration, which long depravity and unemployment have inflicted on them (Kasali 2008). In search of ways to meet their basic needs, they have become instruments in the hands of anarchists to launch a reign of terror for transcendent or material reasons (Usman 1987). This also explains how *Almajirai* and the migrant youths who became idle and frustrated because of their inability to find jobs either due to their non-qualification resulting from the introduction of Universal Primary Education in the Muslim north including Kano and the unfriendly climatic conditions with attendant poor agricultural yields that widened the inadequacy of job opportunities to absorb all the youths (Lubeck 1991).

According to Albert (1999: 280), the Western educational exposure enjoyed by the southern Nigerian settlers majority of whom are Christians has given them an upper-hand over their *Kanawa* hosts in the control of the formal sector of the Kano's economy. The reason is not farfetched, most indigenous people lack basic education to complete for skilled labour. Majority of the local people are only exposed to Islamic education. And upon completing their Koranic education, many of the *Almajirai* find it difficult to get incorporated into the urban economy, and most of whom become hooligans and common criminals (see KSN 1995: 11). The climate that could have helped to mitigate the effect that inability of these migrant youths in competing for salaried jobs in the city, has been unpredictable and severely unfriendly making farming less profitable especially due to drastic reduction in the volume of rainfall.

Counterfactually, a new twist to this problem is that the old patrons (native authorities) of these migrant youths and Koranic students have been replaced with new crop of political authorities many of whom are graduates. The emergent political elite often distance themselves from the *Almajirai*, as many of them see these poor Koranic students as vagabonds. It is instructive to contend that the social abandonment and deprivation experienced by these students and migrant youths that necessitated their decision to join *Maitatsine* movement despite its heretic principles and contradictory position to orthodox Islamic ideology (Lubeck 1991 & Albert 1999).

Another dimension to this discourse is the unrestricted migration of people from neighboring countries has been a contributory factor to the incessant religious violence that characterizes Kano and several other states in northern Nigeria (see Albert 1999: 297). Such foreigners like Tuareg who left their homelands due to drought and floods caused by climate change and upon arrival in Kano, became economically displaced and frustrated for their inability to find any greener pasture they anticipated of deriving from their migration to Kano. The adverse consequences produced by climate change in their home countries also exist in Kano, and many of them have been found engaging in anti-social activities like street-begging, religious violence, robbery etc. This view is corroborated by Albert (1999), in the Akaluka sectarian riot in 1995, among

those arrested only one of them was a Nigerian while others were foreigners notably from Niger. The cause of the *Akaluka* episode was as result of the allegation leveled against one Gideon Akaluka, a man from south-eastern Nigeria “of having desecrated a leaflet of the Koran”, as he was still awaiting trial he “was beheaded by some Shiite fundamentalists at the Bompai prison” (Albert 1999: 292).

The last straw that broke the camel’s back is the phenomenon of “...fundamentalist Christianity”, which became visible in Nigeria in the 1980s (Albert 1999: 289). The emerging paradigm in the Muslim-Christian relations obliterated the joking relationship that dominated inter-religious affairs in Kano and several other parts of the northern Nigeria. This fundamentalist posture is an offshoot of the economic recess Nigeria started to experience since the 1980s. Majority of the citizens began to look for transcendent or spiritual solutions to their individual economic misfortunes, a situation that has propelled titanic fatalism among the people. This new development led to conflict of cultures. Meanwhile, prior to that period, the relationship Christians and Muslims in Kano and elsewhere in northern Nigeria were relatively cordial until introduction of ‘born again theology’ in the region. The Christian guests began to tell their hosts largely Muslim to accept Jesus as the only way for them to make heaven, as nothing can take to heaven including their Islamic religion (Albert 1999: 290). This intercultural conflict might not have escalated to the level of crisis if the youths are productively engaged.

The effect of climate change appears to be a source to this ugly situation. Though, it will be mischievous to argue that climate change is the structural cause of the problem but its impact on agricultural activities has been a contributing factor. The fact is that due to poor agricultural yields resulting from rapid variability in the climate, many of these youths stay permanently in the city in search of opportunity to participate in the urban economy against the traditional practice of relocating to the rural settlements on arrival of rain for farming.

Naturally, when rainfall becomes unpredictable and inadequate, farming becomes a very risky venture. Unfortunately, majority of these youths cannot be absorbed into the urban labour, and so many of them have become idle with very little or no means of livelihood. These large youth cohorts often show signs of frustration and are simply always on the verge of igniting. They are always angry and very vulnerable too. They can easily be recruited as instruments of anarchy. Noticeable is the fact that these youths get angry more quickly than the mature adults. The existence of youth bulges in Kano compounds the problem because majority of these youths fall within the ages 16 and 30, who according to Steinberger (2001) form the people “...who go out to kill other people”. The persistent frustration that pervades their social existence usually makes them to continue exhibiting violent behaviour (see Urdal 2004; Goldstone 1991 & Fuller 2003). The frustration that accompanies their idleness and deprivation is responsible for their attitude of religious violence, and here they subscribe to using religion to legitimize their aggressive behaviour.

CONCLUSION

The effect of climate change goes beyond creating a change in the weather. It involves seasonal changes over a long period of time. Change in the climate also has a great impact on the natural ecosystems, economies and cultures. In Kano, the incidence of significant variability in the climate has not only undermined, the capacity of the state to ensure food security as an

agrarian society known for its leading position in agricultural production in the West Africa prior to the last three decades, but it has also contributed to the dislocation of cordial inter-religious relation between the Muslim indigenes and Christian settlers majority of whom migrated from the southern Nigeria. Paramountly, there should be drastic reduction of emission of CO₂ into the atmosphere. Nuclear energy and more environmentally friendly energy policy should be adopted by all governments, 3Rs approach should be integrated into the waste management policy of the government locally and nationally, and even internationally such that wastes generated will be reduced, recycled and reused. Emphasis should be placed on alternative transportation framework that will encourage people to walk, ride bicycles and frequently make use of public transports in order to save energy, and carefully reduce emission of carbons into the atmosphere. But in achieving this all hands must be on deck. Both governments at central, state and local levels in collaboration with Non-Governmental Organizations, International organizations and development partners, should be proactive enough to design a viable masterplan to initiate policies and actions that can mitigate not only the effect of climate change but also reduce it to a barest minimum.

Also, there is a need to encourage urban farming by the government with the aiming of engaging the army of unemployed youths many of whom cannot compete for salaried work due to lack of basic educational qualification, even when there is no adequate availability of opportunities for such work in the first instance. The reasons for this need are not farfetched, and one of the notable reasons is the absence of social amenities that pervades most rural settings in Kano and Nigeria in general. Again, it may be contentious to posit that city should be exempted from agricultural activities, and such notion is rhetoric of Victorian expression (Mougeot, 1994). There should be mass education on water usage and government should also work more effectively in the provision of portable water to the people and discourage strongly the habits of water pollution as well as culture of defecating, bathing or urinating in public places because of their ability to cause public health hazards. Necessary legislations should be put in place with effective implementation, to discourage the reckless attitude of deforestation by the people especially those using trees as wire-woods for cooking. Bush burning should be discouraged by all stakeholders while relevant government agencies should apply adequate penalties on the erring companies who pollute the environment.

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