

Islam and National Development in Nigeria

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Abstract— The position of Islam in establishing virtues such as sincerity, sympathy, love, justice, kindness, honesty, tolerance, self-reliance, determination and dedication to duties, courage, creativity and God consciousness could not be over emphasized. When these and other virtues are attained, there will be peace and stability, law and order, employment, productivity, good governance and development. It is against this background that this paper discusses and examines Islam as Din, thus, a comprehensive way of life which touches each part and parcel of life. The paper also spells out the impacts and relevance of Islam on education, social stability and economy in Nigeria to the extent that one grasps the relevance of Islam in national development in Nigeria. The paper, therefore, recommends that there is the need to revisit, reassess and re-evaluate the curriculum of education in Nigerian education system. Muslim scholars should concentrate on extending messages that are positive to the society in making Nigeria to develop.

Keywords— Islam, Nation, Development, Nigeria

I. INTRODUCTION

Islam means total submission to the instructions and commandments of Allah. It also means peace. That is peace with the Creator, i.e., Allah the Most Exalted, peace with one's self, peace with fellow human being and peace with all other creatures.

Nation could be defined as a community of people with a territory, economic life, language etc.

Development is viewed as a stage in growth or advancement

Nigeria: In 1914, Northern and Southern protectorates of Nigeria were merged together as Nigeria by Lord Lugard, and in 1960, Nigeria got its independence from British.

II. THE COMPREHENSIVE NATURE OF ISLAM

As a Din, Islam is a very comprehensive way of life which deals with each part and parcel of human life, such as social, economic and political. The way a Muslim thinks and reflects, the way he talks, walks, works, eats, drinks, dresses and sleeps; the way he intermingles with members of his family, his relatives, friends, neighbours and people generally have been properly instructed by Islam. Not that alone, even toilet etiquettes and quite many more and more have been clearly spelt out in Islam. In this regard, Allah says:

Verily, my Prayer, my sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah the Lord of the worlds... (Qur'an, Al-Anam:162:163).

From the foregoing, one understands that Islam as a Din

establishes virtues such as sincerity, sympathy, love, justice, kindness, honesty, tolerance, self-reliance, dedication to duties, creativity and God consciousness among others.

III. THE IMPACTS AND RELEVANCE OF ISLAM ON EDUCATION AS MECHANISM OF DEVELOPMENT: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

Education is a process of developing an individual morally, socially, intellectually, economically, politically and otherwise. Therefore, the essence of education is to ensure all-round development of an individual. (Adeyemo, 1979:9).

The impact and relevance of Islam on education could be seen in the sense that Islam supports and strengthens education and vice versa. For example, Islam plays a very significant role in making education to be very functional. Islam equips education with some ethical values capable of making education to achieve its purpose. These values include: quest for education to serve Allah and to offer services to humanity, self-reliance, honesty, sympathy, to mention a few.

It is important to note that in the Nigerian context, the curriculum of Islamic education are framed in such a way that all those virtues which education is meant to provide are very well instructed and encouraged in it at different levels of education such as primary, secondary, tertiary institutions and universities. Indeed, this plays a very significant role in establishing virtues capable of instilling ethics and morality as viable mechanism towards building a nation and attaining to development. In the Department of Islamic Studies and Shari'ah of Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria, for instance, there is a postgraduate course Islam and Modern Development. This course exposes Islam as a Din, culture and civilization which is dynamic and relevant to any place at all times.

IV. THE IMPACTS AND RELEVANCE OF ISLAM ON SOCIAL STABILITY AS MECHANISM OF DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

From the outset, all the messengers of Allah were sent to among other things establish social justice and wither away injustice and oppression among humanity. Islam commands and establishes justice. Muslims, therefore, have to be just not only among themselves, but also among believers of other religions. In fact, the justice to which Islam invites Muslims is meant for all human beings. (al-Mawdudi, 1983:21). Allah the Most High says:

Whenever you judge between people, you should judge with (a sense of) justice (Al-Nisa:8).

Do not let your hatred of a people incite you to aggression. (Al-Ma'idah:3)

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As part of the process of ensuring social justice which by extension leads to social stability, Islam, safeguards and preserves five necessities of life (al-Darurat Al-Hamsah). These are preservation of religions, lives, lineage, hour and wealth. It is important to note that Islam did not discriminate between Muslims and followers of other religions as far as the preservation of these five necessities are concerned. This clearly shows how humane Islam is, and how much Islam accords social justice and social stability a priority.

Coming to the Nigerian context, Islam encourages social justice through its numerous teachings. For example, Islamic quest for honouring neighbours and honouring guests, no matter whom they are, creates a kind of peaceful co-existence among the people, and this really facilitates social stability which plays a great role towards attaining development.

V. THE IMPACTS AND RELEVANCE OF ISLAM ON ECONOMY AS A MECHANISM OF DEVELOPMENT: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

As part of the impacts and relevance of Islam on economy, Allah the Most Exalted is the real owner and controller of all things including wealth. This is why all issues relating to economy should not be carried out completely without divine guidance. (Zowk, 2011:18-20)

There are a number of Qur'anic injunctions which encourage Muslims to engage themselves in wide range of lawful business activities. Allah says:

Then when the (Jumu'ah) prayer is finished, you may disperse through the land and seek of the bounty of Allah (by working or engaging in business etc), and remember Allah much that you may be successful. (al-Jumu'ah:10).

There are also numerous bounties of Allah (through business) which the Qur'an clearly spells out, these include maximum utilization of seas, oceans, and rivers which help in national and international business and movements of goods and commodities. In this regard, Allah says:

And you see the ships there in that plough the waves (sail in the sea) in order that you may seek the bounties of Allah so that you may be thankful (al-Fatir:12).

In the context of the above verse, Muslims can see some great opportunities and chances of business while travelling, and more especially while on long journeys, and when utilizing seas, oceans, and rivers. If Muslims business men in Nigeria could make proper use of business channels and opportunities mentioned by the Qur'an with much interest, sincerity, devotion, courage patience and du'ah, they could have achieved great success in importing and exporting business.

There are also numerous prophetic traditions which serve as motivation as far as business creation and growth from the Islamic perspectives are concerned. The Prophet (SAW) says:

For a man to take his rope and go into the forest to collect wood is better than to beg from people, whether or not people give him what he wants. (Al-Bukhari).

No one has ever eaten better than what he eats as a result of the labour of his hands. (Al-Bukhari).

From the foregoing, it could be deduced that dignity, self-

respect and development are not possible if a person is economically dependent for extended periods of time on the charity of others. Moreover, it is in the light of this that Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria, establishes International Institute for Islamic Banking and Finance (IIIBF) where various programmes are offered. In fact, this is a very veritable tool for national development.

VI. CONCLUSION

All the works a Muslim does in the daily life situation, must be guided by Islamic instructions. For, it is this that will check and balance his affairs to ensure social, economic and political development. Thus, any aspect of human and national development without an element of spiritual development can only be a phantom development. Nigeria cannot expect to succeed without abiding by the wishes of God. This is because man cannot be just unless he follows what has been laid down to be just, that is the commandments of God.

This paper, therefore, recommends that there is the need to revisit, reassess and re-evaluate the curriculum of education as it is taught in the Nigerian education system. Governments at all levels should be more involved in matter of religion. At the moment, many of the social, economic and political ills in Nigeria result from moral failures, government must help guide the people to understand the wishes of God and establish a culture of decency and good values which by extension provide a gateway for peace, stability and development.

Muslim scholars should concentrate on extending messages that are positive to the society such as: honesty, sincerity, hardworking, creativity, perseverance, dedication, commitment, innovation, responsibility, humanism, planning and strategy. These among other things are what are needed in making Nigeria to develop.

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