

Islamic Appraisal of Tribal Politics Among Muslims in Taraba State

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Abstract

Taraba state, Nigeria, is characterized by ethnic and religious diversity, with Islam playing a major role in its socio-political history. However, the emergence of tribal politics among Muslims has posed serious challenges to unity, political participation and socio-economic development. This paper appraises tribal politics among Muslims in Taraba state from an Islamic perspective. It analyzes the causes, manifestations and the results of tribalism and evaluates them against Islamic teachings on unity, justice, and brotherhood. The study adopts qualitative methodology, using Qur'anic teachings, Hadith literature, interviews and participatory observations as its primary source of data, and scholarly documents, like thesis, journals, textbooks radio productions among others as the its secondary source of data. Findings reveals that tribalism contradicts Islamic principles and contributes to political marginalization and internal disunity. The study also, found that, relations among Muslims were relatively cordial before and shortly after the creation of Taraba state in 1991, but later deteriorated with the return of democratic politics, leadership contest, and rising ethnic sentiments, while noting that from around year 2000 onward, integrative determinants such as intermarriages, Islamic educational institutions and shared commercial activities have helped rebuild unity. The study recommends promoting unity among Muslims, through intermarriages, tolerance, merit-based politics guided by Islamic principles, continues scholarly engagement on Qur'anic and Prophetic traditions teachings against tribalism, institutionalized inter-ethnic dialogue, and the establishment of forums and empowerment initiatives such as zakat and waqf to support especially youths.

Keywords: Appraisal, Islamic, Muslims, Taraba, Tribal Politics

A. Introduction

Islam emphasizes unity, justice, and equality among believers regardless of ethnic or tribal affiliations. However, in many Muslim societies, including Taraba state, tribal politics has become a dominant feature influencing political alignments and leadership structures. Taraba state is home to diverse ethnic groups such as Fulani, Hausa, Ichen,



Jenjo, Jibu, Jukun, Kanuri, Mambila, Mumuye, Wurkun among others, with Islam co-existing alongside Christianity and traditional religions. Taraba state has historically experienced peaceful co-existence, but recent decades have witnessed growing ethnic and political divisions among Muslims. (Bello 3) The State was created out of defunct Gongola on the 27/8/1991, by the Military head of state General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, the State was named after River Taraba and have sixteen Local Government Areas. (Taraba State Diary 2019) Ethnic relations and tribal politics have remained central to Nigeria's socio-political development, shaping both governance and community dynamics. Taraba State is located in Nigeria's North-East geopolitical zone.

Before the creation of the State the relations among Muslim ethnic groups in Taraba State were bearably in pleasant union, mutual trust and mode of respect to one another. The peaceful and harmonious relationship had led to a little bid inter-ethnic relationship which transcends ethno-geo-political boundaries and ethno-religious differences. Muslims were highly respected, considered reputable personalities, rulers in almost all royal houses and highest political class of the Communities that Constitute the present day Taraba State (Bello2) They enjoyed maximum cooperation between themselves, but after the creation of Taraba State the bearings changed to division and Semi-hostility (Bello123) The political marginalization of the Muslim Ummah, the Muslims inter-ethnic and intergroup discrimination and the issue of Muslim self-centered politicians who support the non-Muslims politicians to emerge as leaders against their fellow Muslim brothers. For instance, in 1992, SDP/NRC State Governorship elections which produced Joly Tavoro Nyameh as Governor, under the defunct Social Democratic Party (SDP) Was partially, sponsored by some conspicuous Northern Muslim politicians, like Shehu Musa Yar'adua, Atiku Abubakar, Abu-Bakr Ibrahim Sarkin Ayyukan Muri, among others, who were then, among the leaders of Social Democratic Party, the same thing with the 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019 and even the last 2023 elections, were not in exception. (Yusuf 1)

Conceptual Definitions

Concept of politics

Politics is one of the essential activities that differentiate human beings from all other creatures on earth. Politics has been seen and viewed from different perspectives and within different backgrounds. It is a valuable contribution towards understanding what



constitutes politics, it is also, through politics human beings are able to cooperate for their common interest and abide by collective rules, organize means that would enhance their peaceful co-existence through making worthwhile decisions in relation to their collective affairs as well as on how to live in large communities under shared norms in the interest of all (Coloma14). Politics is an aspect of virtually all kinds of human behavior and human interactions; hence, politics is one of the aspects of human relationships and interactions in all fields of life (Eijiks10). This indicates that politics is a universal phenomenon for; it covers all walks of life encompassing socio-economic and educational endeavors. It emphasizes justice, consultation (*Shurah*), and accountability where rulers act as trustees rather than masters. Based on Qur'anic teachings and prophetic traditions, it focuses on morality, community welfare and upholding religious obligations (Qaradawi14)

Concept of Tribal Politics

Tribal Politics, refers to political behavior and decision-making heavily influenced by ethnic loyalty, identity and sectional interest rather than merit, ideology, and justice. often prioritizing in-group interests over broader societal concerns. This means individuals are more likely to vote for or support candidates or policies based on their tribal affiliation, regardless of the candidate's or policy's merits. In a political context, tribalism can manifest as discriminatory behavior or attitudes towards out-groups, rooted in strong in-group solidarity. (Offili14).

Islamic Perspective on Tribalism

Islam provides a framework for understanding and addressing issues of ethnicity and tribalism. The Qur'an emphasizes human unity despite diversity:

Oh mankind! We created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another. Verily, the most honored of you with Allah is the one who is the most righteous" (Q:49:13).

This verse underscores that ethnic diversity should foster mutual respect rather than conflict. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) reinforced this principle in his Farewell Sermon:

All mankind is from Adam and Eve. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab have any superiority over an Arab; a white has no superiority over a black, nor does a black have any superiority over a white—except by piety and good action (al-Tirmidhi, Hadith 3270).



This Hadith directly rejects tribalism (*Asabiyyah*) and affirms equality in the Muslim community.

Literature Review

This point is to highlight some previous literatures, which were scholarly related to the current study and mostly on the area of the study. Several scholars have examined the intersection of ethnicity and religion in Nigeria.

Abubakar (20) argues that ethnic rivalry is a significant factor in electoral politics across the Middle Belt, often overshadowing religious solidarity. Kukah (19) highlights how political elites exploit tribal loyalties to gain power, thereby weakening interfaith and intra-faith unity. Usman (22) specifically addresses Islam and tribal politics in the Middle Belt, noting that Muslims are frequently divided along ethnic lines, which undermines the Islamic concept of the *Ummah* (community). Sa'ad (13) provides information on the diverse physical features and the heterogeneous ethnic groups in the middle Benue region; particularly the Kwara kingdom and its affiliates like Alagon people Idoma, Egon among others. Bello (20) addresses some challenges facing Muslims, noting that leadership of Christian Association in the state played some rolls to actualized the complications.

Ajiya (14) Talked about some ethnic groups of Taraba North and their religious practices, and the introduction of Islam and Christianity. Hamman (8) discusses the impact of the Establishment of the Emirate of Muri and the historical origin and formation of Muri Emirate and how the rise of Muri Emirate affected various communities of the area positively.

Muhammad (17) discusses the ethno religious crises in Taraba state and how it has affected the socio-economic life of the people in the area. However, Muhammad's work, is related to the present research which focuses on relations among Muslim ethnic groups, in the area of ethnic discussions, but differs in the ethno-religious crises scope. Offili, (14) stressed that, in a political context, tribalism can manifest as discriminatory behavior or attitudes towards out-groups, rooted in strong in-group solidarity.

B. Methodology

This Study used qualitative research method, employing two sources primary and secondary, for the primary sources are the glorious Qur'an and Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh), interviews, participatory observation, to source for the field data,



which in turn, was analyzed. The secondary source, on the other hand, includes library materials, these encompasses both published and unpublished materials such as printed books, journals, periodicals, thesis, dissertations, projects and internet sources.

C. Result and Discussion

Islam spread into Taraba state between the 18th and 19th centuries through trade, migration and the establishment of emirates such as Muri. At first, Muslims in the area maintained strong unity, contributing significantly to socio-economic and political development. Nevertheless, overtime, especially after the year 2003. Elections, Muslims cohesion started to decline due to divisions along ethnic, political and sectarian lines

Nature of Muslims Relations before and the present Taraba State

Muslim ethnic groups in Taraba State, before and shortly after its creation, were in cordial relations and live together in peace, with the exception of some little land or herder-farmer disputes which were amicably settled, at the traditional institutions level or even between the disputant's leadership. Politics used to be based on merit, party affiliations and candidate's rhetorical prowess during campaigns. Until after the 2003, elections in the State and the subsequent democratic dispensations that followed, the issue of tribes emanated and ethnic groups that have considerable number of Muslims started yearning for recognitions in the various zones of the State. According to Barrister Rufa'I Umar, Politics changed to tribal affair, money influenced, land and Farmer-Herder disputes metamorphosed into a police or court affair and sometimes even escalates to crises among various Muslims ethnic groups in the area.

In an Interview with Hon. Yusuf Hamman Liman, on Muslims relations, he said: When we were in Gongola State, Muslims ethnic groups in this area, now Taraba State, were Connected because of the religion, but were dis-jointed due to their different geographical locations, economic activities and social aspect of their lives. But the real area of their disconnections was the variance sects and the issue of different Native Authorities (N. A's), they belonged to. Tribal politics from 1979, democratic dispensation emerged, the people started experiencing political differences, due to the disconnection of a Mambila Muslim from Jenjo or Mumuye Muslim in Muri area, or a Wukari, Takum and Donga Muslims so Muslims played tribal and zonal politics to protect their identity and in-group interest. For example, the then Mumuye Candidates for Senatorial and House of



Reps in Persons of Luka Zanya, Kadiri Lanko, Dahiru Hamman Bakundi and Hon. Mabarama Jen and Governorship Candidate Abubakar Barde all from Muri Zone

Also, according to Yusuf, another factor, that disjointed the Muslims was educational institutions, like Secondary Schools, for instance, in the seventies and eighties, we were having Mc Bright and Teachers College here in Jalingo muri and G.S.S Gembu in Sardauna, G.S.S.S Donga, Imbiya Commercial Secondary School and G.S.S. Takum, Saint Paul and G. S. S Wukari secondary schools. Therefore, most of those Muslims tribes around Sardauna area attended to G.S.S Gembu, the same thing with those from Muri attended to Mc Bright or GSSS and TC Jalingo then. Likewise, those Muslim students from Takum, Donga and Wukari. This has also contributed to having gap between Muslims ethnic groups in Taraba State.

Yusuf, also identified some three agents of connecting people among different communities, which includes; Commercial activities, Educational Institutions and intermarriages, and they were not mostly tenable between Muslims ethnic groups in the area, therefore, these created a wide gap among Muslims ethnic groups.

Yusuf also, maintained that it was after the creation of the State, various Muslims tribes now intermingle more closely than before the creation of the state, Wukari Muslims had little or no connections with Muri or Sardauna Muslims, because of the geographical locations and there was no much commercial, educational or Marital relations between them, despite the fact that there was Sufism and Sufis in Donga and Lau but, there were no much co-relations between them, until after the creation of the state, they became more related for the following factors; civil service, schools, intermarriages, politics, religious, and commercial activities.

An interview with Garba Maigishiri on the Muslims relations, reveals that: The relations were good and cordial between Mumuye Muslims and the Hausa-Fulanis, in Yoro here before, but the creation of Taraba State, the enjoyed fraternity is not like before, because, you will see a Muslim Mumuye man now discriminating against Hausa- Fulani Muslims, on either, origin, public appointment or social status. For instance, when it is time for me to be appointed as director of finance, Yoro Local Education Authority, some Mumuye Muslim politicians were vehemently opposed to that, which is very unfortunate as Muslims.



An interview with Alh. Hashim Hammawa Lankaviri and Abubakar Tanko Pantisawa, reveals that, there are tribal discriminations among Muslims in Yoro, why because, when it is time for both the two of them to be appointed as permanent secretaries, from Yoro Local government quarter they were vehemently opposed by some Muslim stakeholders like Hon. Muhammad Danladi Gompu, he preferred non-Muslim Mumuye than Muslim Hausa-Fulani, based on tribal and indigene-settler sentiments.

When asked on whether there are changes in the relations among Muslims ethnic groups after the creation of the State and in the subsequent democratic dispensations? Hon. Yusuf Hamman Liman affirmed that there are changes:

There was establishment of more Government Secondary Schools, Tertiary institutions and private Islamic Primary and Secondary Schools, which bridge the gap. For instance, Magami Government Day Secondary School, GDSS, Sabon Gari and Nukai among others. School of Nursing, School of Health Tech, Taraba State Polytechnic, Federal Poly Bali, Taraba State University and Islamic Private Schools like al-Iman School Jalingo, Mutumbiyu, Wukari, Albayan, Annur, Darul Arqam among others. These Schools have bridged the gap by bringing different Muslims ethnic groups among staff of the Schools, pupils and students together, for example, my Daughter, Zarah and Aisha Kamal Bakari Jillahi, are in al-Iman School Jalingo and now are friends, despite the fact that I'm from Bali and Kamal is from Lau, but the creation of the state brought different Muslims together, therefore, they now became more acquainted of each other. So there are more acquaintances now than before, and the State civil service also serves as a meeting point for various Muslims ethnic groups, now there are positive changes at least, towards uniting the Ummah.

An interview with Abdulazeez Jibrin El-Yakub shows that: There are changes, Muslims Jukun used to be together with their Hausa Muslims brothers in all they do in the 1960's including politics but now some among them change to voting for their Christian Jukun kins men in wukari here, he cited example with the 2023 elections, where some Jukun Muslim brothers voted for the present Governor, Kefas Agbu, based on tribal lines.

Another respondent Barr. Auwalu Sa'adu Muhammad reveals that; the relationship was cordial among Muslim tribes before the creation of the State but after the creation of the State there were changes, the friendly and sociable relations began to declined, because of the existing political interests. Muslims groups were divided along political lines, some



Muslims stick to the precepts of Islam, while others were caught into tribal Chauvinism and political interest, which landed us to where we are today, is very unfortunate.

An interview with Muntakha Muhammad, also affirm that; Muslims ethnic groups were living together happily and harmoniously before the creation of Taraba State but divided after the State creation along political lines, particularly, 1999, democratic dispensations to date.

Malam Mas'ud Marubang differently asserted, on the relations among Muslims in Yorro that: The relations among Muslim Ummah here in Lankaviri town, to the glory of Allah and the interventions of our great Muslim preachers, people are living together harmoniously, but we need more preachings, sermons and symposia, for more unity and tolerance among Muslims in the entire Yorro Local Government Area.

Another respondent, Muhammad Zubairu (Mabas) stated that: Muslims were happily living together as brothers before the creation of Taraba State but with minor tribal jingoism, yearning and aspirations for chiefdoms, local governments and educational institutions creation and siting, that was inherited right from the inception of Gongola State and the 1979-1983, second republic political dispensations.

Abba Umar Siddiki Nyaja, on Muslims relations, maintained that: There is cordiality among Muslims here in pantisawa and we are living well, only some minor cases of misunderstandings which are naturally human and in-evitable.

When asked on Muslims relations, Kabiru Mukhtar Bello said: The ethnic relations among Muslims before 2007, was good but later on, tribal and zonal differences appeared and it brings about setback to the entire Muslim Ummah in the State and I see no way out now, unless we change our attitudes to Islamic, positive thinking.

Shuaibu Nyalapa informed the researcher that: The relationship among Muslims in Yoro is cordial, because they do comply to the preaching's of their Scholars

Causes of Tribal Politics and Ethnic Sentiments Among Muslim Ethnic Groups in Taraba State

Tribal Politics were very insignificant, before the creation of Taraba state and fully ushered into the State, after its creation, by Politicians and clearly, infiltrated into the subsequent years of the So-called democracy, particularly, the 2007, elections that were



characterized by voting based on ethnic lines and the successive elections to date. The followings are some of the causes of tribal politics;

Weak Islamic Consciousness, and Decline in Muslims Unity.

Political Manipulation and Ethnic-Based Power Struggles.

Socio-Economic Competitions.

Poverty, Ignorance and Lack of Awareness.

Ethnic discrimination and Fear of Domination.

Indigene-Settler Dichotomy.

In the following interviews some other causes of tribal politics were also, identified:

In an interview with Hon. Yusuf Hamman Liman, on what were the causes of tribal politics he identified the following; the various ethnic groups want to grab political and economic advantages for their tribal advancement in the society, for example, lucrative political and public office appointments, employment and contract award to their kin's men for economic empowerment. Religious politics initiated and played by non-Muslims among mambila, mumuye jukun and wurkun ethnic groups in the State, in which they used their fellow Muslim tribal brothers to ascend onto either political or traditional power and forget about them, poverty and ignorance of the ordinary Muslim tribal men is used by the elites among them to actualize their political whims and caprices, fear of being dominated and lust to dominate others is also part and parcel of the agents of tribal politics in Taraba State

An interview with Gidado Sa'ad in Pantisawa shows that: favoritism and economic interest are among the causes of tribal politics here in Yoro.

Another respondent, Muntakha Muhammad and Ali Ibrahim also listed the following causes: political interest is a major cause, followed by lack of unity and trust or confidence among Muslims Ummah, some Muslims are sticking to party prioritization than Islamic brotherliness, lack of unity among Islamic scholars, most of them are not in unison in terms of their various study sessions, preaching periods, Juma'ah sermons and other social and religious interactions.



In an interview with Mansur Dahiru Liman, (politician) indicates that: The Hausa Fulani are facing tribal and political discriminations mainly, from some Mumuye Christians and a little from Mumuye Muslims, based on tribal sentiment, in Yoro Local Government. You will see an average native Mumuye man, is discriminating against his fellow Muslim brother for the simple fact that he is non-Mumuye, therefore, he doesn't deserve either political or public appointment in their quarter (native Mumuye)

Manifestation of Tribal Politics Among Muslims in Taraba State

Right from 2007, elections in Taraba State, tribal politics began to be conspicuous among various Muslims ethnic groups. According to Muhammad Ada'u Nayay: that, On the Governorship elections, of 2007. There were two candidates Ahmed Yusuf of the then ACN Platform who is a Muslim and Danbaba D. Suntai of PDP, a Christian, in a heated contest between the two candidates at the final elections. In that time, some Muslim from the Central and southern Taraba, particularly the Muslim Chamba-Jukun and Ichen people, voted for Danbaba who happened to be a non-Muslim along ethnic line, for the mere fact that, Ahmed Yusuf was a Fulani man, that they could rather vote for a non-Muslim "Kabila" than a Muslim Fulani, for they may achieve their political interest. In the case of ACN Governorship primary elections in taraba State, around 2010, where a non-Muslim candidate emerged from the southern zone and a Muslim Candidate from the Northern zone. According to Jafaru Danbaba; we witnessed Muslims Jukun from wukari here, voting for their non-Muslim tribal brother in the person of Joy Ikenya against their Muslim brother Ahmed Yusuf, a result of which forced Ahmed Yusuf to switched to, or cross carpeted into another political party, that was CPC, which was eventually couldn't scaled through. Ibrahim Gambo Donga affirmed that Muslims in their area are voting non-Muslims base on tribal affiliations.

Another instance of the tribal politics manifestation was the cases of Mambila Muslims of Sardauna Local Government Area in the Central zone, Mumuye, Jenjo and wurkun in the Northern Zone. According to Umar Leme; most of Mambila Muslims did not vote for Hon. Marafa Bashir Nguroje, during his cenral zone, Senatorial election bid in the 2023 elections, for the simple fact that he is a Fulani man. likewise, in the observations of Muhammad Zubairu; the Muslim Wurkuns in the House of Reps Election of 2019, voted for Danladi Baido who is a Wurkun-Christian, against Kabiru Bello



Badawaire a Muslim Fulani man. The same thing with Mumuye Muslims ethnic group in Jalingo and Yorro Local Governments, in the House of Reps and Senatorial elections of, 2019, 2023 and the 2024, re-run respectively, where they voted for Jolly Nyame and David Umaru (Jabayang) who are Mumuye Christians, apparently along ethnic lines, against their fellow Muslim Candidates of other ethnic groups.

Kabiru Zakari, affirmed that: Tribal Politics was clearly Manifested during the last 2019 and 2023, elections. For instance, the 2019, Governorship Candidate who was a Wurkun man, and was wholeheartedly voted for by the Hausa-Fulani group, but in the case of senatorial elections of same year, some Muslim Wurkuns did not vote for the Fulani Senatorial Candidate, Ahmad Yusuf. In the 2023, Senatorial and House of Reps elections, the Wurkun Senate Candidate was voted by almost all Muslims groups and when it turned to House of representative election, he asked all his wurkun kinsmen to vote for their Wurkun Christian Brother, in person of Dnladi Baido, who vied for the position against Kabiru Bello Badawaire a Fulani Man.

Sheikh Muhammad Mukhtar observed that: Politics nowadays, have become a thing of ethnicity not merit and Islamic brotherhood, some Muslims deviated from the Islamic rules; merit, fairness, justice and love to one another and are voting in people base on ethnic lines, the cause of which is either envy or lack of assistance among Muslims.

Kasimu Ibrahim observed that: There are minimal discriminations among Muslims in Yorro, because the people intermarried, you will see a Hausa man married a Mumuye woman, a mumuye man married to a Hausa woman and Fulani men married Mumuye women and our preachers are up and doing in preaching unity among Muslims.

An interview with Abbdulmumini Umar Bashir Ngroje, affirmed that: In 2017, ethnic crises erupted between the two major Muslims tribes Mambila and Fulani in Sardauna here, where lives were lost, animals killed, as a result of tribal sentiments. It is very unfortunate, having Muslims fighting one another.

Issues Arising from Tribal Politics

The issues arising from tribal politics, include, more future historical divisions, political exploitation, economic inequality and the absence of a strong brotherhood among Muslim Ummah. Politics to Muslims are now some-how becomes boring and hateful, to the extent that, some of them are no more interested in registration and voting process,



which is ruining and damning to the entirety of the Muslim Ummah. They are disunited and weaken, to the advantage of the non-Muslims. Muslims do fear to aspire for some political posts either at the Local Government, State or Federal level, for the various Muslim ethnic groups are divided and ruled by the non-Muslims who used tribal politics to by-pass the Muslims for their personal, political and economic interests.

According to Prof. Ali Ahmadi Alkali, the problem Muslim Community is now facing at the State Civil Service is that the employment opportunities are restricted and reserved for almost only non-Muslims in the State, because, Muslim youths are not employed nowadays, the powers that be used to employ non-Muslims to fill in the existing vacancies in the various Ministries, Departments, Agencies and Institutions (MDAI) in the State. Malam Bashir Hamman adama observed that; tribal politics is destroying the Ummah, sighting example with some people, at his area, NTA, Jalingo, who voted along ethnic lines in the 2023, elections and later on regretted.

Husseini Sani, observed that, Admission into various State Tertiary Institutions is now an issue, for a Muslim Child to secure Admission into various required courses in the tertiary institutions in the State, especially a mainstream Hausa-Fulani Candidate, for instance, Taraba State School of Nursing, Taraba State University, School of Health Tech, Takum, among others. Husseini asserted that all these, are as a result of tribal politics and sentiments played by some Muslims that led to the failure of Muslim Governorship Candidates in the successive democratic dispensations in Taraba State, since 2007, elections to date.

According to Kadi Abdulmumini Abu-Bakr, Muslims are divided base on ethnic lines and it does not augur well to them. In fact, let me tell you it is detrimental to us and we should embrace unity and brotherhood instead

Effects of Tribal Politics and Ethnic Sentiments Among Muslims in Taraba State

The effects of tribal politics among Muslim ethnic groups in Taraba State are identified as follows:

- a. Muslims are downgraded and some of their rights are trampled upon in some aspects of their life in the State, example, employment opportunity in the State and Local Government services, some Muslim pastoral right to rear their cattle's in some parts of the State is denied, worship buildings like Mosques among others,



are to a certain level were either denied or even destroyed where they are erected, for instance Wukari town.

- b. Loss of political power by the Muslim Ummah in Taraba State, for example Governorship, Local Government Chairmanship and Political Appointments like Commissioners, Heads of boards, parastatals, Institutions and Agencies.
- c. Muslims are psychologically defeated, in terms of Political and some Religious contests in the State, for example, defense of their votes during elections and the ability to deter rigging in some areas of the State.
- d. Discrimination among Muslims and conflicts hindered progress, in this regard some Muslim are politically working against their fellow brothers during politicking periods.
- e. It can foster a sense of “us” vs “them”, leading to prejudice and hostility towards other groups among Muslims in Taraba State.
- f. Unfair treatment against collective Muslim Ummah in areas like employment, education and access to resources of the State
- g. Obstruction of Unity and the desired development among Muslims in Taraba State, thereby hindering Muslim Community to achieve its full potentials.
- h. Tribal politics can deepen social division within Muslim ethnic groups and make it difficult to achieve social cohesion and inclusivity in the State.
- i. Social Effects, Distrust among Muslim ethnic groups hindered intermarriage, weakened communal cooperation, and fueled stereotyping. Instead of embodying Islamic brotherhood, but tribal divisions reinforced barriers.
- j. Political Effects, Muslims often failed to unite under common political platforms, as a result, their influence in state politics weakened, allowing non-Muslim blocs to dominate governance structures.
- k. Religious Effects, the fragmentation of Muslim communities contradicted Qur’anic injunctions of unity and justice. Internal divisions weakened Islamic organizations and limit their ability to address broader societal issues.
- l. Security Effects, Ethnic violence in the period 2017–2023, often involving Muslim groups, particularly, Mambila and Fulani, contributed to instability, displacement, and economic disruption.



Factors Contributed to Consistent Election of non-Muslim Governors in Taraba state

1. Some Muslim Politicians are aligning to political party affiliations than Islamic brotherhood, while Islam enjoined Muslim to prioritize faith than any other thing and because of greed they chose worldly materials.
2. Lack of unity among Muslim Ummah and within Islamic Scholars, is another militating factor that led to perpetual election of non-Muslims Governors
3. Lack of finance and Muslims are unwilling to bankroll attempting Muslim candidates for Governorship, according to Hon. Yusuf, there must be logistics and wherewithal to support elections, especially in the modern Nigerian democratic dispensations.
4. Tribal Politics, is also immensely contributing to electing non-Muslims in the State, because, it is apparent that some Muslims are voting along ethnic lines in some parts of Taraba State, by which they vote in non-Muslims tribal men at the expense of Muslim aspirants.
5. Rigging in some quarters, is another inherent factor that contributed to consistent election of non-Muslims.
6. Poverty and unemployed Youths, in this case you will see voters are lured with a meagre amount of money to vote or be an accomplice against their fellow Muslim brother, for instance 2023, elections at juggol polling unit in Lau Local Government Area, it was observed that, youths were enticed by one thousand naira only (1000) to vote for APC governorship candidate in person of Emmanuel Bwacha or PDP candidate Agbu Kefas, both of whom were non-Muslims against their Muslim NNPP Candidate, Prof. Sani Yahya.
7. Lack of Islamic Consciousness.

Islamic Solutions to Tribal Politics and Ethnic Sentiments Among Muslims in Taraba State

- a. Islam, strongly prohibits and condemned tribalism (Assabiyah) in a hadith Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "He is not of us who calls to tribalism" therefore, political behavior based on tribal identity contradicts Islamic teachings.
- b. Islam promotes unity among Muslims, "indeed this community of yours is one Ummah" (Q: 21: 92)



- c. Islam emphasizes justice (adl) and competence, by this, leadership should be based on trust and capability, not ethnic affiliation
- d. Islam encourages equality of all humans and rejects superiority based on ethnicity, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: “No Arab is superior to a non- Arab” (al-Tirmidhi, Hadith 3270). Thus, tribal superiority in politics is un-Islamic.

Islam as a Religion and complete way of life, is a unifier and redeemer of its faithful. Therefore, Islam enjoined its adherents to love each other, assist one another and cement a fortified good relationship among them with no discriminations against one another, what so ever. The following solutions are proffered

1. Promotion of Islamic brotherhood, Muslims should prioritize faith over ethnicity and Muslims should have a unified leadership and reduced fragmentations among them as advocated by Islam.
2. strengthen Islamic brotherhood among themselves.
3. Politics must be guided by Islamic political ethics, where participation must be for justice, as Islamic education and awareness should emphasize on the dangers of tribalism and promote unity
4. countability and public interest (Maslaha)
5. Islamic dialogue and inter-ethnic conflicts resolutions should be initiated and embrace by Muslim leaders, to mediate disputes and address inter-tribal tensions

D. Conclusion

Tribal politics among Muslims in Taraba State represents a deviation, from Islamic teachings, while ethnic diversity is natural and acknowledged in Islam, but its politicization led to disunity, the appraisal of tribal politics among Muslims in Taraba State reveals that tribalism significantly undermines Islamic unity and weakens Muslims political influence. While Islam provides a clear framework for unity and equality among Muslims, political actors and community leaders have often prioritized ethnicity over faith. To overcome these challenges, Taraba’s Muslims must draw on the Qur’an and Sunnah to foster genuine brotherhood, strengthen cooperation, and resist divisive politics. Unity, justice, and piety must replace tribal loyalty if the Muslim *Ummah* in Taraba is to thrive in peace and progress. The research analyzed various Muslim ethnic groups in the State. The study had a glance on the relationship among Muslims ethnic groups before and after the creation of Taraba State and proffered some Islamic solutions and recommendations.



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