

RELIGION AS AN INSTRUMENT OF EXPLOITATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract: *Religion so permeates every facet of a Nigeria's life that her social political and economic behaviour reflect religious influence. The proliferation of religious sects and worship places across the country is a testament to this strong religious affinity. However, despite Nigerians' proclivity towards religion, religion which ought to be a transformative instrument, leveraged for the betterment of the society, has become one of the most effective ways through which they are exploited: an instrument of terror used to instill fear, manipulate and defraud people. This paper examines the shift from the use of religion as a transformative tool to its use as an exploitative tool in Nigerian society. It adopted historical and descriptive methods in its discussion. With a focus on the three major religions in Nigeria, data from diverse sources such as internet sources, journal articles, magazines, and archives were analyzed within the framework of the Karl Marx theory on religion to showcase the different ways religion has been used as an instrument of exploitation. The findings underscore that religion in Nigeria has been commercialized and has become an exploitation tool. It equally reveals that religion is not bad in itself rather it is the abuse of religion that leads to exploitation and manipulation. Hence, the study recommends improved education of the masses, good governance and effective*

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laws and policies as possible means of curbing the abuses of religion.

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Introduction

Before the coming of the Europeans, Nigerians have been deeply religious. Adamo (1985) cited in Asukwo and Umanah (2022) avers that Nigerians are deeply religious to the extent that their cultural, political, social and economic activities have a religious colouration. Hence, it is difficult to have a clear-cut line between what can be perceived as religion and what can be considered as secular. This gust of religious zest is on a steady increase and finds its expression in the different religious denominations and worship places that keep springing up in the different nooks and crannies of the country. This should be a welcome development. This is because prior the advent of Christian and Islamic religion in Nigeria, African traditional religion which the people practiced played a transformative role in the lives of the people and in the betterment of the society. With the advent of Christian and Islamic religion this transformative role was bolstered through Western education, which enlightened the people, curbed certain barbaric practices like the killing of twins and ultimately birthed the fight for

independence. Therefore, with the advance in science and technology and the current rife of religious activities in Nigeria, it is expected that there ought to have been an exponential increase in the positive transformative role that religion plays. Instead, religion as practiced in Nigeria, seem to have derailed from its noble role of transformation and has become one of the most effective means of exploitation in Nigeria. Presently, we are faced with a situation whereby religious heads weaponize religion to delude and exploit their adherents. The adherents' susceptibility to exploitation can easily be linked to their attachment to religion and their religious heads that they view as God's representatives.

The use of religion as a means of exploitation and manipulation is not peculiar to any religious sect. Instances of religious exploitation and other forms of religious abuses prevalent among the dominant religious sects, Christianity, Islam and African Traditional religions, in Nigeria abound. Umoh (2013) cited in Asukwo & Umanah (2022) reports how at the request of parents, a certain self-acclaimed Bishop Sunday William killed hundreds of children suspected to be witches in Akwa Ibom State. The saddening part was that the parents of the executed children were the ones who paid him to execute

this monstrous act, as a means of saving their families from witchcraft-related misfortunes. They equally cite *Sunday Sun*, August 25, 2013, which reports how Pastor K. Olubenga was charged with defrauding his parishioner of N 214, 000 on the pretext of praying over the money. These exploitations and manipulations abound and run deeper than meets the eye. This is because they are several unreported cases. Religion, like Knowledge, is power, but it can be power for good or evil. And when religion leaves its primary function of transforming and bettering society and becomes an instrument of terror, it upturns the societal balance. Therefore, this paper focuses on exploring how religion terrorizes, with the guns of exploitation and manipulation and the strategic ways to wage war against this terror.

Definition of Terms

Religion

The term “Religion” does not have a universal definition. There is no scholarly consensus on the definition of religion (Isomkwo & Njor, 2019). Therefore, religion can be said to be like a mirror. People of various fields and cultures define religion the way it appears to

them and for their specific purposes. Ediba et al., (2021) cites Dogara (2013) who in defining religion, states that:

Religion has influenced different forms of human civilizations such as in art, architecture, music, poetry, history, philosophy, politics, and other aspects of human engagements. Understanding religion, therefore, requires a multi-dimensional overview of its essence and manifestation. Religion has a forceful factor with the capacity to arouse deep emotions in man and passion towards obedience, commitment and total surrender. Religion creates faith which could be revolutionary, that is, with the capacity to influence change and it could also be transformational in content and goal. However, when religion assumes extreme content in its belief and practice, it leads to fanaticism, extremism, intolerance and unguarded bigotry. It could be used or blatantly manipulated by its adherents

in order to achieve certain primordial interests (p.17).

This view of Dogara (2013) on religion strongly aligns with the context this paper intends to explore about religion.

Exploitation

According to the Standard Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2022), exploitation is using another person's vulnerability for one's benefit. Therefore, to exploit someone is to take unfair advantage of them. Although benefiting from someone's vulnerability is not always morally wrong. For instance, a chess player exploits the weakness in his opponent's defence. Exploitation can be transactional or structural. In the former case, unfairness is a property of a discrete transaction between two or more individuals. For instance, a pharmaceutical research firm that tests drugs on poor subjects in the developing world might be said to exploit others in this sense. Exploitation is said to be structural when the arrangement of the workings of a system is designed to unfairly benefit one group to the detriment of the other. Although exploitation can be mutually harmful or beneficial, this study focuses on the normative aspect of exploitation.

Religion as a transformative instrument in Nigeria

Religion is an instrument of social cohesion and transformation. Its practices primarily gear towards transforming an individual to become good within the context of his religion and the society. One of the ways it does this is through the education of its adherents. For instance, African Traditional Religion anchors the foundation of its education on seven cardinal goals (Fafunwa, 1995). These goals include: developing the child's physical skills, character, respect for elders and those in positions of authority; to develop intellectual skills; acquire specific rational training, and develop healthy attitude towards honest labour; sense of belonging to participate actively in family and community affairs; and lastly to promote cultural heritage of the community at large.

It is in line with this, that Apyewen (2020) opined that “the first and the foremost use of religion in Nigeria is its use for Western education” (p. 66). He further stated that religion (Christian and Islamic) found its main expression by its focus on the education of its adherents. This is seen in the establishment of schools and learning

institutions that were to serve as major vehicles of transformation. In more concrete terms he opines that:

Right from the colonial era, religious bodies, starting with Christians later joined by Muslims, have risen to the tasks of establishing schools for the purpose of educating the masses, through which they spread their religions by indoctrinating the pupils and students. Although the intention of establishing such schools was evangelization and Islamization, respectively, the political consciousness of the people became raised to fight for independence from colonialism (pp. 66-67).

The Arabic education was the vehicle with which Islam came into Nigeria. This, coupled with the emergence of Uthman Dan Fodio in the history of Northern Nigeria birthed the Koranic schools (Fafunwa, 1995). Islam attaches great importance to education and the Koranic schools are usually found in or outside mosques themselves. Hence, in northern Nigeria, there were widely

spread Koranic schools where the pupils learned to recite the Koran by heart, which served as the first stage of learning.

On the other hand, it was the advent of Christianity in Nigeria through the early Christian missionaries that introduced formal education. The Christian missionaries established the first schools with the main aim of using the schools for converting adherents of ATR and Muslims, Fafunwa (1995). According to historical records, Christian missions, as far back as 1942, controlled 99% of Nigeria's schools, and over 97% of Nigerian students were attending mission schools (Onwubike, 1973). The Christian missionaries were also focused in taking of the physically handicapped. As far back as 1914, Rev. Brown of the Baptist Mission and Rev. Olubi of CMS Church founded the Iberekodo Leprosy Settlement in Abeokuta. Also in the 1950s the Pacelli school for the Blind was conceived by the then Catholic Archbishop of Lagos, Leo Taylor with the assistance of the Irish Sisters of Charity and other experts in the education of the blind (Onwubike, 1973). It is worthy to note that the various means of education adopted by various religions in Nigeria did not focus solely on their particular religion doctrines; they covered the wide ranges of knowledge, moral, philosophical, artistic,

and scientific (Onwubike, 1973). This played a great role in the actualization of the Nigerian independence.

In the health sector, religious organisations have equally played significant roles. Christian missionaries in particular established hospitals as means of expressing love in action and spreading the gospel to and through the sick. Muslim clerics (Alufaa) in many Yoruba towns promoted religious virtue of efficacious prayer and spiritual assistance rendered to the sick. The first ever Mission hospital in Nigeria was a sixty beds hospital built by the Roman Catholic Mission (RCM) in the Kingdom of Kororofa in 1905(Anyika, n.d). Through these hospitals, many prevalent diseases like malaria, tuberculosis, measles, polio, small pox and leprosy were treated and controlled. Similarly, the attribution of small pox to a divinity ceased, as the disease was cured with pure medicine.

Religion is also considered to be a vehicle of economic progress. Nwosu (1988) opines that religion is a big employer of labour. The investment of religious organizations in medical and higher education through establishment of universities has contributed immensely to extending university education to the ever increasing

youth yearning for it. According to him, these institutions cuts across Christian and Islamic religious sects, and they employ people in fairly large numbers.

The above clearly reveals that the transformative role of religion in bettering the society and the lives of individuals. Thus, before present commercialization of religion in Nigeria, it has been a great transformative instrument for individual and community development. Therefore, it is fair to conclude that its recent notoriety as an instrument of exploitation stems largely from abuse. It is the nature of this abuse that formed the basis for employing Karl Marx theory on religion as the paper's theoretical framework.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the Marxist theory of religion because it encapsulates the paper's focus which is the use of religion for the manipulation and exploitation of the poor. This is relevant to the study given Nigerian people's strong affinity with religion and their overreliance on it to solve their existential problems. It is these factors that make them susceptible to manipulation. Karl Marx considers religion as a belief system that changes people's perception of reality and blurs their vision of their

objective condition in ways that serve the interests of the ruling class. Karl Marx cited in Ediba et al., (2021) succinctly puts it thus:

The social principles of Christianity declare all the vile acts of the oppressors against the oppressed to be either a just punishment for original sins, or trials which the Lord, in his infinite wisdom, ordains for the redeemed... When suffering is seen as a trial, it promises a reward for those who bear the deprivations of poverty with dignity and humility. Religion thus makes poverty more tolerable by offering a reward for suffering and promising compensation for injustice in the afterlife (p.15).

Therefore, for Marx, the ideological effect of the superstructure — media, laws, politics, religion and other social structures is ultimately in the interest of the ruling class in ‘reproducing’ essentially the exploitative relationships and manipulation and in legitimize the dominance of capitalism and subordination of the working class (Onoja, 2009). Therefore, religion is used to

obliterate the existential realities of the poor, creating a false consciousness while diluting the demand for change. Religion merely stupefies its adherents rather than bringing them true happiness and fulfillment. When this is applied to the current Nigerian situation, we see the exploitative use of religion. How it is used as a smokescreen that helps to manipulate, maintain dominance over religious adherents and legitimize this oppression.

Religion as an Instrument of Manipulation and Exploitation in Contemporary Nigeria

Faleye (2013) argues that corruption has existed in religious cycles since the annals of history. This corruption has been perpetuated by fear, hate and sometimes lies to control and manipulate people for undue self-centered benefits of a few individuals. In confirming this, Nicholson (2004) points out that the various crusades that took place in the Middle Ages are obvious footprints of corruption. This is because religion was leveraged as an instrument of terror for waging war against the political enemies of the Pope, pagan peoples and Christian heretics. The term crusade was coined to designate the war against these people. This system was used by the church as a tool of oppression, especially against the Jews and Muslims. The

penalty for heresy was torture and death (Homza, 2006). Falola (2002) argued in the same line when he pointed out that in the 19th century in Northern Nigeria, Jihad was coined as a war against oppression and syncretism. However, the Islamic revolutionaries did not aim at just purifying Islam; the revolution was embedded in the political ambitions of the Jihadists (Korieh & Nwokeji, 2005). The aftermath of the Jihad witnessed a wider stratification of the society between the ruling class and the ruled; culminating in high-level inequalities in the established Caliphate. These examples illustrate how man has used God to justify his greed and quest for power.

Most scholars, over time, have come to the agreement that religion can play a significant role in nation-building. They construe religion to be a transformative instrument that can be leveraged for achieving meaningful development. This is based on its privileged position as a bastion of morality, which can help in building the moral standard of people, contributing to social stability, peaceful co-existence and purposeful transformation. Going by historical antecedent, which witnessed the impactful contributions of the Christian missionaries and Islamic brotherhoods to the transformation of societies in Nigeria, then we can reach a

consensus that the postulations of the scholars are germane. However, the trajectory of Nigerian's experience regarding religion has dramatically been altered. This is a pulsating effect of the outright manipulation and politicization of religion in Nigeria particularly in the post-colonial era, (Ediba et al., 2021). This manipulation and exploitation are not peculiar to any religious sect, since it permeates the dominant religions in Nigeria. In the different religious sects, religion has been turned into a business centre for money-making. Ogara (2011) confirms this when he states that:

Religion in Nigeria is the commercialization of religion. It is perceived that establishing a church today is an easy way towards wealth acquisition. Thus, Nigeria since the 1980s has witnessed the proliferation of religious institutions and the rise of religious functionaries some of whom have abandoned their original vocations and training in fields such as teaching, medicine, and banking, among others, to be head of churches. Similarly, religion has transmuted into a lucrative

business venture as sundry charges in different forms are believed to attract blessings. Sunday Bobai Agang posits that the commercialization of religion is also at the centre of economic corruption in Nigeria because it has further impoverished the already poverty-stricken religious adherents. This goes to buttress Mahatma Gandhi's assertion that "oppression of people in the name of God is the worst form of oppression" (p. 7).

Hence, they can go to any length to get what they want, like the use of charms to entrap members. For instance, on Wednesday, April 27, 2017, following a tip-off, the NSCDC officials swooped on a 34-year-old suspect, a cleric, who was accused to have buried some fetish items inside his church located at Ikota in the Ifedore local government area of Ondo State (naij.com, April 27, 2017). As a result of this, most adherents of a particular religion, instead of finding fulfillment, have become bound by fear, frustration, indoctrination, and manipulative mind control that have made their pursuit of God an endless drudgery punctuated by a driven and legalistic lifestyle.

There are many instances of these exploitations and manipulation and how this often beclouds the senses of the religious adherents. Oyetade (2018) reports that in Kaduna a young lady who was a fashion designer was asked to fast if she wanted to hear and speak the English language, the lady fasted until she lost consciousness. Also in Kaduna, a sick child died from a curable illness because his parents refused to seek medical help for "religious convictions" instilled by their church's teachings. In another local case, a pastor who had made himself a paternal grandfather to his flock threatens via prophetic utterance, all who waver at coming forward for a mass public baptism will die by auto accident at the hands of a "death angel", and subsequent eternal damnation if they do not repent.

A recent occurrence was a deliverance service posted on YouTube showing the General Overseer of the Living Faith Church also known as the Winner's Chapel, David Oyedepo, in which he smacked an unyielding female church member during the deliverance service. This has sparked social media outrage in Nigeria and around the world. The video went viral immediately and drew widespread condemnation of the pastor's action, which many see as gender abuse. The pastor was seen slapping a

lady kneeling before him because she refused to accept that she was a witch. After several prods by the pastor, the lady rather insisted she was a “witch for Jesus” a claim that angered the pastor. Bishop Oyedepo then slapped her on the left cheek, yelling, “Do you know whom you are talking to?” Human rights activists have labelled the pastor’s action as “religious bullying”, “violence against women” and “child abuse” (<http://www.jehovahswitness.net>).

African Traditional Religion is not left out in this. There are instances where African deities were manipulated to perpetuate injustice. For instance, rampant ritual murders and the use of ATR to aid Advanced Fee Fraud (419/Yahoo plus) and armed robbery are some of the ways ATR is fueling corruption in Nigeria. Yahoo Plus is an elevated form of cyber fraud. It involves performing various rituals to brighten the swindler’s chances of getting his victims hypnotized to keep remitting money from any location in the world. It can therefore be deduced that ATR cannot function without the human agent. Hence, it is subject to human cravings and corrupt practices once its encryption is decoded by the skilled master swindler (Faleye, 2013).

The above are instances where religion is weaponized as an instrument of manipulation and exploitation, thereby becoming a terror. Religion becomes a terror when it is used to incite fear, brainwash and manipulate in a bid to exploit. It is when religion becomes transactional and commercialized even to the detriment of the sharers of the belief.

It is when religious leaders prey on the vulnerability of their followers in a bid to exploit them. Ediba et al., (2021) confirm this when they argued that:

It is expected that religion should command the language of societal ethics and even fight corruption but the situation now is that many religious leaders have turned into “spiritual consultants” scouting and lobbying for contracts for themselves from their benefactors. It is pathetic that prayers and fasting/thanksgiving services are held for individuals who were convicted stealing of public funds.⁴⁰ Apart from these religious exercises, religious leaders and groups go on pressurizing

the agencies involved in the arrest and prosecution of corrupt persons to soft-pedal and suspend legal actions against such persons who are religious financiers, despite their offences against the poor masses (p. 20).

Going further, they cite Kwanashie (2014) who argues strongly along the same line when he averred that:

The monumental theft of public funds by public officials and the deliberate maneuvering of religion to perpetrate corruption and evil are carried out openly to the extent that almost every Nigerian is affected one way or the other. Ironically, these are temporal and spiritual leaders who should be torch-bearers and lead by example for the masses to emulate and follow. This is largely the reason Nigeria is facing a crisis of development marked by serious

infrastructural deficit, growing social cleavages, pervasive insecurity, the crisis in the education, transport and power sectors, serious constraint on the development of the human capital of the society and a kleptocratic elite with very limited vision of the future of the country (p.21).

Examining the trend and pattern of religious corruption (abuses) in Nigeria, Egbeazien (2012), Secretary-General of Nigeria Psychological Association, asserts that:

In theory, the understanding of what could be termed Religious Corruption Syndrome should be seen as a function of both the chronic abuses of religious practices and the impact of pervasive dishonesty in individuals and across various faith communities in Nigeria... The toxic aspects of Nigerian-oriented religions appear to have a deep impact on the psychological connection to the

deep sense of dishonesty... With further attachment to one's religion, some Nigerians appear to see enormous personal conforming behaviours which could include cycles of dishonesty, being defensive and blaming others for one's confusion... There appears to be emotional/spiritual satisfaction from being religious and committing oneself to a corrupt lifestyle and living,

The above discussions adequately showcase that religion has overtime being used to exploit and manipulate. However, given that religion that Christian, Islamic religion and traditional were in the past the main vehicles of civilization and nation building, particularly in the sphere of education (both formal and informal), is a pointer that religion can equally be used for good. This calls for the rechanneling of religion to its primary purpose. This raises the questions; how can religious exploitations be stalled? How can its effects be curbed in order to mitigate further spread of its malaise?

Curbing Religious Exploitation

When religion becomes an instrument of terror used for exploitation, it defeats its primary aim of transforming lives and creating a decent society. This causes more harm than good. Nigerian society is replete with incidences of terror caused by religion. If these issues are not addressed, they will cause serious damage. There are several ways to curb religious exploitation.

Improved Education of the Masses: It takes one who has been close to the rural communities in Nigeria, to understand the UNICEF 2022 statistics that:

At least 10.5 million children are out of school in Nigeria-the highest rate in the world. A full of Nigerian children are not in school, and one in five out-of-school children in the world is Nigerian.... It is estimated that 35 per cent of Nigerian children who attend primary school do not go on to attend secondary school. Half of all Nigerian children did not attend school in 2021.

Hawkins (2022) the UNICEF Nigeria Representative goes further to state that:

Millions of Nigerian children have never set foot in a classroom- and this is a travesty. Perhaps equally tragic is the high number of children who make it into a classroom, but never make the transition from primary school to secondary school-thereby cutting off their chances for a secure future.

The easiest way to save people from being victims of religious terror is to provide a proper and adequate education. This is the major reason the West are rarely victims of religious manipulation due to the intellectually advanced nature of their countries which makes the citizens quite immune to religious exploitation. Education can play a huge role in mitigating religious exploitation. Quality education can improve the critical and analytical skills of a person. Armed with these, it will be quite difficult to exploit or manipulate an individual. The ignorant lots are cheap prey to most unscrupulous religious leaders who prey on their gullibility, manipulating them into doing their bidding. The case of

Boko Haram, a religious terrorist group, is a clear case of how the ignorance of the masses can be preyed on. Hence, Hawkins (2022), going further suggests that:

We need to look towards communities - leaders, parents, teachers and caregivers - and together, find the best strategies to ensure that all children enroll in school have access to continuous learning and ensure they emerge with quality skills that equip them for a prosperous future.

This is very relevant given the fact that children are the said leaders of tomorrow, they need to be empowered with quality education, lest they become leaders easily victimized by religious terror. Hawkins (2022) argues in this line when he avers: "All children deserve a fighting chance - no matter who they are or where they are. And this must include education. It is not only their right - it is the smartest and best way to secure the future of Nigeria as a whole."

Given the situation on the ground, there is an urgent need for heavy investment in the education sector. There should also be a proper religious sensitization of the

masses, especially those in the rural areas, some of whom are not very educated and are prone to give into fear dished out by religious leaders. This will go a long way in educating them and keeping them immune from religious manipulations.

Making Effective Laws and Policies: One of the ways to guide against religious exploitation is to establish laws and policies that prevent unscrupulous individuals from disguising as religious leaders to defraud the people. There should be a prerequisite standard of education for anyone who is to become a religious leader or preacher. On April 4, 2018, news 24 reported that the Rwandan government has closed thousands of churches and dozens of mosques, in a bid to assert more control over a vibrant religious community, whose sometimes makeshift operations, and authorities have threatened the lives of followers. Going further, Paul Kagame, the president of Rwanda, said the country doesn't need so many houses of worship. According to him, such a high number is only fit for bigger, more developed nations that have the means to sustain them. The proposed legislation aims at regulating faith-based organizations separately from civil society organizations. Also in the new legislation, pastors (religious leaders) would be required to have a degree in

theology as a means of making sure they teach the right doctrine already established when he signed into law that only individuals with a degree in theology can operate a faith-based organization. The aim is to discourage abuse of religion. This will enable the government to put a check on religious heads or pastors who are motivated by greed, to start their own churches or worship places to defraud their followers. There should be a law that demands that all churches must be registered with the government. And before they start functioning must prove they have the basic requirements of standing on their own. This will mitigate the unmitigated spread of mushroom worship places scattered all over the place.

Good Governance: the socio-economic trajectory of Nigerian society extensively contributes to the use of religion as an instrument of exploitation. The bad policies and poor governance, lack of basic social amenities and the millions of Nigerians ravaged by poverty, and hunger, are things that make the citizens easy prey in the hands of religious miscreants. The National Bureau of Statistics gives credence to the level of poverty in Nigeria in its press release of November 17, 2022, in Abuja, where it stated that:

63% of persons living within Nigeria (133 million people) are multi-dimensionally poor.... 65% of the poor (86 million people) live in the North, while 35% (nearly 47 million) live in the South. Poverty levels across the state vary significantly, with the incident of multidimensional poverty ranging from a low of 27% in Ondo to a high of 91%... In general, the incidence of monetary poverty is lower than the incidence of multidimensional across most states. Over half of the population of Nigeria are multidimensionally poor and cook with dung, wood or charcoal, rather than cleaner energy. High deprivations also appeared nationally in sanitation, time to healthcare, food security, and housing.... Multidimensional poverty is higher in rural areas, where 72% of people are poor, compared to 42% of people in urban areas.

The World Bank's recent report in its Macro poverty Outlook for Nigeria: April 2023, projects that about 13 million Nigerians would fall below the national poverty line by 2025 owing to the country's population

growth superseding efforts to reduce poverty among countrymen. Given Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics Multidimensional Poverty Index Survey report in 2022, the World's bank recent report implies that 13 million more Nigerians are doomed to the same fate.

In the face of these existential facts and problems, where people are fighting tooth and nail to survive, religion becomes opium. It becomes the hope of the common man. It is this that makes them easy prey for exploitation and indoctrination. If the government improves on the socio-economic trajectory of the country, by providing basic social amenities, it will go a long way in bridging the menace of religious exploitation. This is because the things people go to their worship places to pray for are already provided by the government,

Conclusion

Religion, like knowledge, is very powerful. However, it can be a power for good or evil, depending on its application. Religion is a huge transformative tool. It plays a huge role in the transformation of an individual and society at large for the better. However, religion has over time become an instrument of terror. This is because it has become one of the most effective means of exploiting

and manipulating religious adherents. Given the proclivity of Nigerians towards religion, they are often victims of religious exploitation and manipulations. Instances of these incidents of manipulations abound. However, it must be noted that religion itself is not bad; it is its misuse that makes it bad. It is when religion is abused that it becomes a terror. This study attempted to bring to the fore, the ways religion is used as an instrument of terror, which exploits and manipulates. The study also suggests possible ways to quell religious exploitation. Although it is not an exhaustive study on the abuse of religion, it, however, provides a basis for further research on religious exploitation and manipulation.

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